

LEICESTERSHIRE
AND RUTLAND
GARDENS
TRUST



Newsletter

No 20 Spring 2008

Chairman's Notes

Firstly, I would like to apologise to our members that there was no Autumn Newsletter. This was due to a combination of circumstances, resulting in a delay in its production. So, we hope that this 'jumbo' edition will bring everybody up to date with all our activities since last spring.



Celebrating the first 10 years of the Trust at the Kilworth House Hotel

2007 marked the tenth anniversary of the LRGT and I would like to reflect on our achievements over the last ten years. From our earliest days we have been actively involved in arranging conferences on aspects of our local landscape heritage. The first was in 1999, on Burley-on-the-Hill, where we traced the history of the site from before the current house was built, its construction for the Duke of Buckingham and its landscaping in the 1690's, the later work by Humphry Repton and the relationship of Burley to the wider Hunting Landscape. The theme of hunting featured in the papers presented at the AGT Annual General Conference which the LRGT hosted in 2002. More recently the trust has gone further afield

with the successful study day held at Rufford in Nottinghamshire, where the history of the site was traced from a Cistercian Abbey to its present day use as a public country park.

Over the years our annual programme has been built up, the backbone of which has always been the spring and autumn lectures, and a social gathering in January. This has been complemented by a mixture of outings either by coach to more distant sites or by car to more local gardens. We have walked around local villages to view their relationship to the wider landscape and to look at landscaping and gardening within the village. In recent years, the programme has been expanded to include a short break away to look at gardens elsewhere in the country. The introduction of a Friends' Evening in November has given members the opportunity to share their experiences of different gardens they have visited or to raise issues of concern such as the loss of front gardens to car parking. Our programme now covers virtually every month of the year.

In addition to the lectures and outings, we have actively promoted research into the heritage of parks and gardens in Leicestershire & Rutland. Early on, it was decided to concentrate on public parks, as these have not been widely researched previously. The research that has been carried out has been used to mount displays around Leicestershire in public libraries, the County Records Office and local history and heritage events. As part of our research we have built up an extensive collection of postcards of public and private parks and gardens. These are an invaluable resource for showing features and planting schemes which no longer exist and how public spaces were used in the past. Our research will form the basis of our first submissions to the Parks and Gardens UK database which was launched in October last year.

The last year for the Trust has had its ups and downs. The programme of visits was disrupted by last spring's bad weather resulting in the cancellation of the visit to Bramham Park. I am pleased to say that this has been rearranged and we will be going there on Sunday May 18th. The planned long weekend to London to see the London Parks and Squares weekend was cancelled as we could not sign up enough people to make it viable. However, a small party went down by train for the day and had an interesting time looking at public squares in the Bloomsbury and Regents Park area. A trip to Paris – our first venture abroad – will take place in June, and has been fully subscribed.

As well as celebrating the Trust's anniversary with tea in the stunning conservatory at the Kilworth House Hotel we have reviewed our current activities and have been looking at the way forward. A key objective is to increase the membership of the trust; the LRGT has always been one of the smaller county trusts with membership numbers around the 80+ mark. We felt that an increase in members would be in line with our principal aim of increasing understanding and enjoyment of landscape heritage. To help achieve this we are reviewing our publicity and have produced the new membership leaflet that you have all seen. An increase in membership numbers will raise our income levels, so that we will be able to afford nationally renowned speakers and make more cost-effective use of coach transport when arranging day trips. We would also like to develop initiatives such as an education programme with schools but currently do not have the resources (or volunteers) to do this. To date I am pleased to say that the membership has gone up from around 82 members this time last year to 108. Don't forget that we are offering a bottle of champagne to every member who introduces 5 new members over the coming year!

After having remained unchanged for ten years, we have reluctantly agreed that an increase in the subscription was needed, as a result of the increase in running costs. The new

subscriptions are as follows: £13 for single members, £20 for joint members, £8 for students, £25 for Associations and £50 for Corporate members. For existing members the new fees will not apply until their membership is renewed in the autumn. We regret the need to take this decision, but we feel that it is in the best interests of the Trust.

As ever I am grateful for the work and support of the committee, and to all those members who have assisted in the success of the Trust. I look forward to seeing you all at this year's programme of events.

