



CAMBRIDGESHIRE GARDENS TRUST

NEWSLETTER No. 54 May 2023

PRESIDENT THE LORD FAIRHAVEN

PATRONS Lord and Lady De Ramsey
Lady Nourse
Mrs D. Astor
Lady Proby
Prof. J. Parker
Mr C. Vane Percy
Mrs Jane Brown
Prof. B. Glover

COUNCIL OF MANAGEMENT

Chairman..... Liz Whittle
Secretary..... Mark Wilkinson
Treasurer Jane Sills
Membership..... Sarah Hundleby
Research Virginia Warren
Council member.... Ann Colbert
Council member.... Janet Probyn

Deputy Chair..... Judith Christie
Conservation..... Mark Wilkinson
Events Coordinator Jane Bhagat
Events & Study Day Judith Christie
Events Judith Rossiter
Publicity..... Vacant

LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN

WELCOME TO THE SPRING 2023 Newsletter, full of interesting and useful information. Since the publication of the last Newsletter in November we have been subjected to a rollercoaster of weather, from extreme cold to drought, to excessive wet and now to a cold, grey spring. The King's coronation is imminent; I remember the late Queen's, in 1953, as a very wet, grey and cold day, so maybe not much has changed.

The Trust has not been idle through the winter and spring, with successful events, talks and new initiatives. First, the Christmas lecture, given by Dr Laura Mayer, was a lively romp through the way parks and gardens were used in the eighteenth century.

Next, I'm delighted to let you know about an exciting new development. After discussions with Richard Gant, it was agreed to set up shared membership opportunities between the Trust and the Cambridgeshire branch of Plant Heritage. Plant Heritage is a national organisation with regional branches whose primary emphasis is on plants and main aim is the curation of National Plant Collections. There are a number in Cambridgeshire including *Hemerocallis*, *Hyacinthus orientalis*, *Juglans* and *Yucca*. More are held by the Cambridge

University Botanic Garden. The CGT Council of Management agreed to invite Plant Heritage members to our talks and events and conversely we are invited to those of Plant Heritage in Cambridgeshire. This agreement has been taken up with enthusiasm by both groups. The next Plant Heritage event is on Saturday 14th October and is a talk by Anne Tweddle on *Engleheart's Daffodils*. Talks are held at Madingley Hall at 2.30 pm. More information can be gathered from Plant Heritage and CGT websites.



Janet Probyn has recently joined the Council of Management.

In January the Council of Management held a strategy meeting at which issues wider than day-to-day management were discussed. These included the agreement with Plant Heritage, how to increase membership, reviewing strategy with our Patrons, the updating of our documentation for the Charity Commission, the setting up of a questionnaire for members, and the reactivation of the Research Group. Some of these initiatives are already bearing fruit. One thing that was agreed was to invite Janet Probyn to join the Committee of Management. This was done and we are delighted that she has accepted.

It was felt that it was time to sound out our members with a questionnaire on their thoughts about the Trust. The results,

which are reported in the Newsletter and will soon be on our website, are very encouraging, in that they give a positive picture of members' views on our events, talks, venues and visits. We very much appreciated members' suggestions for speakers and visits. Most gratifying was the result that 75% of respondents read most or all of the Newsletter! Well done everyone who took part. Your enthusiasm shines through.

For those interested in getting stuck into a more intellectual aspect of gardens and garden history, possible research topics have recently been suggested by the Gardens Trust (GT). First, a GT project is emerging to find out more about the landscape designer Robert Marnock. His one known commission in Cambridgeshire was at Pampisford Hall. Secondly, a Historic England project to record unlisted glasshouses has also been proposed. It is in its infancy but sounds like a worthwhile exercise, as little work has been done to survey and record these often derelict structures. By coincidence, this issue includes previous research by Ann Colbert on the innovations brought about by glass technologies in Victorian England, so if this inspires your interest or curiosity in the project, please drop a line to admin@cambridgeshiregardenstrust.org.uk.

So far this year the Trust has laid on a varied and fascinating programme of events, which are detailed elsewhere in the Newsletter. The Study Day, on 18 March, was a triumph. Jan Woudstra's talk on climate change in particular was excellent and thought-provoking. Two visits have taken place, one to the lovely gardens of Ousden House in Suffolk and the other, completely different, to the Fitzwilliam Museum, to be shown beautiful flower-decorated ceramics from its collection. Curator Julia Poole showed us examples from many periods and styles, all of them fascinating.

Lastly, we are pleased that worthy applications continue to be made to our Small Grants Scheme. Two have been granted this year: the Hilton Community Garden has been awarded £500 for garden edging and £500 has been awarded to The Manor, Hemmingford Grey, for repairs to garden woodwork. These were projects that the Trust felt it should wholeheartedly support and we wish them both well. If you know of any potential applicants do please let them know about this scheme, details of which can be found on the website.

Enjoy the rest of the Newsletter and I hope to meet you at future events.

Liz Whittle

THE CGT STUDY DAY 13 MARCH 2023 GARDEN GAME-CHANGERS: PEOPLE AND CLIMATE

After a well-received set of talks at Eddington in 2022, the 2023 Study Day returned to the familiarity of Hemmingford Abbots Village Hall. Our theme for the day was prompted by considering the past impact on landscaping by people's taste, and the concern for the future impact of climate change.

THOUGH HE PROBABLY didn't coin the phrase, Churchill is supposed to have said that history is written by the victors. As far as garden history is concerned, the game-changing winner in the past was arguably the taste of men (and women) who had the money to spend on landscaping their estates according to the changing fashions of their times. Looking forward, the winner is likely to be the impersonal force of anthropogenic climate change though, with luck and determination, we may be able to mitigate its impact.

In Hemmingford Abbots Village Hall, a full house of members and guests gathered to hear our speakers give their thoughts on the theme for the day. After a cup of coffee served during registration, Liz Whittle, CGT Chairman, welcomed everyone to the event and introduced the first speaker, Angus Wainwright, who is the National Trust's Archaeologist for the East of England.

WIMPOLE: A MONSTER PARK - AND THE PEOPLE IT ATE

Angus described himself as a 'generalist with catholic interests' in that he is primarily an archaeologist but one who has acquired an amazing working knowledge of the landscape and, more importantly from his viewpoint, the people who occupied that landscape which we now know as Wimpole Park. The estate is part of an ancient landscape with archaeological evidence from Iron Age, Roman, Anglo-Saxon and mediaeval

periods showing that it has been continuously occupied for at least 2,000 years. The present Grade I listed house is Cambridgeshire's largest Georgian mansion, but three villages were completely erased during the 18C to create the parkland, developed between 1740 and 1895 by some of the best known and influential garden designers of their time: Charles Bridgeman, Robert Greening, Lancelot 'Capability' Brown and Humphry Repton.

In his talk, Angus lightly skipped across the Iron Age, Roman and mediaeval periods to focus mainly on the later development of the Park, weaving together the historical evidence with the results from modern remote sensing techniques such as LiDAR (light detection and ranging), photogrammetry and magnetometry. The combination of LiDAR (three-dimensional laser imaging from above) and photogrammetry (the combination of multiple images to remove the effects of vegetation) generates a map of the terrain with high precision, so that subtle changes in elevation that indicate the presence of buried structures are revealed. Magnetometry detects slight modulations in the earth's magnetic field introduced by shallow-buried structures which again may be interpreted as ditches, foundations, post-holes etc. As a taster, Angus showed us both LiDAR and magnetometry maps of Wimpole which clearly revealed Iron Age and Roman settlements, mediaeval moats, earthworks associated with formal gardens, fountains and a 17C garden wall.

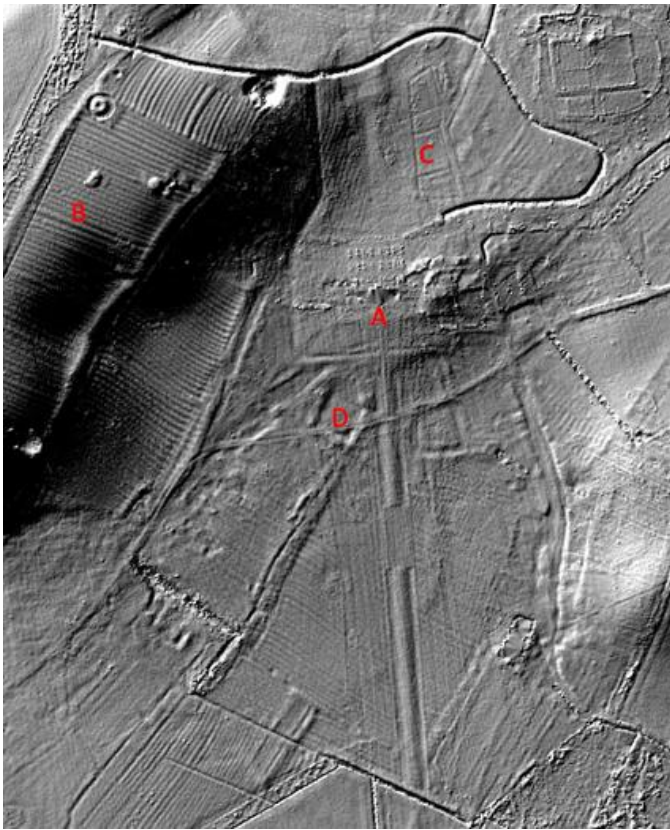


Figure 1. LiDAR image revealing ridge and furrow marks (B), remains of the formal garden (C) from c.1700 and the water garden (D) to the SW of the house (A).

Wimpole has the largest preserved mediaeval ridge and furrow plough marks in Cambridgeshire and these show up clearly as field stripes in the LiDAR images. They are preserved because after the mediaeval villages were cleared to create the parkland, the land was largely left unploughed. Angus showed the 1638 map (Fig. 2) drawn by Benjamin Hare for Sir Thomas Chicheley, which depicted a largely mediaeval manor house surrounded by a moat. There is also evidence for ornamental landscaping with trees. The manor house was demolished c.1640 and Sir Thomas completed construction of the first Wimpole Hall c.1660. Hare's map, probably part of a terrier for rents, shows the landholdings and their tenants in 1638. Angus had used the names listed on the map, together with research from Hearth Tax and parish records, to trace some of the families, especially the Pratts and the Balls, over a few generations during this period of transition from villager strip farming to emparkment. John Pratt had 6.5 acres on Hare's map which was not enough land to support a family and so he probably augmented his income by labouring for neighbours. One neighbour, William Witton, had 103 acres and was a yeoman farmer. A William Neale was also a yeoman farmer with a smaller landholding but had a moated farmhouse. The lands were worked communally, with the whole village getting together on the fields to reap. This created a close-knit community with Sir Thomas often becoming a godparent to the children born to his plot-holders.



Figure 2. Detail from Hare's map of 1638, showing moated manor house and church. North is to the left.

However, as well as creating a formal garden around his new house, Sir Thomas reorganised the estate lands, so that many of the smaller landholdings were merged to form two larger farms which were granted to tenant farmers. The small tenants either became labourers on the large new farms or moved away altogether. Cottages were removed along with some of the winding roadways, and the Chicheleys no longer appear on baptismal records. In fact, many of the family names disappear altogether: Sir Thomas had interests in draining the land around Soham and Angus speculated that some of the former tenants may have ended up there, but this is a topic for future research. Debts eventually forced Chicheley to sell Wimpole in 1686 to Sir John Cutler although, after his death, Chicheley's body was returned in 1699 to be interred in the family vault in Wimpole Parish Church.

Cutler appears to have done little to the estate and died in 1693, whereupon Wimpole passed by marriage of his daughter to Charles Robartes, the second Earl of Radnor. Lord Radnor laid out extensive formal gardens around the house using the Royal Gardeners London and Wise. They were finished in 1701 and illustrated in the engraving by Kip and Knyff from 1707 (Fig. 3). The park was extended with new avenues, a water

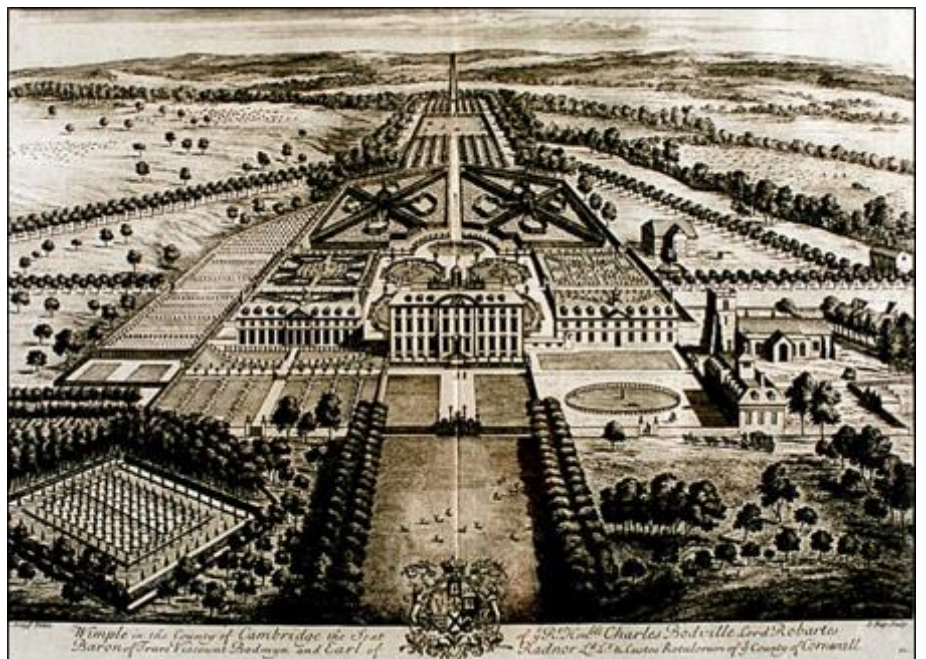


Figure 3. View of Wimpole looking north; engraving by Kip & Knyff 1707.

garden, fishponds, a large walled garden, a deer park over the ridge and furrow and an orangery. The remains of the water garden to the SW of the house can be seen in the LiDAR image (Fig. 1), set obliquely to the house to conform to an earlier field boundary.