Stephen Barker
Chairman

Events 2007

The unusual weather patterns of 2007 were reflected in our events programme. The Spring was unseasonably very warm and sunny which could not have been better for our April trip to the gardens of **Renishaw Hall**, home to the Sitwell family, in Derbyshire.



Renishaw Hall

Here you have an Italianate garden situated in mature parkland in a post-industrial landscape. The formal garden was designed by Sir George Sitwell a century ago. He had spent a large part of his life in Italy and this was the style he created at Renishaw. On gently sloping land away from the south façade of the house there is a series of gentle terraces linked by steps centred on the axis of the house. In the centre of the final terrace is a circular pond with fountain. There are yew hedges, topiary, statuary and urns, some of which came from Italy with Sir George. Within this formal structure there is an abundance of herbaceous plants, bulbs, shrubs and roses and from this setting there are vistas into the surrounding parkland some of which is densely planted woodland, where the bluebells were out for our visit and they were stunning. Although a little incongruous, I was very taken by an avenue of camellias planted by the present Lady Sitwell in memory of her mother. There was also a very effective small temple, which came not from Italy but from a local garden centre. There are also a series of lovely walks through the woods. There is much to see at Renishaw including the Georgian stable block where there were plants for sale and where we had a good lunch and tea. There is also a small gallery where amongst other things there is a permanent

exhibition about the lives of Edith, Osbert and Sir Sacheverall Sitwell. This garden must be one of the finest in the north of England, well worth a visit but give it plenty of time.

When we visited Steve and Diane Horsfield's **Hoby** garden in June, it was a beautifully clear evening in early summer but very cold. However, this did not prevent us enjoying our walk around this lovely garden. They moved to Glebe House in 1994 and have been developing the garden since then. It was originally the kitchen garden to the rectory next door and they have created a garden of different styles and rooms including an Italianate pool garden, a Japanese bed, herbaceous borders, water features and a small vegetable and soft fruit area. It all works very well. The most intriguing feature of the garden is the original wall of the enclosed rectory kitchen garden which was constructed to be heated to protect frost sensitive plants. This creates the backdrop for an abundant herbaceous border. From the garden there are views of rolling Leicestershire countryside.



After enjoying a glass of wine the churchwarden showed us around the 13th century church. As a result of our visit Steve and Diane were able to give a contribution to the church heating fund. Many thanks to our hosts for a very enjoyable and sociable evening.

This is a local garden well worth visiting and it will be open with other Hoby gardens on the weekend of 14th/15th June. Lunch is available in the village on these days and cream teas will be served at Diane and Steve's house, so do go.

July was very wet and so we considered that it was in everyone's best interest to cancel our trip to **Bramham Park** in Yorkshire. It would have been very wet under foot, Bramham has no alternative indoor facilities and had it rained it would have been miserable. Traffic may also have been a problem because of flooding in other parts of Yorkshire. I have just heard that Andy Wimble has arranged a new date, Sunday 18th May and details are enclosed.

It was still raining for our **village walk at Hungarton** in August. Sue and Tom Scutt, who live there, had kindly offered to host this visit, show us round the village and provide tea. Whilst it was raining we were shown around the church and their 18th century farmhouse which was most generous of them and very interesting. When the rain stopped we were able to enjoy a short walk round the village with our hosts. It gives the impression of being a very cohesive community, but as in many other villages around the country the local shop, post office and school have gone. There is an impressive play area and tennis court for the locals.

Our many thanks to Sue and Tom, for their hospitality and to those who made cakes for tea. Some of us then went on to Helen Martin's house in the village to buy plants.

I had hoped to take advantage of the University of Leicester's Department of Art, Film and the Country House for our **Autumn Lecture** and the previous year had arranged for a member of their staff to give a lecture. Unfortunately he was unavailable at the last moment and we were left with a bit of a problem. Swapping the dates around in November we were able to get Brian Taylor, a WEA lecturer on the Grand Tour to come and talk about *The Influence of the Grand Tour on English Gardens*. The lecture was all encompassing and he showed some splendid slides and it left me wondering whether there is such a thing as an English garden?

The **Friend's Evening** was therefore in October and those who contributed need to be doubly thanked because they did so at very short notice. Eva Penn Smith talked about plants to attract butterflies to the garden, Steve Horsfield on his visit to Apethorpe House and Peter Rawson showed a series of his photographs recording the changing year. All were, in their different ways, received with great interest by the audience.

Events 2008

The **Winter Lunch** this year was held at the Black Boy in Hungarton, just big enough to accommodate 36 Friends. From where I was sitting the noise level was such that everyone seemed to be enjoying themselves. We also had the pleasure of welcoming 4 new Friends to the meal. Over coffee Irene introduced the splendid new publicity leaflets, designed by the publicity team who deserve our congratulations for their efforts. This launched the *Friend Get Friend* Initiative and details of the Free Guest Offer to Burton Latimer in February. We had hoped to have a walk after lunch, followed by a cup of tea with Sue and Tom Scutt, but were unable to take advantage of their generosity because once again it was pouring with rain. As our numbers increase we can expect more people for the Winter Lunch and so I am going to have to look for a larger venue for next year. Your ideas will be welcome.

In February 2008 we made our first ever visit to a garden in winter. This was to Nicholas and Gillian Loake's garden in **Burton Latimer**, which had been highly recommended to us. I did hope that the weather would not prove too much of a problem, but as it happened it was a lovely clear, sunny day which was just right for a visit to this essentially winter and spring garden.



Nicholas and Gillian Loake have built up their snowdrop collection at Beech House in Burton Latimer over 16 years. In the half acre, north facing garden of the 1770s house, there are some 200 varieties of snowdrop, as well as box hedges, herbs, variegated holly standards, sarcocolla and *Ligustrum japonicum*. The main purpose of our visit was the snowdrops but as one would normally expect to see drifts, what we saw were clumps of all the many different varieties. This meant we were able to appreciate their different characteristics. There were big ones, little ones, double ones, single ones, twisty ones... absolutely fascinating. We could not have been made more welcome by the owners who greeted us with tea and home made cake. After looking round the garden Nicholas Loake took us round the local church, which is Norman in origin. With many interesting features including 13th century wall paintings, early 17th century wall paintings representing the 12 tribes of Israel, an Elizabethan poor-box and a beautiful 15th century rood screen.

We had one of our largest turnouts to date, 47 adults and 2 children. It was nice to see the faces of new Friends and guests. This was an excellent way to start off this year's visits. This event was so successful that I am in the process of arranging a visit to 2 winter gardens, Cambridge Botanic Garden and Anglesey Abbey by coach next February. Beech House in winter and the church are both well worth the visit.

Although I've been doing this for 10 years I still enjoy arranging the programme and have already made a start on events for 2009. I have plans to include days away in Wiltshire, a Spring lecture on the Indian influence on gardens, followed by a visit to Sezincote, another village walk etc. It occurs to me that perhaps it would be more interesting for individual Friends to write up the visits in future and as ever I am always interested in your ideas for visits.

Elizabeth Bacon

**Joint Lecture with the Friends of the Botanic Garden
Thursday 15th May, 8.00pm**

Ken Edwards Lecture Theatre 1 at the University of Leicester

English Landscape Garden Design re-interpreted by Tsarist Russia

Botanic Garden Lecture by Professor Alexi Leporc

The creation of the English Landscape Garden is rightly considered to be one of this country's greatest artistic achievements. What is perhaps not so well known is the impact that these ideas had in Europe and in particular Russia.

The influence of west European garden design in Russia can be traced back to Peter I who, in his Grand Embassy of 1697-98, visited Holland and England. But it is in the reign of Catherine the Great that the concept of the English Landscape Garden was introduced to Russia.

Unlike Peter, Catherine never travelled abroad to see the gardens of England first hand, but she studied closely contemporary publications and prints which she acquired in large numbers. The ideas that she took from her studies were to be employed in creating new gardens and landscapes at the Imperial palaces. From the mid Eighteenth Century many members of the Russian Nobility went on their own Grand Tours which included visiting

England and its principal parks and gardens. This stimulated the creation of landscape parks and gardens on their estates on their return to Russia. Both Catherine and her nobles employed English and Scottish gardeners, architects and craftsmen to work on their houses and estates. The interest in English landscapes extended to the Frog Dinner Service produced for Catherine by Josiah Wedgwood. This is decorated with views of English Parks and Gardens taken from contemporary engravings.



A plate from the Frog Dinner Service

In his lecture Professor Leporc, a long-time Anglophile, will examine the impact that the concept of the English Landscape had on Russian landscapes and how this concept was developed in a Russian context. He will go on to show how the landscaped park and garden evolved in Russia in the nineteenth century and to compare and contrast this to how the originals evolved in England.