Radnor also overspent on the estate and sold it to the Duke of Newcastle in 1710, who died the following year, so the estate again passed through marriage of the surviving heiress, Henrietta Cavendish-Holles, to Edward Harley who became the second Earl of Oxford. The couple employed James Gibbs to remodel the house and Charles Bridgeman to transform the garden. His geometric plan of 1721, with its grand south avenue of elms, was revised to retain the water garden and instead remodelled the spiral of fishponds on the other side of the avenue to create a balancing, three-sided canal.

Following the pattern of previous owners, Harley also became indebted and was forced to sell the estate in 1740 to Philip Yorke, first Earl of Hardwicke. He engaged Robert Greening to remodel the garden which he did by sweeping away Radnor's formal north garden and replacing it with lawns and a pleasure garden, replacing one foot of soil with fresh soil over the whole garden in the process. Greening enclosed both north and south gardens with a hah-ha to the west and moved the walled garden, replanted with fruit trees, to the eastern boundary, out of sight of the house. In 1751, the first Earl also commissioned Sanderson Miller's design of a Gothic folly.

Philip Yorke, the second Earl, inherited Wimpole in 1764 and, with his wife Jemima, invited Lancelot Brown to remodel the northern park. Brown removed some trees to create clumps and enclosed land to the north to create a carriage drive around the estate, offering excellent views of the house across a new lake made from Radnor's fishponds and an excavated eastern lake. With James Essex, he had the first Earl's Gothic tower built in 1774 at the northern avenue's end on Johnson's Hill.

Angus noted that excavations had revealed sections of oak pipe that Brown had used for drainage. He also mentioned that a similar pipe had been used to supply water from a pond on Johnson's Hill to Radnor's fountain (Fig. 3), whose retaining wall and brass stopcock had been discovered. Angus admired the engineering but noted that while there was good head for the fountain, the pond had little volume and so the fountain could have been operated for only short periods.

In 1790, Wimpole passed to Philip Yorke, third Earl of Hardwicke, and nephew of the second Earl. He engaged William Emes to develop a plan for the gardens and grounds, which included a new lake. Only some of Emes' proposals were carried out: the kitchen garden was re-sited with a pleasure ground connecting it to the house. Greening's walled garden was removed, and a sinuous sunken fence built. This Philip, the third Earl, then called upon Humphry Repton to look at both house and grounds and create the 1801 Red Book for Wimpole. This proposed reinstatement of a flower garden and railings next to the house in the north garden to separate the garden from the deer park. The utility of the separation is emphasised by the image of a lady in the foreground confronted by deer droppings on the garden path (Before) but magically becomes free of such hazards (After). This suggestion appears not to have been followed, although other changes to staff accommodation and entrance drive were carried out. By this time, the few remaining

tenants were removed to the new Wimpole village along the main road.

The fourth Earl Hardwicke inherited in 1834 and may have been responsible for the creation of the northern parterre garden. From 1840 he employed H. E. Kendall to make improvements, planting shrubberies in the pleasure grounds to the north and east. The fifth Earl, 'Champagne Charlie', inherited a thriving estate in 1873 but his extravagant lifestyle again forced the sale of the estate within fifteen years. It was taken over, in settlement of the debts, by the second Lord Robartes who was a descendant of Charles Robartes, the second Earl of Radnor. The Robartes rented out the estate and it was subsequently bought in 1938 by Captain and Mrs Bambridge, the latter being the daughter of Rudyard Kipling. Her main contribution was the planting of thousands of bulbs in the Pleasure Garden. On her death Mrs Bambridge left the property to the National Trust. Over the course of 450 years this estate, which bears the archaeological signs of intensive occupation and cultivation from the Iron Age onwards, lost the people who had cultivated its lands and bankrupted several of its owners.

Angus closed his talk with some comments on the great south avenue which had been planted with elms but wiped out by Dutch Elm disease in the 1970's, as monitored in the field books of Oliver Rackham. The avenue has been replanted with limes, which seem to be doing quite well but Angus expressed concern about their future resilience due to soil drying as a result of climate change. Over 100,000 trees have been planted at Wimpole, but the National Trust is worried at the growing trend for hot dry summers and fears that many may not survive.

Phil Christie, April 2023

LADY GREY'S PICTURESQUE EYE WILL DISCOVER MANY PARTICULARS WORTHY OF YOUR TRAVELLING POCKET-BOOK

The second talk was given by Dr Jemima Hubberstey, a postdoctoral fellow in the Humanities at the University of Oxford. She is also a research assistant for Lost Literary Legacies, a Knowledge Exchange Fellowship between the National Trust, English Heritage, and Oxford's English Faculty, exploring the shared literary influences that once united Wrest Park and Wimpole Hall in the 18C. Outside research, she works in museum marketing at Bonner & Hindley in Leeds.

Jemima gave us a lively and animated talk based on the travel diaries of three 18C women, her namesake Jemima, Marchioness Grey (1722-1797, Fig. 4), her sister-in-law Elizabeth Anson (1725-1760; née Yorke, Fig. 5) and her childhood friend, the blue-stocking Catherine Talbot (1721-1770, Fig. 6). They were known as the 'Wrest Women', all being members of the literary coterie that centred on Jemima Grey and her husband Philip Yorke (1720-1790) at their home at Wrest Park, Bedfordshire.

The ladylike pursuits of painting and sketching in the countryside have provided us with an enormous amount of information about historic houses and gardens but Jemima H. has discovered that the copious diaries written by the early tourists can also paint a picture about what catches their eye and how their opinions change on subsequent visits. 'The women's correspondence played a key role in disseminating ideas around



Figure 4. Allan Ramsay, 'Lady Jemima Campbell, Marchioness Grey' 1741. Wimpole Hall, Cambridgeshire.



Figure 5. Elizabeth Anson, sister of Philip Yorke.

garden design, allowing for an exchange of ideas, debate and discussion.'

The culture of the 18C positioned the viewing subject as male, and women were marginalised so we must thank Jemima H. for her work in putting the record straight. In much of the writing about 'Nature' done by men, we find that 'Nature' is sexualised as a woman and Jemima argued that women negotiated these culturally constructed gender dynamics, and were able to do so in the letters they wrote to each other.

Both Jemima Grey and Catherine Talbot had been educated



Figure 6. Catherine Talbot by Christian Friedrich Zincke.

by the garden designer, astronomer and polymath, Thomas Wright (1711-1786) and, in 1740 when only seventeen, Jemima inherited Wrest, which was considered to be one of the finest landscaped gardens in the country. By this time, its most exceptional features, the massive formal woodland garden enclosed on three sides by canals, had already been laid out by leading designers of the day including Nicholas Hawksmoor, Thomas Archer, Batty Langley and William Kent: quite an inheritance for a keen owner-gardener. While her marriage to Philip Yorke in the same year had been arranged, the two respected each other's intellect but this did not prevent Jemima from feeling cross that Philip had gone for a walk alone through the Wrest grounds shortly after their wedding.

Yorke's friend, Daniel Wray (1701-1783), evidently respected Jemima's knowledge of landscape aesthetics, writing to him that 'Lady Greys Picturesque Eye will discover many particulars worthy of your Travelling Pocket-book.' Wray clearly sees Jemima as an aesthetic subject, with her 'Picturesque Eye', suggesting that women were not merely passive consumers of the landscape.

Jemima was keen to continue with 'improvements' to the Wrest Garden but not at the expense of losing features she valued, so Lancelot 'Capability' Brown's changes were not so sweeping as they were elsewhere, merely softening the edges and preserving the heart of the formal layout. Brown himself realised that to do more 'might unravel the mystery of the garden.' As an aside, the surviving correspondence about Brown's work at Wrest throws an entertaining light on the great man but this was not part of Jemima's lecture, focusing as it did on the ladies' letters.

Jemima's background and sentimental approach to Wrest must have made her exceptionally well prepared to comment on other great gardens she visited. Her freedom to travel afforded the opportunities needed to develop a critical eye. This was denied to her friend Catherine Talbot who wrote despairingly, 'how shall one determine to omit any part where all is pleasing? To You this is easy, because you have been to so many fine places all together that you can easily omit what is Common to all and distinguish only what is particular in

Everyone, but for me I am a mere paysanne and think every one I see the finest in the world.’ Which of us has not had similar feelings on a garden tour led by an expert?

Elizabeth Anson also received an excellent education and ‘made a progress in (that) science beyond what the sex in general are thought capable of.’ This glass ceiling has taken so long to break through. Jemima H. used Stowe Gardens as an example of a feminist view of the acclaimed landscape. Neither Grey nor Elizabeth Montagu (1718-1800), leader of the Blue Stocking Society, saw Lord Cobham’s estate as the epitome of taste. She saw, instead ‘feminised Nature victorious over Cobham’s “Vain Pomp”’ and ‘employing her own knowledge of garden design affords her a critical authority over the type of male owner who would torture nature to fulfil his own fantasies and ambitions.’ Jemima’s talk repeatedly demonstrated the gender divide in the way that men and women would view the same landscape in the 18C in a manner unknown to us in the 21C. [It is, perhaps, worth bearing in mind that these famous gardens were being viewed at a time when many would have been newly laid out and, although we know they did manage to plant large trees, the various built structures and sculpture enclaves will not have been softened by the fully grown trees we see around them today.]

The final part of the lecture was devoted to the Picturesque with quotes from the lady travellers about the ‘paintability’ of the gardens they visited and, far from endorsing the old adage that a painting can capture a thousand words, the diaries prove much more adept at capturing the dichotomy of opinions. But there were instances when Grey was lost for words, and she was cautious about allowing art and literature to speak for, or to represent, nature. In this view she was in agreement with Thomas Whately (1726-1772), author of *Observations on Modern Gardening*, who argued that ‘even when painting exactly imitates the appearance of nature, it is often weak in conveying the *ideas* which excite, and on which much of their effect sometimes demands.’ [As a comment, could this account for the so called ‘poetic licence’ we see in some pictures? Now that the camera gives us such exact images, the role of painting the landscape has become more expressive.]



Figure 7. Lead statue of Jemima Grey, reading, in Wrest Park, probably by John Cheere (1709-1789).

All those who attended the Study Day were grateful to Jemima Hubberstey for bringing to life her namesake from

Wrest and for her contribution to the great landscape debate in a hugely enjoyable lecture.

Judy Rossiter, April 2023

After Jemima’s stimulating talk, the attendees were buzzing as they broke for an excellent buffet lunch, catered as usual by Diane Warboys. Following the break, the programme resumed with Dr Gin Warren, CGT Member of Council.

PLANTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Becoming a historian, Gin is now learning not researching. She’ll be back in garden history next academic year, with a dissertation on the Loudons, their 19C horticultural and agricultural publishing business, and its contribution to 19C social reform. She decided to showcase the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh’s appraisal of plants and climate change, drawn from her recent study of the RBGE’s short course. The course is offered by Propagate Learning, the distance-learning arm of RBGE, and can be accessed, free of charge, at: <https://propagatelearning.rbge.ac.uk/enrol/index.php?id=242> It takes about 4-5 hours to follow the course through but it can be done at any time and in as many sessions as may be convenient. Overall, Gin felt that the course had very good graphics and content and was an excellent introduction to the topic.

Gin opened by outlining the basics of climate and its dependence on latitude, local elevation and proximity to the sea. Such used to be the factors in any school geography course but the list now must include the level of atmospheric greenhouse gases (GHGs) which include carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄) and water vapour. Over longer timescales, climate experienced at a given location is affected by glacial/interglacial periods, which are driven by changes in the earth’s tilt and orbit, plate tectonics affecting the relative distributions of continent and oceans, and massive volcanic eruptions. As an example, the crop failures experienced throughout the northern hemisphere from 1783-85 were caused by the 1783 eruption of the Icelandic volcano, Laki, arguably contributing to the French Revolution in 1789.

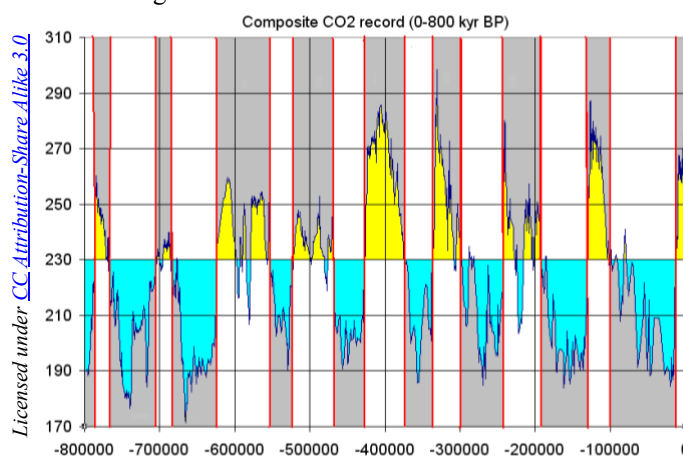


Figure 8. Concentrations of atmospheric CO₂ in ppm, estimated from ice cores, against time in years before present. 230 ppm marks the transitions between glacial (blue) and interglacial (yellow) periods. Graph by Tom Ruen.

The geological record shows a strong correlation (Fig. 8) between levels of CO₂ and interglacial (warming Earth) periods, with an atmospheric concentration of CO₂ at about 230 parts per million (ppm) marking the changeover from glacial to

interglacial conditions. Today we have a concentration of about 421 ppm, or about twice the level where the climate enters an interglacial period, but what is remarkable and concerning is that the rate of CO₂ being released into the atmosphere is higher than anything seen in the geological record. Consequently, the systems that absorb CO₂, typically the oceans and the biosphere, are struggling to cope. The extra heat trapped by the atmosphere is causing the ice-sheets to melt, sea levels to rise and oceans to warm.

The impacts of these changes are complex and non-uniform. For example, while the global average temperature is increasing, climate change may result in the 'switching off' of the Gulf Stream which could mean that the British Isles might actually experience harsher winters than at present. For now, what appears to be developing is a pattern of more extreme weather events with winter storms bringing associated flooding but hot dry summers. So what might be the impact of climate change on British Isles flora?

Gin reminded us that every plant species has an ecological range, and that these ranges are changing with the climate. *Meconopsis* (Himalayan poppies) are now found 300 m higher than they were in 1970. Non-native species (NNS), such as *Impatiens glandulifera* (Himalayan balsam), may win over native species and fill an ecological niche. NNS may fill a gap left by a declining native, and 'heal' the ecosystem's resilience: *Acer pseudoplatanus* (sycamore), which is tolerant of wind and coastal exposure, appears to be taking over from *Ulmus glabra* (wych elm) and *Fraxinus excelsior* (ash) as habitat for epiphytic lichens. Similarly, native species can become invasive in degraded habitats, such as *Pteridium aquilinum* (bracken) in cleared woodland. Hot, moist conditions favour plant pests and diseases. For example, Gin cited elm bark beetles (*Scolytus scolytus*) which like warmth and carry the Dutch elm disease (*Ophiostoma novo-ulmi*) that destroyed the Wimpole avenue. North and West Scotland is disease-free but threatened. Changes in seasonal timing (phenology) may mean that species within an ecosystem may not stay in synch, disturbing food chains. Again, the pace with which changes are occurring may mean that a species dies out through lack of food or habitat at a critical part of its life cycle before it can adapt.



Figure 9. A self-seeded primrose growing below a London Plane in Sidgwick Avenue, a happy result of the council's decision not to spray herbicides. Photo Antony Warren.

At this point, listeners were getting ready to join the lemmings off the nearest cliff (fortunately, a challenge to find in Cambridgeshire) but Gin reassured her audience that it was not yet too late and there were things we could do to mitigate climate change, so long as everyone contributes. For transport, we could: walk, cycle or use public transport; car-share; fly less or substitute electronic communication for physical travel. At home we could: repair instead of discarding; reuse or recycle; instal solar panels and insulate houses; wash on cool settings; turn down thermostats; turn off lights and gadgets when not in use; buy food with low air-miles and don't waste food. In the garden: use water butts with drip irrigation instead of hoses; promote the garden ecosystem with nectar-rich flowers, areas of long grass and dead wood, and plant suitable trees to capture CO₂. Furthermore, we ought to clean boots, tools and hands to avoid spreading pests or diseases; use peat-free compost; avoid plastic or re-use if unavoidable, and don't bring in NNS from overseas visits. Compost bins, mulching, growing our own food and adapting planting schemes to the garden conditions all seemed like good ideas. Finally, we could chivvy local authorities and governments to adopt measures that will benefit the climate and the environment (Fig. 9). Gin closed by reminding us that Covid-19 showed that governments and people can change their behaviours quickly and radically in response to a threat that affects everyone. The comparison of climate change with Covid-19 generated some strong feelings in a part of the audience, possibly heightened by the radically authoritarian response of governments to the pandemic before medical innovation came to the rescue. Climate change is arguably going to have a much greater and longer-term impact on everyone, including those not yet born, and successful mitigation will inevitably entail changes to lifestyles.

Gin Warren & Phil Christie.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND HISTORIC GARDENS: THE SITUATION IN THE UK

The final speaker for the Study Day was Dr Jan Woudstra. Jan is Reader in Landscape History and Theory at Sheffield University and has been an active researcher in the field of climate change and its impact on heritage landscapes. He promised his talk would provide a critical view of the situation in the UK, within a European context. Taking his cue from Gin's talk, Jan began by suggesting that the term 'climate crisis' is more appropriate for the current situation than 'climate change'. This set the tone for his rather depressing outlook despite some proffered glimmers of hope.

The causes and effects of global warming were outlined, including the weakening of the Gulf Stream and the diversion of the jet stream, which have caused unpredictable and wide variations in temperature and weather patterns, increasing vorticity and volatility. In particular, the melting of polar icecaps has resulted in rising sea levels and coastal land erosion. This was illustrated by very graphic maps produced by the UK government predicting devastating effects on the British Isles, which were particularly shocking, especially since apparently these maps had been quickly rescinded after publication, for fear of causing too much upset. As an aside, the maps have been replaced by an interactive map which allows the user to see what changes in the coastline follow a given rise in temperature.

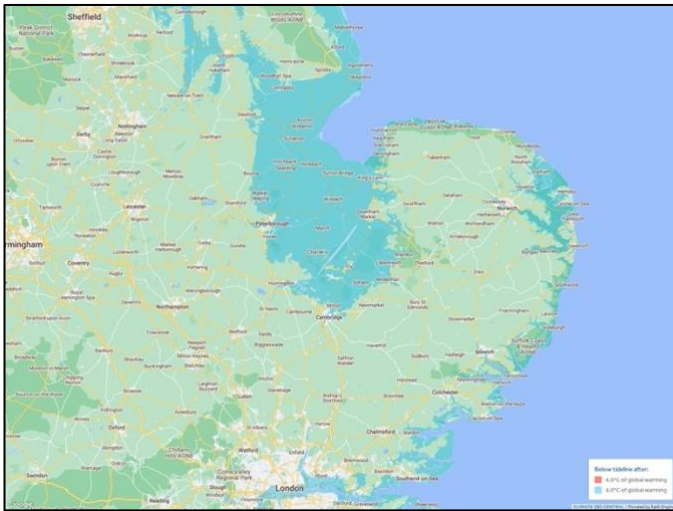


Figure 10. Predicted sea-level incursion into Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire following a 4°C rise in temperature.

Figure 10 shows the Wash expanding to Cambridge, Huntingdon and Peterborough after a 4°C rise in global average temperature. The current target is to limit global warming to 1.5°C. Even though this target is likely to be surpassed, the difference between 1.5°C and 4°C is minimal as far as the future Cambridgeshire coastline is concerned.

The impending disaster has encouraged a great deal of research and publications. The reports, *Climate change and the historic environment*, published 2005 by the Centre for Sustainable Heritage, University College London, with support from English Heritage and the UK Climate Impacts Programme, and *Gardening in the global greenhouse*, 2002 by Richard Bisgrove for the National Trust and RHS, relaunched as *Gardening in a changing climate* in 2017, were among those mentioned.

Jan listed the threats to trees which had occurred in recent years such as sudden oak death, ash die back, the plane tree disease, Massaria, caused by the fungus *Splanchnonema platani* since 2009, horse chestnut disease, pear rust fungus, and *Phytophthora* (water mould), suggesting that plants weakened by climate challenges were more susceptible to such diseases. He made the point that while the ‘popular narrative’ suggests that plants can be replaced by others more able to cope; the climate is, in fact, no longer stable or predictable so that this is not a reliable solution. It is therefore increasingly difficult to maintain historical authenticity in planting schemes, especially for trees. Limes are one of the most resilient, and this chimes with the National Trust’s selection of limes to replace the avenue at Wimpole.

Features such as the lawn were ‘a thing of the past’, no longer sustainable due to scarce and unreliable water supplies. Other features in a similar predicament included traditional bedding, ferneries, the herbaceous border, gravel walks affected by excessive run off, and brick and stonework damaged by successive extremes of wetting and drying. Chatsworth has introduced tarmac to replace gravel and Goddards in York has used York paving to avoid erosion.

Moving towards solutions, the prairie planting schemes advocated by those such as James Hitchmough at Sheffield and exemplified in the 2012 landscaping of the London Olympic

Park, seemed to offer more resilience and a longer season of interest by mixing drought-resistant varieties. There seemed to be some hope in global collaboration and cooperation between university departments. Jan mentioned his son who is studying environmental science on a multinational course at a Dutch university. This exemplified the increasing commitment of younger generations to finding solutions and preventing further losses. He pointed to innovative art installations in Leiden, which he felt would encourage debate and stimulate enthusiasm. At the same time more practical solutions had been demonstrated, also in the Netherlands, where long-term efforts to mitigate the impact of rising sea levels had been made, including raising dykes by a further 30 cm on top of the 120 cm already achieved. These were ‘glimmers of hope’ but sadly Jan’s conclusion emphasised that his working career had been spent battling these issues and trying to raise public awareness. Now it is time for the next generation to pick up the baton.

Sarah Hundleby, April 2023

POSTSCRIPT FROM SARAH

Coincidentally on the Study Day I received the Gardens Trust Newsletter, Issue 21, Spring 2023. This contains a feature article *The challenges of climate change* by Sarah Couch and David Lambert, reporting on a paper and panel discussion on the subject that took place last November at the annual Historic Landscape Assembly (pp18-19). It is worth reading in the context of the above talk: an equally passionate plea for us all to take notice of what they describe as ‘the climate and ecological emergency.’ However, their perspective is broader and no less disturbing, pointing to ‘the real possibility of extinction and social collapse’ stating that ‘whether we can prevent catastrophe or slow down catastrophic processes now in train depends on political will and that in turn depends on us. And designed landscapes and gardens can play a part in their mitigation, if we are willing to redefine ideas of significance and redefine priorities.’ Further discourse can be found in the article, with a link to the original discussion online.

After Jan concluded his talk, CGT Chairman Liz Whittle closed the Study Day by thanking all the speakers for their excellent contributions and the audience for their engagement and participation: the talks had given us much food for thought.

Everyone who was intrigued by Jemima’s talk on her namesake Jemima Grey and her literary companions may be interested to know that a short comedy play, called ‘The Woodcutter’, will be re-enacted at both Wimpole Hall (12-13 June 2023) and Wrest Park (14 June). The play was written by Elizabeth Countess of Hardwicke for the family to perform at Wimpole Hall over Christmas 1797. It tells the story of Hodge, a lazy, obstinate woodcutter, who is unexpectedly granted three wishes by Oberon, King of the Fairies. Granted such power, can Hodge make the right decision? The performance is part of the Knowledge Exchange Fellowship, which examines the shared literary culture at Wrest Park and Wimpole Hall, when both properties were owned by the Yorke family. All performances will be held at 10:30am and 2:30pm - no booking required, though standard entries will apply at both properties.

JUDY ROSSITER REMEMBERS HER SUMMER HOUSE

IN 1980 MY HUSBAND AND I bought Springfield, a lovely house with a big garden. So far so ordinary but to our delight we found we had also acquired a rustic summer house in the grounds (Fig. 1), albeit in a rather dilapidated condition. Springfield was built between 1840-45 on newly enclosed common land so there would have been no previous garden on the site. We therefore surmised the summer house must have been a fashionable acquisition at some later date.



Figure 1. Springfield summer house as on 25 April 2021.