The lecture will provide a fascinating insight into the exchange of ideas between different cultures and how the same ideas evolve in different settings. It will also provide an opportunity for us to re-evaluate part of our own heritage from a different point of view. The lecture will be illustrated with an interesting selection of photographs and paintings of Russian landscapes that will be unfamiliar to an English audience.

Further reading:

Russian Parks and Gardens. Peter Hayden. Francis Lincoln Ltd. London. 2005.

The Picturesque Garden in Europe. John Dixon Hunt. Thames & Hudson. London. 2003. Paperback 2004.

British Art Treasures from the Imperial Collections in the Hermitage. Edited by Brian Allen and Larissa Dukelskaya. Yale University Press. New Haven & London. 1996.

Rufford Study Day

After 18 months in the planning, and a few sleepless nights for the organiser, the Rufford Study Day finally took place on 15th May.

This event came about as the result of a visit by the Research and Recording Group to Rufford Abbey Country Park in Nottinghamshire. During our guided tour of the estate, we learnt something of the park's multi-layered history and also that there was wealth of archive material relating to the former gardens. This resource is largely under-utilised and most visitors to the Park are unaware of the layers of history beneath their feet.

We were very excited with what we had discovered and felt that a Study Day offered the ideal opportunity to explore all this in more depth. We worked closely with Rufford Abbey Country Park staff to develop this event, which was open to all Gardens Trusts' members, local historical societies and any other interested parties. We were delighted to attract nearly 50 delegates.

The day fell naturally into 3 parts which summarized the 3 major periods of the long and fascinating history of Rufford. It had begun as a Cistercian Abbey in the 12th century, had been passed on to the Earl of Shrewsbury at the dissolution of the monasteries and had enjoyed a magnificent heyday during the Victorian and Edwardian periods when the house, the gardens and the estate were all extended and developed. Three lectures addressed these periods and, in the mid afternoon, delegates were split into several groups for a guided walk around the grounds.

Our first speaker was Dr. Glyn Coppack of English Heritage, a recognized authority on monasticism in Britain. He covered the Cistercian period and described Rufford's situation as a daughter-house of Rievaulx Abbey in Yorkshire.

He explained that the gardens have left very little clear evidence of what was created by the monks, but it is known, from other sources such as Rievaulx and Cistercian Abbeys in France, that monastic gardens were utilitarian rather than ornamental. The emphasis was on vegetables, fruit trees and medicinal herbs for the Infirmary. There would have been stew ponds for the fish they ate. While the Abbot had a garden for himself, there was no physical evidence to help us find this. Daily activities centred round the cloister which would have been planted with trees.

Our next speaker, Pete Smith, also from English Heritage, outlined to us the evolution of the gardens during the formal and landscape periods. There was evidence of a deer park where the early Stuart monarchs had hunted. But it was in the 1680's, when the owner, the Earl of Halifax, had embarked on a major period of house building and garden development.

There were a number of formal landscape plans drawn up during this period, not all of which were implemented. However, the garden acquired parterres, canals, fine yews and a Wilderness. There was also a Broad Walk laid out in a unique triple form. Later on, in the landscape period, the lake and corn mill were created and also, in 1728, the Gentlemen's Bath House.

After lunch, our third and final speaker was local historian, Philip Jones, who covered the Victorian and Edwardian periods, which were the heyday of the gardens. The Bath House was converted to an Orangery and various 'themed' gardens were developed – a Japanese Garden, a Roman Garden and a Rose Garden, among others. The kitchen gardens covered 1.6 hectares and supplied vast quantities of fruit, vegetables and cut flowers for the house. King Edward VII visited regularly with a large entourage and greatly admired the gardens.



Delegates were then taken round the park, where our knowledgeable guides were able to help us to relate the information we had been given to the visible traces still remaining on the ground.

The day concluded with a cream tea in the Savile Restaurant.

My thanks to Irene Jones, Jackie Alcott, Rowan Roenisch and Eva Penn-Smith, from whose summaries of this event a full conference paper was produced. If you would like a copy of this, please contact me on 0116-260-9748. Alternatively, you can find it on the AGT website: <http://www.gardenstrusts.org.uk/new/Reports/Rufford/rufford.asp>

As a result of the profit made at this event (we had so many delegates!) we were able to make a donation to Rufford's funds, which will pay for spring bulbs for a new memorial garden. The day has also sparked off a new project with the University of Nottingham for a further investigation of the history of the gardens, based on the material in the Savile Archive.