A plaque (Fig. 2) nailed to the inside of the hut revealed it to have been made by 'Henry and Julius Caesar, Rustic Hut Makers to the Queen and Royal Family.' In her blog of 23 April 2021, The Folly Flâneuse¹ wrote about the rustic hut company founded by the Caesars in the 1880s in Knutsford and mentioned that the volunteers at the Knutsford Heritage Centre were trying to trace the location of any summer houses still extant in gardens. So, some 150 years after the construction of my summer house, I began a correspondence with the Knutsford volunteers.



Figure 2. Maker's plaque from inside the summer house

¹ <https://thefollyflaneuse.com/henry-julius-caesar-rustic-house-builders/>



Figure 3. A summer house from Caesars' catalogue. Image by kind permission of the Knutsford Heritage Centre.

The existence of the plaque seemed to suggest that our summer house was the genuine article and from the photos I had sent, David (the Knutsford volunteer I was corresponding with) identified an almost identical hut in one of the Caesars' old catalogues (Fig. 3). It was very interesting to see what it had looked like when new. Over the course of the forty-odd years it was in our ownership, we had made repairs but apart from the roof it was substantially original. We knew the roof had been thatched when new but previous owners had replaced this with roofing felt which added nothing to its charm. We asked a local thatcher to advise on the roof but he felt the structure wasn't sound enough to support the weight of thatch and so we compromised and put on a wooden shingle roof which did not look out of place.

The original 'china matting' lining the inside walls had mostly disintegrated and had been covered with linoleum, which must have been off-cuts as they matched that found in the bathroom when we moved into the house. The Victorian tile design was not entirely inappropriate but we replaced this with tongue and groove boarding which might well have resembled that used to line the more expensive version of our hut as shown in the sales catalogue.

Again, so far so good. The Rustic House was standing in our garden when the house was sold at the end of 2021. The new owners had a young family who were expecting to enjoy playing in it as much as our children had but then tragedy struck



Figure 4. Ruins of the summer house following gales in April 2022 that felled a nearby tree.

in April 2022 when fierce gales brought a tree crashing down on it. The rustic house was flattened (Fig. 4)!

I wrote to David at the Knutsford Heritage Centre with the sad news and told him that the new owners had no interest in rebuilding it. David asked if there was any possibility of restoring it for display in the town from where it had originated. They had a team of volunteers who would like to try. The owners were happy for the remains to be removed and donated to Cheshire. Little did the volunteers realise the challenge confronting them. Once the fallen tree was logged the full extent of the damage was revealed: it looked hopeless. Nevertheless, in the spirit of not being defeated by difficulties, the parts were collected and subsequently dried out nicely during the very hot summer of 2022 before being transported north.



Figure 5. A similar Caesar Rustic Hut, with stained glass windows, which sold for £7,200 at Sotheby's.

When David surveyed the parts as they were unloaded at the back of Knutsford Town Hall, he bravely said they were more intact than he had feared. So we are currently awaiting the outcome. Other restorations of the same type of hut have been made and one came up for sale at Sotheby's a few years ago (Fig. 5) which sold for over seven thousand pounds.

I am looking forward to taking my grandson to Knutsford in a year or two, hoping to show him the reassembled garden summer house that his father used to play in so many years ago.

Judy Rossiter, October 2022

SUMMER SOCIAL EVENT WITH PROF. BEVERLEY GLOVER

Keep the date! The CGT summer social event will be held on Friday 23 June 2023 in the Village Hall, Grove End, Hilton, Huntingdon PE28 9PF. This year we are delighted to welcome back CGT Patron, Prof. Beverley Glover, who will provide members and guests with a fascinating talk starting at 7:30pm in the Hall on *Why are Flowers Different Colours?* Bring a picnic to enjoy on the green from 6:00pm onwards, where there will opportunities to visit the turf maze and the CGT-supported Hilton Community Garden.

Entry to the event will be £12 for members and their guests prior to 5 June and £15 thereafter, with final bookings by 19 June, to include a glass of sparkling wine or soft drink. Proceeds from the event will help to fund the CGT Small Grants Scheme, of which Hilton Community Garden has been a beneficiary this year. We look forward to seeing you there.



THE HISTORY OF THE COTTAGE GARDEN – ANDREW SANKEY

Nearly 50 members came to the CGT Annual General Meeting, held at the Village Hall in Fen Drayton on 5 November 2022. Some were no doubt enthralled by the AGM itself, many appreciated the excellent lunch that accompanied it, and everyone enjoyed hearing the guest speaker, Andrew Sankey.

ANDREW BEGAN HIS ENGAGING TALK, entitled *The History of the Cottage Garden*, by describing the commonly held view of what makes a typical cottage garden. He suggested that Americans who haven't visited England probably have a mental image of a thatched cottage with diamond-quarried windows and a door framed by a climbing rose. A brick-edged path, bordered by honeysuckle, roses and magnolias leads to a squeaky gate. This romantic image has been ingrained in our imaginations by artists' impressions over the years but we were soon to learn what a biased view this was.

Helen Allingham (1848-1926) was one of the many painters to establish the romantic image of the cottage garden and, as her work was adopted by Cadburys to decorate their boxes of biscuits and chocolates, it rapidly became the established image, featuring flowers and kittens in front of a charming thatched cottage but a very far cry from the truth. Nevertheless it was perpetuated in *Country Life*, first published in the 1880s (Fig. 1).



Figure 1. 'The saucer of milk', watercolour by Helen Allingham.

No one can be quite sure when man first domesticated the area surrounding his/her habitation but written records go back as far as the Domesday Book which mention thousands of 'garths', always enclosed and containing six to eight raised beds, a foot high and three feet wide, as described by monks at the time. Is nothing new?



Figure 2. A modern depiction of a mediaeval garden at Castelnaud La Chappelle, France.

The peasant hovels were very simple constructions, with probably just a hide across the doorway; and no windows, which were later named after the openings left in the walls to allow the escape of smoke from the central fire pit, blown through by the wind, hence 'wind-holes'. A muck heap was an essential constituent, as was a pig, a few chickens and a cockerel. There was a limited range of vegetables available at the time and any flowers that grew were entirely incidental and self seeded.

Some of our commonplace sayings originate from this period, such as 'bringing home the bacon,' and buying 'a pig in a poke', a poke being the name for a hessian sack used to carry a piglet home from market to be fattened for the winter.

The Elizabethan period saw great changes in the cottage garden and these were now recorded in contemporary printed books. In 1587 William Harrison (1534-1593) opined in his *A Description Of England* how much nicer the modern gardens were and referred to the older versions as 'dung hills'. The introduction of new herbs from the Continent and marigolds, referred to as 'Golds', must certainly have brightened the scene, improving the taste of the food at the same time. In 1557 Thomas Tusser wrote a gardening manual entitled *A Hundreth Good Pointes of Husbandrie* which was widely distributed and for the second edition he was able to expand this to *Five Hundreth...*, so it must have been a galloping success. Elizabethan gardens grew in size, up to two acres, to accommodate all the new plants being collected, and began to incorporate fruit trees as well as some soft fruits such as gooseberries and alpine strawberries which preceded the larger varieties. Although potatoes were brought to the UK in 1586 it was more than a hundred years before they became widely grown. A long list of flowers arrived at this time, such as the African marigold in 1535, lavender 1550, laburnum 1560, and French marigold in 1572, to name but a few.

By the 17C, Huguenot weavers had introduced the first flowers grown solely for decorative purposes: auriculas, tulips, hyacinths, carnations, pinks etc.; all became specialist plants. New varieties of vegetables also made an appearance with an orange carrot adding an alternative to the 'black' and 'white' carrots already being grown. This was bred to celebrate the arrival of William of Orange. (The impact of William and Mary on British gardens will have to be told another time.)

It is quite possible that the fashion for topiary could have infiltrated into cottage gardens at this time as gardeners working in the grand gardens of the great estates bought home clippings (cuttings) to root in their own gardens. (Anecdotally, Vita Sackville-West always took a potato and a sponge with her on any garden visit, the potato for hardwood cuttings and the sponge for soft ones.)

The picture of rural housing and the cottage garden changes drastically in the 18C largely due to emergence of a market economy as opposed to the old subsistence systems. The Enclosure Acts of this period were very destructive to peasants who benefitted from the open fields and communal tilling, forcing them to become more dependant of their own small plots, while the ensuing agricultural productivity led to redundancies amongst peasant labourers. In 1775 Nathaniel Kent (1737–1810) wrote *Hints to Gentlemen of Landed Property* in which he criticised the appalling housing of the rural poor and which led some landowners to build model villages, happily coinciding with their own wish to remove unsightly hamlets so as to conform with the new vision of a gentleman's estate.

Our speaker claimed that the late 18C to early 19C to be the zenith of the cottage garden. Ornamental trees such as Lilac and Bay were added to the growing list of fruit trees available but it was the middle of the 19C before the eponymous Victoria plum arrived. By this time the cottage gardens began to resemble the romantic image that springs to mind, with a variety of climbers available to decorate arches and bowers as in the illustrations. Many of the herbs and flowers typically associated with cottage gardens were introduced: in 1862 *Alchemilla vulgaris* arrived from Turkey, also the source of many bulbs. Potatoes began to be widely consumed during the years of agricultural depression; there is always a darker side.

William Cobbett's *Rural Rides* (1822) described conditions he encountered during his exploration through the countryside in England, Scotland and Ireland, and he noted the different characteristics of cottage gardens. In the Cotswolds it was typical for the cottage to be close to the road with just a small patch of flower garden in the front and with honeysuckle over the door, traditionally thought to keep out witches. The larger back garden would have been devoted to vegetables, protected from slugs by ash paths.

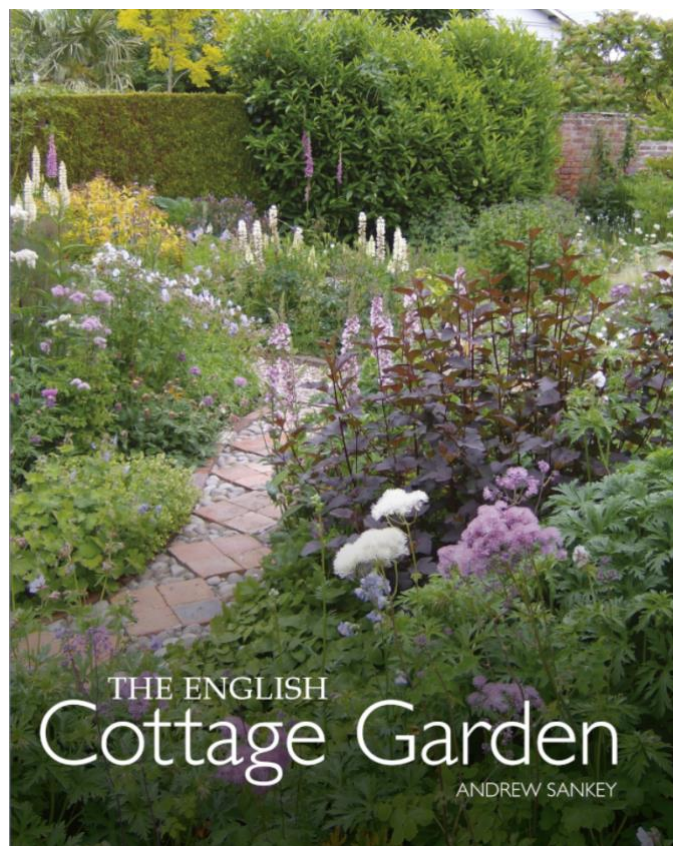
In other areas it was commonplace to have a bigger front garden divided by a straight path to the front door and with vegetables grown on either side. In Scotland there would be a pair of Rowan trees either side of the gate, acting as a witch defence. In England Holly was the favourite woody species for this job and sprigs were often worn as button holes and would be fingered if danger was imminent and hence the origin of the saying 'touch wood' for luck.

By the late 19C the writings of John Clare (1793-1864) became a useful source of information, many cottage gardens becoming entirely decorative as middle-class owners were able to buy their meat and vegetables, instead of producing their own. Space originally devoted to them could now become lawns giving scope to the recreational value of gardens and at this time designers such as William Morris (1834-1896) and Philip Webb (1831-1915) began designing gardens for the better off. However there was still demand for workers to have space to grow their own food and land was 'alloted' for this purpose. The challenge of feeding the population during the Second World War resulted in the 'Dig for Victory' campaign and once again fruit and vegetables were prioritised in gardens everywhere.

The rebuilding of Britain after the war saw rapid changes, with council houses being built with gardens big enough to support a pig, fruit and vegetables, many now being built over as housing densities increase. There are wonderful examples of cottage gardens still to be seen in rural Britain but the one design theme to be retained from cottage gardens and now common place, in modern gardens as well as old ones, is the technique of random, dense planting. What a contrast to the styles where bare earth was neatly hoed around specimen plants or the beds of highly prized roses!

Andrew's AGM lecture proved to be a canter through the history of cottage gardening; it was interspersed with many amusing rural anecdotes, and the very informative lecture was much appreciated.

Judy Rossiter, November 2023



Andrew Sankey's book is available from good bookshops and online retailers.

GLASS: AN ENABLING FORCE FOR INNOVATION IN VICTORIAN HORTICULTURE?

In 2007, CGT member of council Ann Colbert researched the rôle of glass in driving horticultural innovation during the Victorian period. Ann has kindly enabled her research to be edited into the following article.

THE NEW TECHNOLOGIES and innovations which powered the move in Britain's economy from being largely agricultural to being predominantly industrial between 1837 and 1900 also impacted the horticultural world.

This essay sets out such evidence and particularly considers how glass played an innovative part by linking with other developments of the period to create both the large glasshouses in parks and country estates and the smaller glass items which were sought after by the Victorians. The essay discusses why these ideas took off to contribute to the huge changes of the time, which have influenced garden history and left their impact in today's gardens with surviving Victorian glass buildings, albeit through restoration.

Human taste and interest, in addition to technologies, appear to have driven the building of glasshouses and conservatories. In particular, the Victorian plant hunters were sent off by nurseries, such as that of George Loddiges, and by large estate owners, such as the 6th Duke of Devonshire at Chatsworth, to bring back new and often exotic species which required demanding cultivation conditions, such as more heat and light throughout the year, if they were to survive and be used for seed and propagation.

It is interesting to look back at one of the first innovations using glass in which plant hunters transported plants to Britain. Dr Nathaniel Bagshaw Ward (1791-1868) designed the Wardian Case in 1830, which proved to be a 'major turning point in the successful transportation of non-native plants to Britain, as the sealed case provided ideal conditions in which living plant material could be shipped from its natural habitat to the glasshouses of Britain' (Jennings 2005; p 72).



Figure 1. A Wardian Case at the Garden History Museum. Image from Jennings 2005.

Before the 1830's, seeds being transported by sea were wrapped in moist cloth while growing specimens had to be kept either below decks in inadequate lighting, or on

deck where they were exposed to salt spray. The environment of the Wardian case with water evaporating during the day and condensing at night meant that living plants could be brought back with minimal loss rate. George Loddiges, who was related by marriage to Ward, said that whereas, prior to the use of the

Wardian Case, his nursery had been lucky to receive one intact specimen out of twenty shipped, to lose only one out of twenty was now a misfortune. Ward published his discovery (Ward 1842) and the number of exotic plants successfully introduced into Britain skyrocketed with the use of glass in this way, creating a new mass retail market (Elliott 1986).

Moving from miniature glasshouses to the full-scale, earlier technical innovations which allowed easier construction methods with glass now came into their own and allowed for further development. The wrought-iron glazing bar was invented in 1816 by John Claudius Loudon (1783-1843). Regarded as his most significant invention, the glazing bars could be made in curvilinear sections, as they were flexible enough to be bent to shape without losing strength. Suddenly such non-Cartesian glass structures and conservatories were made possible (Loudon 1817) and another market was to develop over the coming years. Sadly, Loudon sold the idea to W. & D. Bailey of Holborn who patented the concept and reaped the rewards. Loudon, despite his prolific publications, was never far from bankruptcy during his lifetime.

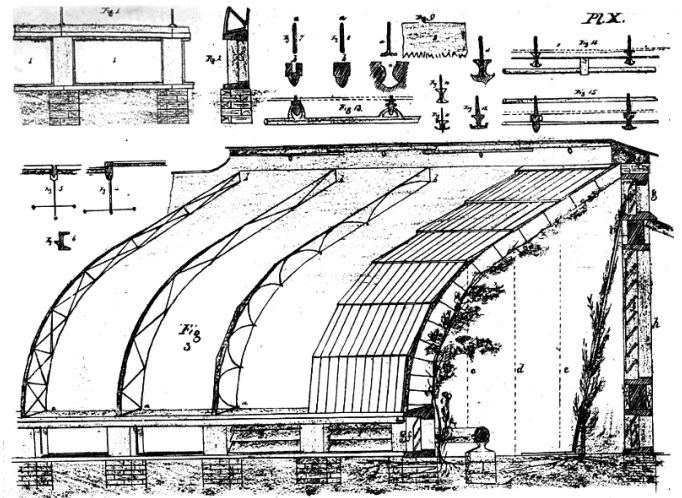


Figure 2. A curvilinear greenhouse from Loudon 1817.

During the 19C both cast and wrought iron were used for horticultural purposes until the 1880's when the Bessemer steel-making process, originally driven by the need for large-volume steel production for artillery, competed against both in the mass market. Nonetheless, cast iron lent itself well to prefabrication. As an indicator of demand, by the 1870's Macfarlane's of Glasgow issued a catalogue of castings ranging from girders to decorative finials with illustrations of the way in which complete glasshouses could be assembled from numbered parts.

In 1840 when the Great Stove, or Conservatory, at Chatsworth was ready to be glazed, glass was still taxed and expensive, so only the wealthy could afford greenhouses and therefore the fruit grown in them. Glass itself was difficult to manufacture in large sheets, being hand-made by spinning a

large blob of molten glass into a disc by centrifugal force to form crown glass. However, Sir Joseph Paxton (1803-1865) was not prepared to use the small pieces of crown glass that were then available. At Chance Brothers, a firm of Birmingham glass manufacturers, the cylinder process to produce sheet glass in quantity had recently been introduced from the continent. The glass is blown into a large cylindrical iron mould, the ends are removed and a cut is made down the side of the cylinder. The cut cylinder is then placed in an oven where the cylinder unrolls into a flat glass sheet. Chance Brothers soon became the largest British manufacturer of window and plate glass. The use of sheet glass for horticultural purposes was an experiment but Paxton's was a substantial order and, if successful, would provide the best possible advertisement for Chance Brothers' new process. They were able to manufacture the sheets to Paxton's specifications: at 48 inches long they were the largest panes they had ever made and, as these fitted Paxton's sash bars exactly, the overlaps which he loathed were unnecessary. As a result, with an eye to the longer-term market benefits, Chance Brothers supplied the glass at cost (Colquhoun 2003).

Abolition of the glass tax in 1845 and the brick tax in 1850 meant that, suddenly, construction of large glasshouses became significantly less expensive. It also meant that smaller glasshouses were affordable by many more people and opened up wider markets, for example, by enabling people to keep exotic plants or to allow bedding plants to be grown on and planted out when frosts had passed.

The Victorians loved bedding plants: petunias, calceolarias, salvias and verbenas from South and Central America which previously could only be grown in stove houses, could now be grown, not only by parks and estates but also by suburban villa gardeners. Ribbon planting and pincushion beds moved on into the 1870's when Shirley Hibberd (1871) and others writing in magazines such as *The Gardener's Magazine*, considered that brightly coloured bedding schemes were out of place. The use of plants with coloured leaves, such as the geranium 'Mrs Pollock', and carpet bedding using succulents became popular, the seeds being set in the cool greenhouse early in the year.

A further fashion which appealed to the Victorian love of the unusual and curious was to include an exotic plant such as cannas, coleus or banana as a central feature in a planting scheme, all of which could be reared in cool greenhouses but required significant labour and maintenance when bedded out. Battersea Park was an example of such planting by the Park Superintendent, John Gibson (previously a gardener at Chatsworth and sent by the Duke to seek out orchids in India).

In 1884, an article in Robert Thompson's book *The Gardener's Assistant* declared: *The introduction of large-foliaged or stately-habited plants into our open-air flower-gardens during the summer months enables us to obtain pleasing and varied glimpses of luxuriant tropical vegetation, otherwise unattainable in our northern climate... In order to obtain the best effects in colour an abundance of fresh green foliage is required and this greenery is agreeably augmented by stately tropical plants.* (Jennings 2005, p56).

Plants that were rare in the 1840's were easily obtained in the 1880's, orchids being a particular example. Around 1834 Joseph Paxton built three glasshouses to house the 6th Duke of Chatsworth's collection of orchids gathered from around the world. Growing orchids, even in a suburban home, became

possible, especially as some varieties, such as those from the genus *Masdevallia* (Fig. 3), did not require stove heat. These orchids could be grown in a cool house and were therefore suitable for amateurs with specialised orchid houses.



Figure 3. *Masdevallia* orchids: from *Amateur Gardening* 10 Jan. 1885, p436; reprinted in Wilkinson 2005, p190.

Insectivorous plants, such as pitcher plants, were grown with orchids because they required the same conditions and gave interest when orchids were not in flower. They also appealed to the Victorian liking for the curious. Typically, Hibberd in his book, *Amateur's Greenhouse and Conservatory*, used them as a comment on life: *Ah! The way to ruin is smooth and sometimes pleasant, and to go down is easier than to go up; so perhaps the flies find it in the pitchers as we do also in the conduct of life. What then is the wonder that flies, finding the pitchers pen, and smelling the moisture, should be tempted to their destruction? You will never see them return... the moral is too obvious* (Hibberd 1873).



Figure 4. Pitcher plants: from Thompson's *Gardener's Assistant*, vol. 3, p478; reprinted in Wilkinson 2005, p192.

Appealing to the Victorian householder and his or her love of novelties were glass-enhanced products which could be used for the table and might travel with a family between country and town homes. The glass cucumber straightener (Fig. 5a) and the grape bottle (Fig. 5b) kept produce fresh and at an acceptable Victorian standard for the table.

The popularity of ferns during the Victorian period also provided an opportunity to be innovative with glass with the



Figure 5a (left). A glass cucumber straightener.
Figure 5b (right). A grape bottle.

fern case, similar to the Wardian case, (Fig. 6a) and the cloche, (Fig. 6b), providing the ideal environment for plants and showing creativity by the gardener (Jennings 2005, p24).

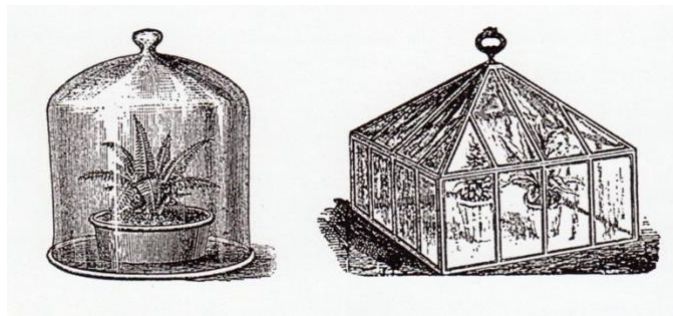


Figure 6a (left). A fern case. Figure 6b (right). A cloche.
Images from Jennings 2005.

But although these smaller items illustrate the use of glass in bringing exotic planting to the ordinary home, they were completely overshadowed by the scale of the large glasshouses such as the Great Conservatory and the Conservative Wall at Chatsworth, the Lily House at Paxton's house at Barbrook, the Crystal Palace built to house the Great Exhibition and the Palm and Temperate Houses at Kew.

In 1836 Paxton began the Great Conservatory, also known as the Great Stove, at Chatsworth which was planted in 1840. At 84 m long by 37.5 m wide, and with a roof rising to 20.4 m, it was the largest conservatory in the world and the largest glass building in England prior to Crystal Palace. The hollow internal supporting columns were made of cast iron and the glass laid in a ridge-and-furrow system, as advocated by Loudon, so that the sunlight would strike it at right angles to give optimum light and heat. Figure 7 shows the Great Conservatory under construction, illustrating the ridge-and-furrow system where glass was laid at angles to the main frames, which formed the 'ridges'. Rain and condensation came off the glass and into the 'furrows', made of Paxton gutters, and then down the hollow iron supporting columns. The Paxton gutter is a wooden glazing

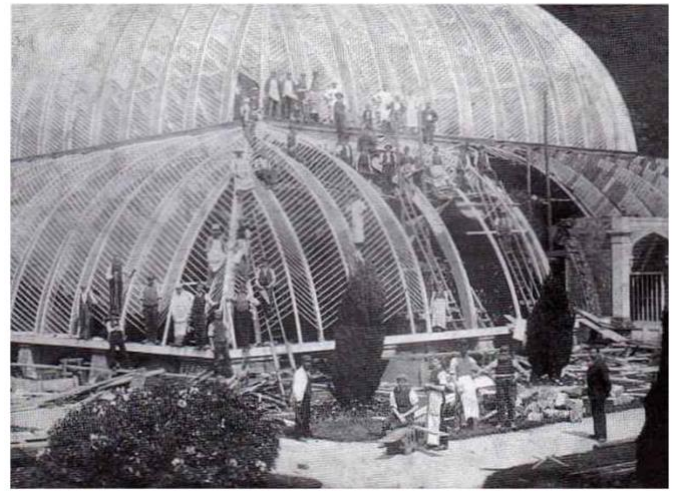


Figure 7. Construction under way on the Great Conservatory at Chatsworth. Paxton developed Loudon's ridge-and-furrow approach as shown by the zigzag glazing bars.

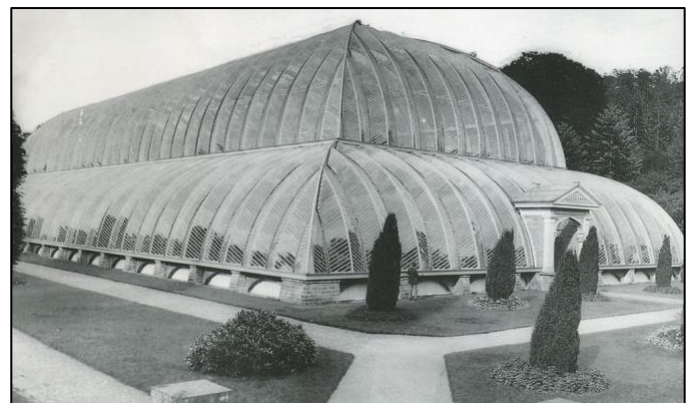


Figure 8. Paxton's completed Great Conservatory.

bar with a rainwater channel on the outside and a groove on the inside to catch the condensation. Paxton made a steam-powered machine to cut and groove the 40 miles of sash bars used to construct the Great Conservatory.

The main axis was wide enough for two carriages to pass, and a doorway in the rocks led to a viewing gallery where visitors could be among the tops of the exotic and rare species. Queen Victoria was taken on an evening carriage drive through the garden and into the Great Conservatory, which was lit by 14,000 lamps, after which the Queen wrote that 'Mr Paxton is quite a genius.' Charles Darwin in 1845 wrote, 'more wonderfully like tropical nature, than I could have conceived possible.' The tropical climate was provided by the Conservatory's heating system. There were eight underground boilers burning coal supplied by an underground railway. The boilers fed a seven-mile network of hot-water pipes. In winter, 300 tons of coal were used to fuel the boilers, with smoke and fumes escaping through flues laid along the ground to a chimney in a nearby wood, out of sight of the garden and its visitors. During and after the First World War, coal was in short supply and many plants died. As a result, the Great Conservatory was demolished in 1920, leaving only the supporting walls as a memorial to this extraordinary building.

At his home, Barbrook, a Chatsworth Estate house which he designed, Paxton designed a lily house using a tank with circulating water, which prompted the *Victoria amazonica* water lily to flower for the first time in this country. The lily outgrew its tank twice and Paxton constructed another 10 m in

diameter and housed it in a new lily house (Fig. 9), 18.6 m long by 15 m wide. As with the Conservatory it used Loudon's ridge and furrow glazing system which meant that the large panes of glass did not overlap. A frame of iron beams and columns, inspired by the ribs of the leaves of the *Victoria amazonica*, carried the ridge and furrow. Rainwater and condensation drained down the hollow columns.

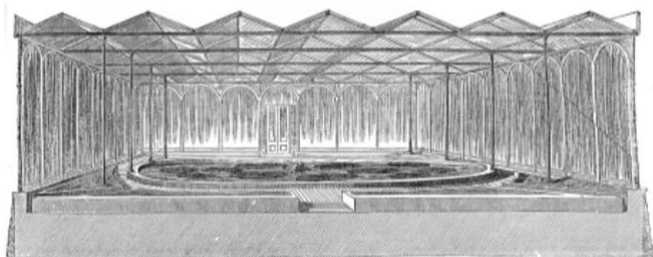


Figure 9. Paxton's design for the water lily house, incorporating ridge-and-furrow roof with hollow columns for

This innovative construction was used again in 1851 for the Crystal Palace (Fig. 10). This construction also used standardised parts reducing the chances of error and the need for specialist skill in assembly. No scaffolding was needed and at one point 3 columns and 2 girders were being erected every 16 minutes with the construction taking just over 6 months. The standard parts approach must also have been of benefit when moving the structure to Sydenham in 1853 when it was rebuilt on an even larger scale.



Figure 10. Postcard of the Crystal Palace c1930. Courtesy Miss P. Jackson who, with her brother, watched its destruction by fire on her third birthday, 30 Nov. 1936.

The glass Palm House at Kew (Fig. 11) was built between 1844-48 by Richard Turner to Decimus Burton's designs and is an example of another large-scale glass creation for housing a particular species. It creates conditions like those of tropical rainforest. The site was deliberately chosen to make the building the focal point of Nesfield's Pagoda Vista and Burton's Broad Walk. It was created specifically for the exotic palms being collected and introduced to Europe from, for example, the Americas. The technology was based on shipbuilding and the design is essentially an upturned hull. The use of light but strong wrought-iron 'ship's beams' made the great open span possible, giving room for the unhindered growth of tall specimen palms.

The Waterlily House at Kew (Fig. 12) was also built with ironwork by Richard Turner, in 1852. It was then the widest single span glasshouse in the world designed, as at Chatsworth, to house the huge attraction of the age, the *Victoria amazonica*. In 1991, after a varied history, it has now been converted back



Figure 11. The Palm House at Kew.



Figure 12. The Waterlily House at Kew.



Figure 13. Kew Gardens Temperate House from the Pagoda. Image © David Hawgood / [CC BY-SA 2.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/).

to its original use and is the hottest and most humid environment at Kew. In 1895 the Government allocated £10,000 to build the Temperate House (Fig. 13), as the orangery and other houses had become overcrowded, such was the intensity of plant collecting. It was completed in 1898 to the design, again, of Decimus Burton and at 4,880 m²; it is the

largest public glasshouse at Kew, twice the size of the Palm House.

Other designers advanced glass innovation. Thomas Rivers (1798-1877), the Hertfordshire nurseryman who introduced the 'Early Rivers' plum along with other fruits and roses, developed easy-build orchard-houses (Rivers 1850) and Charles Ewing's glass walls (Fig. 14) responded to the demand for new building designs to keep plants under glass (Elliott 1986). Glass panes now survived all weathers more reliably, with linseed oil putty giving flexibility over the previous non-pliable lead-based variety.



Figure 14. Ewing's glass wall, designed for the garden of the Royal Horticultural Society at Chiswick. Image from *The Illustrated London News*, 28 August 1852.

Along with glass came advances in other technologies which meant that heating and drainage systems could be updated to meet the needs of these enormous glasshouses, without using underground coal supplies and stokers.

CONCLUSIONS

The above examples show that technical innovation in the manufacture and use of glass, together with more modern heating systems, advanced rapidly during the Victorian period driven by demand from developing mass markets and supported by the creativity of Sir Joseph Paxton and others. Demand grew for spacious conservatories, greenhouses and orangeries in large gardens, with small versions appearing in suburban gardens or, if space was at a premium, intricate glass cases designed as window boxes or items such as fern cases. The Victorian passion for the new and curious and for collecting, drove the speed with which the changes happened.

As never before, plants, trees and shrubs which had previously not survived in what Shirley Hibberd called England's 'sub-arctic clime' could be planted by amateurs and the 'sub-tropical garden' was within reach.

The skill in growing new plants quickly expanded. Shirley Hibberd, looking back in 1883, said that the previous 50 years had 'seen horticulture developed from an empirical mystery to an art founded on the truths of nature and achievements of science.'

Elliott (1986) also points to experimentation by early Victorian gardeners in many areas but, in terms of the use of glass, refers to experiments on hardiness by leading climbing plants through successively cooler sections of the glasshouse, trying greenhouse plants outdoors, and changing the greenhouse construction to catch the sun with curvilinear roofs and ridge-and-furrow construction.

In conclusion, many other buildings using glass are referred to in writings of the period and in modern accounts, but throughout the name of Sir Joseph Paxton is found in influencing design or construction. He was able to combine his knowledge of horticulture, botany and engineering with his ability to work alongside the wealthy Duke of Devonshire both in England and in Europe to make things happen: a Victorian entrepreneur. But arguably it was the mass production of sheet glass which enabled innovation and led the way forward. I suggest that garden history has come to appreciate the links between the design and technology of glass construction and new plant introductions, led the innovation and creativity of Joseph Paxton, his peers and the wealthy Victorian estate owners with the passion for plants.

Ann Colbert, April 2023

References

- Colquhoun, K. 2003. *A thing in disguise: the visionary life of Joseph Paxton*, Harper, 307pp, ISBN: 978-0007143535.
- Elliott, B. 1986. *Victorian Gardens*, Batsford Ltd, 248pp, ISBN: 978-0713447637.
- Hibberd, J.S. 1871. *The Amateur's Flower Garden*, Groombridge & Sons, 306pp.
- Hibberd, J.S. 1873. *The Amateur's Greenhouse and Conservatory*, Groombridge & Sons, 272pp.
- Jennings, A. 2005. *Victorian Gardens*, English Heritage, 90pp, ISBN: 978-1850749370.
- Loudon, J.C. 1817. *Remarks on the Construction of Hot-Houses*, J. Taylor, 92pp, London.
- Loudon, J.C. 1818. *A Comparative View of the Common and Curvilinear Mode of Roofing Hot-Houses*, J. Taylor, 92pp, London.
- Rivers, T. 1850. *The Orchard House; or the Cultivation of Fruit Trees in Pots under Glass*. Longman.
- Thompson, R. 1884. *The Gardener's Assistant*, Blackie & Son.
- Ward, N.B. 1842. *On the Growth of Plants in Closely Glazed Cases*, John Van Voorst, 95pp, London.
- Wilkinson A. 2006. *The Victorian Gardener*, Sutton Publishing Ltd., 236pp, ISBN: 0-7509-4043-3.

WORK AND RETRAIN AS A GARDENER SCHEME (WRAGS)

Karen de Rosa, together with Janice Webster, is one of two regional managers for the charity Working for Gardeners Association, supervising the WRAGS scheme in Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Suffolk. In this note Karen explains what WFGA does and introduces readers to Ellie Cooper, a real WRAG. Those with a sizeable garden may be interested in the scheme.

A PPLICATIONS FOR THE WRAGS trainee scheme, where would-be gardeners learn practical horticultural skills in a carefully selected garden, have surged due to people looking for a career change. A WRAG (Work and Retrain as a Gardener) trainee works for 12-14 hours a week for a year under the instruction of the garden owner, head gardener and/or a gardens team. The administration fee for an applicant to join is £600 (paid by the trainee on confirmation of the appointment) and when in place, trainees are paid the National Living Wage by the garden owner. Graduates of the scheme have gone on to run their own garden business, work in plant nurseries, in private gardens and on estates.

The scheme is administered by the WFGA (Working for Gardeners Association: www.wfga.org.uk), a charity formed in 1899 whose aim is 'Advancing Horticulture'. Its original intention was to provide education and employment for women working on the land, and from it sprang the Women's Land Army. Now open equally to men and women, alongside the WRAGS training scheme, it also offers workshops, skill days and garden visits. Its national network of Regional Managers monitor and visit trainees, and use their local knowledge to source new gardens.

The one downside of the increase in potential trainees is that their number currently outstrips that of gardens available. The WFGA is always on the look-out for garden owners, who have established a garden they are proud of and can pass on their skill and knowhow to a new generation of gardeners, either themselves or through their garden staff. Training is built around the charity's curriculum, and Regional Managers are on hand to advise. If you think that you can give a trainee a year's part-time paid experience, please do get in touch at admin@wfga.org.uk; telephone 01285 841468.

ELLIE COOPER

I'm a WRAGS 'graduate', now with a permanent gardening position thanks to my WRAGS placement at Downing College, Cambridge. Having worked for decades in project management in a totally different industry, my route to WRAGS came about after taking a career break to study for a Master's degree in Sustainability. When the covid pandemic began, in addition to completing my study, I took the 'opportunity' to volunteer at food banks and crucially at CoFarm (www.cofarm.co), a charitable organisation dedicated to sustainable food production, where I realised that horticulture was the next step I was seeking.

WRAGS helps people like me to gain applied expertise through repetition across seasons, immediate access to guidance



WRAGS alumna Ellie Cooper at Downing College.

from experienced gardeners and the opportunity to produce best practice notes through monthly reports. Part-time working also enables adjustment to physical work and to sample working in horticulture for 12 months before committing to career change.

During my placement at Downing, in return for 2 days a week of paid employment, I worked within a team of experienced gardeners carrying out seasonal tasks in a variety of situations ranging from window boxes to woodlands, lawns to Library borders, boat house grounds to bog gardens and ponds to potting sheds (and more!) across the 20-acre site.

I learnt what to do, when and with which tools, both through on-the-job learning and regular 'toolbox talks' for the team. This included best practices for propagation, planting out, pruning as well as maintenance of plants, borders, gardens and grounds. Through Downing's future-facing approach, I gained experience in sustainable practices such as composting on site, climate-tolerant planting and how to use battery-operated tools from leaf blowers, mowers and hedge trimmers to tractors.

I am very grateful to Jack Sharp, Head Gardener for the opportunity to train and now work at this amazing horticultural site. You'd have to ask Jack about the benefits of WRAGS for Downing but as Downing has not only recruited me (their first WRAGS placement) as a permanent gardener and has taken on a second WRAGS trainee, it looks like WRAGS works for Downing as well!

Ellie Cooper, March 2023



A VISIT TO OUSDEN HOUSE GARDENS, SUFFOLK

APRIL IS AN UNCERTAIN month for weather at the best of times but this cold, damp spring did not augur well for an early season visit to Ousden House Gardens in Suffolk, not far from the Kirtling Towers home of CGT President The Lord Fairhaven. But fortune favours the brave and the 26 members who came on 3rd of April were rewarded with delightful sunshine on the best day of the year.

Ousden House has been the home of Alastair and Lavinia Robinson for almost 30 years, during which time they have created a quite magnificent private garden. The present house of Georgian brick was the one-time coach house and stables for Ousden Hall, which was demolished in 1954. The rest of the old estate buildings, comprising a clock tower, flint dovecote and a Norman church were saved from demolition in 1974 thanks to the local council.

Fortunately, Mr & Mrs Robinson bought the estate some 20 years later and proceeded to restore the interiors and create a new garden, engaging Arabella Lennox Boyd to design the main borders and rose garden in 1995. Since then, the garden has grown to the west and south of the house, extending to some 12 acres as contiguous land has become available. It now includes additional herbaceous borders, a vegetable garden, a stupendous double crinkle-crinkle yew hedge (which our guide, Alastair Robinson, said took him and their only gardener Michael Heslop, 17 days to cut at a time), a moat garden, woodland and lake, all set in a lovely landscape of mixed elevations and rolling countryside.

On the east side of the house, the old stable yard has become a sheltered formal garden with box squares and balls, together with standard roses and a view to the dovecote. A particular highlight of the tour was a life-sized sculpture of a mare and foal by Harriet Mead, fashioned so we were told, from the metal parts of an Alfa Romeo car. The sculptures stood by the beech wood lake in dappled sunshine coming through the trees.

Our sincere thanks go to Mr & Mrs Robinson for hosting us on the tour and especially for arranging a simply wonderful tea with delicious cakes served inside their lovely home. The images below serve to remind us of the visit and how fortunate we were with the weather.



Looking back to the west front of Ousden House, with the Boyd borders in the foreground and her rose garden around the arbour in the mid-ground. Photo Diana Yakely.



The arbour and rose garden, designed by Arabella Lennox Boyd.



The haha at the west end of the main lawn is also a conduit for water, ideal for plants that like wet feet.



The elegant bridge crossing the haha provides access to rolling fields, with the beech wood beyond.



Daffodils edge a green way through the beech wood beside the lake.



Our group admires the equestrian sculpture by Harriet Mead, fashioned from an Alfa Romeo car: the ultimate revenge for the horseless carriage?



The moat garden with a view of St Peter's church on the right and the clock tower in the distance.

AUDIO TOUR GUIDE SYSTEM

For outdoor visits especially, CGT has invested in a light-weight audio tour guide system, which should enable everyone to hear the guide without having to huddle around closely. As we had 26 visitors and large grounds, this was the ideal opportunity to test-drive the new system. Mr Robinson very kindly agreed to use the transmitter, and a number of members, including your Newsletter editor, wore a receiver with



Steps lead to the beautifully clipped double crinkle-crankle hedge and the clock tower behind. Photo Janet Probyn.



The 18C flint dovecote with red brick dressings, one of the remaining estate buildings. The carved heraldic lion is much earlier and may have come from the old hall.

connecting ear-piece. Everyone reported good quality sound even at distances of 50 m from the speaker, so we shall continue to offer these sets on future visits. The sound is delivered through a standard jack-plug, so if you prefer to use your own earphones then these should be compatible. Those using behind-the-ear hearing aids, as I do, should find that the standard ear-piece will work well. If there is demand from members with full, in-ear aids, we will explore T-setting compatibility, so if you use such aids and you feel audio support would improve your enjoyment of garden visits, please send an email to admin@cambridgeshiregardenstrust.org.uk.

Phil Christie, April 2023

THE SOCIETY OF DILETTANTI: BACCHANALIAN ANTICS AND BUILDING THE ANTIQUE – DR LAURA MAYER

Following our usual seasonal refreshments, the 2022 CGT Christmas Lecture was delivered by Dr Laura Mayer in the warm and festive surroundings of Hemingford Abbots Village Hall on 8 December 2022.

DOCTOR LAURA MAYER, presented us with a real tour du force at the Christmas lecture entitled *The Society of the Dilettanti, Bacchanalian Antics and the building of the Antique*, the talk being preceded with festive drinks to ensure we were all in the right frame of mind! The Society is believed to have been established in 1732 or 1734 by a group of aristocrats who had completed a Grand Tour which, at the time, was an educational rite of passage for the heirs of great estates. There was a huge range of clubs for gentlemen at this time and although the word ‘dilettante’ is now a pejorative term, it was derived from the Italian ‘to delight’ and this was the meaning intended for the new Society.

Most Grand Tours culminated in Rome, to which the commonest route was overland via Paris and into Italy across the Alps; an alternative was by sea from the south of France to Livorno. Travelling was popularised, at least for those who could afford it, by peace in Europe but bandits still prohibited travelling further east and only a few intrepid souls got as far as Greece, so the taste for Greek art and architecture was second hand, Grecian taste in Roman spirit. The huge archeological digs at Pompeii and Herculaneum were underway and the enthusiasm of Sir William Hamilton (1730-1803) for the Greek pottery being unearthed at these sites and acquired from dealers or collectors, published in his 1767 volume of engravings, led to the designs being copied by Wedgewood, and hence their wider popularity.

Hamilton’s membership of the Society in 1777 would have overlapped with that of the notorious rake Sir Francis Dashwood (1708-1781), who was a founding member of the dining club in 1732, and no doubt Dashwood had much to do with the reputation the society acquired. In 1743 Horace Walpole condemned its affectations and described it as a ‘club for which the nominal qualification is having been in Italy, and the real one, being drunk. The two chiefs are Lord Middlesex and Sir Francis Dashwood, who were seldom sober the whole time they were in Italy.’ Once again our view of history is skewed by one man’s opinion.

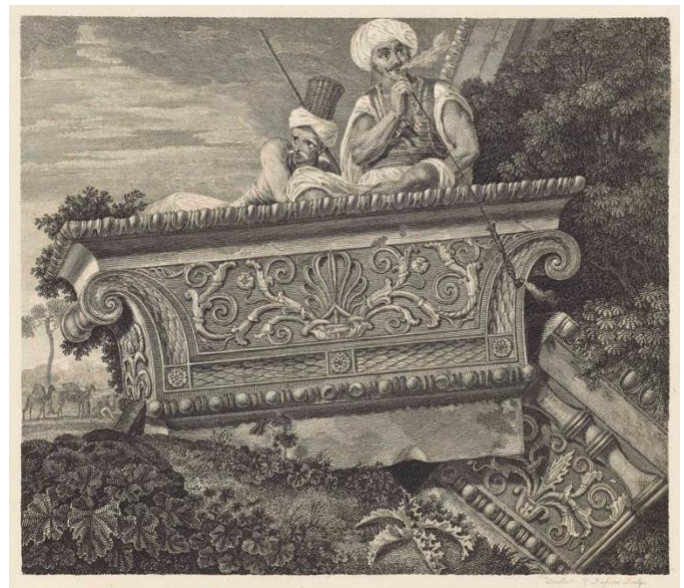
In fact the Society was not entirely frivolous, sponsoring research in Italy by young men such as James ‘Athenian’ Stuart (1713-1788), the architect Nicholas Revett (1720-1804) and the topographical artist William Pars (1742-1782). In the 1750s, the Society sponsored James Stuart and Nicholas Revett’s Athenian expedition. This resulted in the influential publication, *Antiquities of Athens Measured and Delineated*, which was published in three volumes between 1762 and 1794. The work was a landmark in European classicism. Stuart became famous, received the epithet ‘Athenian’ and elected a member of the Royal Society. Revett, however, remained relatively obscure, and he ended his collaboration with Stuart, selling him his rights to the work. The book has more than 300 engravings, with plans, sections and details of architectural members. Its meticulous measurements replaced the generic,

often imaginary representation of ancient monuments. The Society was also responsible for the publication in 1769 of findings from travels in 1764-6 by Revett, Pars and Richard Chandler (1737-1810), a classical scholar and inscription expert. They carried out the first excavations of the temple of Zeus at Nemea. The findings of the trip were documented in *Ionian Antiquities* (1797) which was to become a major influence on neoclassicism in Britain. Thomas Anson (c.1695-1773) of Shugborough Hall was one of the first to own a copy, along with many other topical books in his extensive library, all annotated in his own hand so they weren’t just for show. He invited James ‘Athenian’ Stuart to design garden buildings for his park as did Lord Lyttelton at Hagley Hall.

It should not be forgotten that important as the Society proved to be in setting the fashion for the classical embellishments in our great landscape parks, it was Johann Winckelmann (1717-1768), a pioneering Hellenistic who first articulated the differences between Greek, Greco-Roman and Roman art. He has been referred to as the ‘prophet and founding hero of modern archaeology’ and his *History of Ancient Art* (1764) was one of the first books written in German to become a classic of European literature. He was a homosexual and his enthusiasm for the male form stimulated his budding admiration for Greek and Roman sculpture. (One can’t help thinking that he found it an ideal milieu in which to explore his interests.)

Dr Mayer’s lecture was brilliantly illustrated and we were shown a marvellous collection of pictures of original classical features and copies of them from around the world. Her talk was greatly enjoyed by all who were there.

Judy Rossiter, November 2022



An engraving from 'Ionian Antiquities', published by the Dilettanti Society, London, 1769.

A SUMMARY OF THE CGT MEMBER SURVEY

AS MANY MEMBERS WILL KNOW, an online survey of the membership was conducted by Jane Sills during February 2023, as one of the action items following the strategy meeting held by the CGT Council of Management in January. The goal was to find out what people liked, or didn't like, about membership of the Trust and what the Trust does. Jane has provided the following summary.

A total of 64 members replied, with several of these being 'households', representing just under half of all members. The survey asked for opinions about the Trust's activities. Just over half the respondents had been members of the Trust for more than 10 years, broadly reflecting the membership profile. Perhaps not surprisingly, members who participated in talks and visits were more likely to respond than those less involved: nonetheless we would love to hear from anyone with a view.

EVENTS

In-person talks: of those who responded, 78% had attended an in-person lecture, higher than the proportion of all members. When asked to rate the in-person lectures on a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 was extremely poor and 10 extremely good, the average rating was very high with a score of 9.5. The main reasons cited for not attending live lectures were: lack of time or clashes with other commitments (19 respondents); location (5); subject matter (4); driving at night or to new places (3); health or age (2); cost (1). Comments included:

- *Always pleasant social occasions as well as informative lectures.*
- *I enjoyed the Alison Moller series.*

Zoom lectures: 63% had watched a Zoom lecture, again higher than the proportion of all members. Zoom lectures rated slightly lower with an average of 8.5 out of 10. Again, the main reason for not watching Zoom lectures was a lack of time or clashing engagements but several respondents (11) did not like Zoom or found the technology tricky. Two respondents just said they forgot even when they had booked. Some respondents thought a mix of in-person and Zoom lectures was the best as it meant not having to drive on winter evenings while at other times one could enjoy a more social occasion. Comments;

- *For a straightforward lecture Zoom is the best option. No transport, room booking and flexibility for audience to stay or leave as they wish.*
- *Zoom is great during the winter but live talks bring people together.*
- *Zoom is OK, if necessary, but it is not sociable, very little atmosphere or shared enjoyment.*

Study Day: 60% of respondents had attended a Study Day in the past 4 or 5 years. Satisfaction was again very high with an average rating of 8.9. As before, the main reason for not going was conflicting events or lack of time. Far fewer people mentioned distance or problems with driving. Some respondents commented that they liked the format with four lectures and the chance to get to grips with a theme, but one person thought this required too much stamina and another that

the lectures were a bit intellectual. Respondent comments:

- *Very good value compared with those of similar groups and are very sociable occasions.*
- *Sometimes clashes. I like Hemingford Abbots as a venue, lovely lunch, chance to meet others, usually very good range of speakers.*
- *I love getting to grips with a theme rather than a single lecture.*
- *Lectures are normally interesting and well presented. Hemingford Abbots Village Hall is a very good venue, lunch always very acceptable.*
- *The venue is important for a Study Day. Hemingford is better than Eddington.*

Garden visits: 68% had been on a garden visit in the past 4 or 5 years. Again, satisfaction was high, with an average rating of 8.7. Lack of time or other commitments was the main reason people did not go on garden visits (13) with a further 4 specifically mentioning that they were at work. A total of 9 respondents said visits were often too far away, with 4 mentioning that they had no-one to go with or would like to share a lift. More visits to local gardens in Cambridgeshire was also mentioned. One person thought the guides could be too long-winded and another that it could be hard to hear what the guide was saying. [As an aside, CGT has now purchased an audio guide system, especially for garden visits.] Respondents commented:

- *It depends on the garden, usually very good. Over the years enjoyed some superb, very good, and good visits. An informative owner / gardener can make it special. Garden visits are one of the key points of CGT membership: seeing and learning about gardens at first hand, and access to otherwise private gardens, are one of the main reasons people join.*
- *We are new members, looking forward to future visits.*
- *Even in inclement weather they are informative and enjoyable. CGT is very good at choosing speakers and venues and gardens. A great way to learn more about our local gardens.*
- *Some are quite a way away. It would be helpful if in some instances one could car share - and contribute to petrol costs etc.*
- *My favourite feature of CGT. I have gone to fewer events in recent years mainly due to after-effect of lockdown and disruption of habits and age - nearly 80.*
- *I love garden visits even better than study days or lectures.*
- *I do wish more were in Cambridgeshire. I would like to get to know my home patch, I appreciate long standing members would find it boring to visit local gardens several times.*

Social events: just under two in three respondents had attended a social event with an average satisfaction rating of 8.4. The level of interest in social events was modest, with one in three respondents saying they were very interested in this type of event with a further third being quite interested.

VENUES

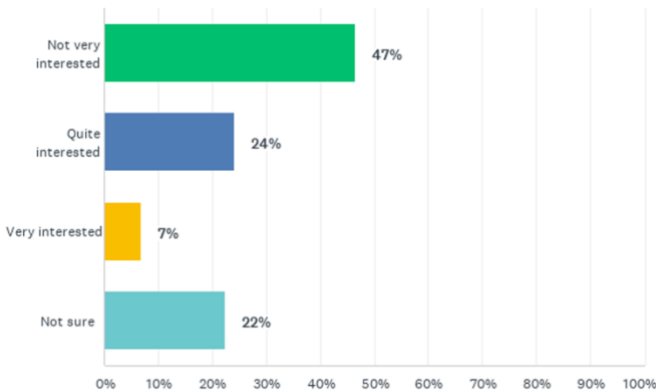
The survey asked respondents to rate out of 10 the various venues used by the Trust for previous events.

Fen Drayton	8.8
Hemingford Abbots	8.0
Storey's Field Centre, Eddington	6.9
Cambridge venues	7.4

Just over half of respondents (55%) said they would be willing to pay extra for a central Cambridge or college venue. Access obviously depends on where the member lives as parking and access into Cambridge can be difficult. Hemingford Abbots was thought to be a good venue. Some members liked Storey's Field Centre but others did not like the ambience and layout for lunch and, for people with mobility issues, the car park is at a distance.

RESEARCH GROUP INTEREST

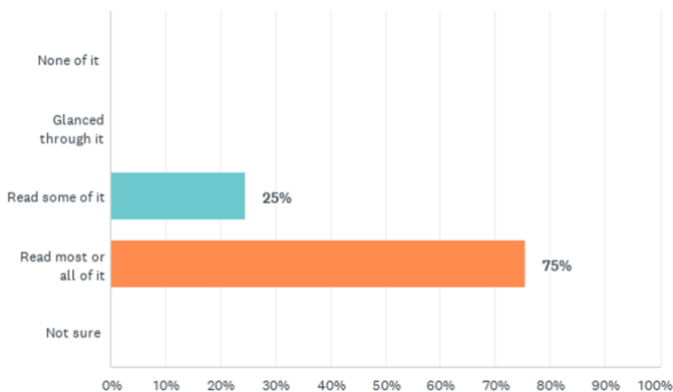
Rather a small number of respondents (7%) said they were very interested in participating in a research group with a further 24% saying they were quite interested.



To what extent are you interested in taking part in research?

COMMUNICATIONS

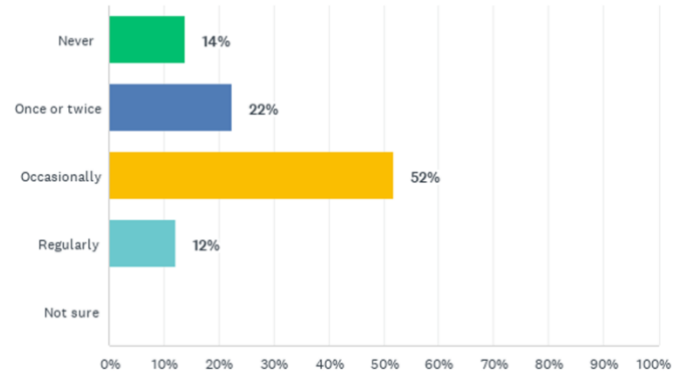
Newsletter: 75% said they read most, or all, of the newsletter. Satisfaction was very high with an average rating of 9.6.



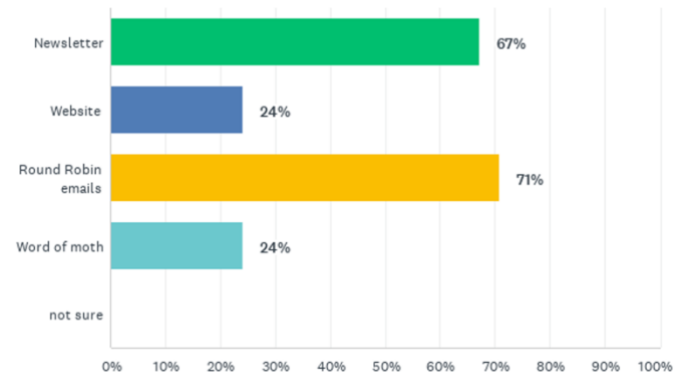
To what extent do you read the Newsletter?

Website: 52% look at the website occasionally with 22% looking once or twice and 14% never. Given that the respondents were by and large the more active, the website could perhaps be promoted more.

Keeping informed: the most common way in which members found out about events was from the round-robin emails (71%) and the newsletter (67%), with 24% saying the website and 24% word of mouth.



How often do you look at the CGT website?

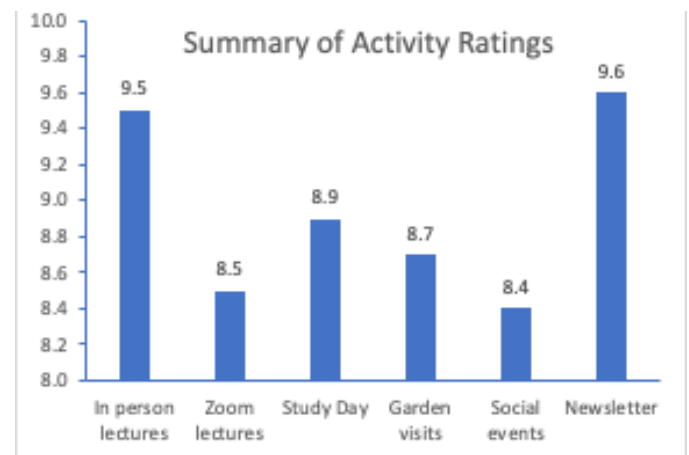


How do you find out about CGT events (tick all that apply)?

SUMMARY

A total of 64 members responded to the on-line survey. Respondents were more likely to be active members. Respondents were generally satisfied with the activities on offer. The newsletters and in-person lectures were rated very highly with slightly lower ratings for Zoom lectures and social events. In-person lectures were very popular. A mixture with Zoom lectures in the winter would satisfy many members.

Garden visits were seen as a key part of CGT membership. Some respondents, especially recent members, would value more local venues but recognised that longer-term members might have visited these before. Some would appreciate car sharing. This does happen already, but new members might find making arrangements to be difficult. Social events might also be daunting for new members or members on their own.



The newsletter is appreciated, with most respondents reading most or all of it. Circular emails and the newsletter informed most members about events and activities.

Jane Sills, March 2023

PROGRAMME OF VISITS AND EVENTS 2023

We invite members to evaluate prevailing Public Health covid advice and to consider whether participation in an event is appropriate for them. We will update the website regularly and notify members as needed. If members have locations they'd like to suggest for visits, please get in touch via the admin email address below.

JUNE 2023	8 Thurs	From 10:30am	Visit to Glebe House, Southill, Biggleswade SG18 9LL. The Tom Stuart-Smith garden has large herbaceous borders, old walled garden, enclosed rose garden with thatched summer house, a sunken garden, a shrub border area and a woodland area. Water feature with 8 standard wisterias. Meet for coffee and home-made biscuits at 10:30am with garden tour to follow. Members £10, guests £12; please book by 31 May .
JUNE 2023	23 Fri	From 6:00pm	Summer Social in the Village Hall, Grove End, Hilton PE28 9PF. CGT Patron, Prof. Beverley Glover will give a fascinating talk at 7:30pm on <i>Why are Flowers Different Colours?</i> Bring a picnic to enjoy with your friends on the green from 6:00pm, see the turf maze and visit the CGT-supported Hilton community garden (below). Members & guests £12 before 5 June, £15 thereafter , to include a glass of summer sparkle or soft drink.
JULY 2023	13 Thurs	From 2:00pm	Guided tour of Churchill College gardens, led by John Moore, Head of Grounds and Gardens at Churchill. John will show us courts, a parterre, wildflower areas, orchards, an orchid house, a garden named after alumna Xiaotian Fu, mixed beds and a large herbaceous border, pointing out en route the 20C sculptures and the collection of plants named after Churchill. Meet at the Porter's Lodge at 2:00pm. Full details to follow.
OCTOBER 2023	14 Sat	2:00pm for 2:30pm	Live talk: by the Cambs. Plant Heritage at Madingley Hall. Anne Tweddle will present <i>Engleheart's Daffodils</i> . Anne is the National Collection holder of Engleheart Daffodils and member of the Suffolk Group committee. Entry £3, payable at the door.

(For up-to-date details please go to <https://cambridgeshiregardenstrust.org.uk>)

Our preferred method of booking is by BACS transfer to Cambs. Gardens Trust (sort code 20-29-68, account number 30347639) using your name as reference; please confirm payment by email to admin@cambridgeshiregardenstrust.org.uk. Cheques, **payable to Cambridgeshire Gardens Trust**, to Jane Sills, The Willows, Ramsey Road, Ramsey Forty Foot PE26 2XN.

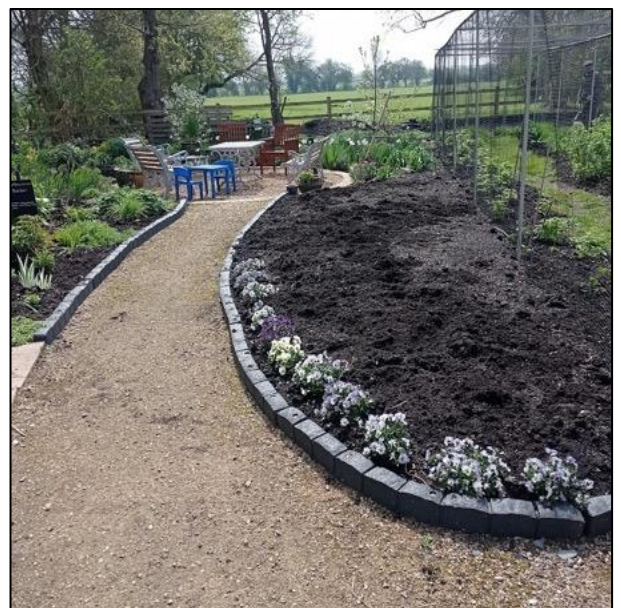
To avoid disappointment (some venues limit numbers), please book at least 2 weeks before the visit, where possible.

Should you need to cancel a booking, please advise admin@cambridgeshiregardenstrust.org.uk as early as possible.

HILTON COMMUNITY GARDEN

CGT was extremely happy to approve an award of £500 to the Hilton Community Garden. The garden was created from part of a farmer's field in 2021 to provide Hilton residents and visitors with an oasis of calm, with vegetables, fruit, flowers, shrubs and a wild-flower area. The edging for the paths was originally donated to the garden by a villager who had used it in her garden for a number of years. It served its purpose for 18 months but was proving to be difficult to keep in place, was deteriorating badly and the different sections were not connected, resulting in trip hazards around the garden.

The new edging (see figure on right), funded by the CGT grant, is made from recycled rubber and won't fade, rot or crack. There will be an opportunity to visit the garden during the summer social event on Friday 23 June.



*New edging at Hilton Community Garden
Photo courtesy of Heather Chambers*

Cambridgeshire Gardens Trust

The Willows, Ramsey Road, Ramsey Forty Foot, Cambs. PE26 2XN. Tel: 01487 813054

Registered Charity no. 1064795. Website <https://cambridgeshiregardenstrust.org.uk/>