All in all, this was an extremely satisfying outcome to an event which happened almost by chance.

Sue Blaxland

London Parks and Squares

June 2007

Following the cancellation of the planned long weekend in London last year, those members who had expressed an interest in going to London were invited to go on a one-day trip to visit some of the parks and squares that are part of the London Parks and Gardens Open weekend. The trip was made by train and, after arriving at St Pancras, we went to the British Library for coffee. Whatever you may feel about the exterior, the interior of the building is well worth seeing.

Suitably refreshed, we decided to start our tour in Bloomsbury, which is on the estates that were owned by the Dukes of Bedford, starting with Tavistock Square which was designed by Thomas Cubitt. The square contains a monument to the 'conscientious objector', unveiled in

1994 by Michael Tippett. There was also a bronze statue to Mahatma Gandhi by Fredda Brilliant and a bust of Virginia Woolf, who lived in the square between 1924 and 1939.



We then moved on to Gordon Square, where Thomas Cubitt started building in the 1820's. It was not completed until the 1850's after his death. The Duke of Bedford personally designed and supervised the layout and planting of the garden; the square was named after his second wife, Lady Georgina Gordon. Since 2006, it has been restored by the University of London, who purchased it in 1951. Many of the surrounding properties are owned by the University. The old gardener's hut has been converted into a café.

Woburn Square, named after Woburn Abbey, the home of the Dukes of Bedford, is a small narrow square and, like Gordon Square, has been restored by the University. It includes new railings and a charming restored summerhouse. At number 15, the house still has a wrought iron arch with a snuffer for link boys to extinguish their torches.



We then visited the School of African and Oriental Studies, which has a Japanese inspired roof garden. The garden is a modern interpretation of traditional themes including raked sand and carefully disposed stones, with a raised platform at one end from which to contemplate the whole.

Moving on to Russell Square, which is the second largest square after Lincoln's Inn Fields, the gardens have recently been replanted to reflect the way they were first laid out by

Humphrey Repton in 1800. There is a statue to Francis 5th Duke of Bedford, who began the development of Bloomsbury.

Our walk took us on to Bedford Square, which is architecturally the first uniform square - dated 1776-86. The gardens are not in such good condition as the above and a small covered shelter was fenced off awaiting restoration, or so one hopes.

Working our way northwards, we took in Fitzroy Square, which was designed by Robert Adam in the 1790's for Charles Fitzroy, Lord Southampton. The square was not completed until the 1830's, as a result of a property slump caused by the Napoleonic Wars. The current gardens were landscaped by Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe, following the excavation of the square for the construction of the Victoria Line in the 1960's. This gives it a different feel and appearance to the others we visited, with a greater variation in levels within the square.

Our last port of call was the gardens of the Royal College of Physicians, St. Andrews Place, Regents Park. The gardens were most interesting as the planting scheme was based on medicinal plants that were and are used by Physicians. These were grouped geographically for different parts of the globe. There was a new range of plants in front of houses owned by the College, replacing lawned areas; this was based on herbals from the College's library.

In all, it was an enjoyable day taking in a wide variety of gardens. The London Open Squares weekend will take place this year on June 14th -15th and includes over 100 sites across London, many of which are not normally open to the public.

Stephen Barker

Butterfly Plants

As a follow-up to her talk at the Friend's Evening Eva has provided us with this list of plants that encourage butterflies.

Aubretia	Buddleias – not globosa but all davidii and alternifolia	
Candytuft	Globe thistle	Golden rod
Hebes	Honesty	Honeysuckle
Lavender and most herbs	Lilac	Michaelmas daisies
Primrose	Pulmonarias	Scabious
Sedums	Shasta daisies	Sweet William Wallflowers

Wild plants that look good in the garden

Bluebells – *Hyacinthus non-scriptus* but **not** the Spanish bluebell

Evening primrose – *Oenothera biennis*

Field scabious – *Knautia arvensis*

Hemp agrimony – *Eupatorium cannabinum*

Lady's smock – *Cardamine pratensis*

Marjoram – *Origanum vulgare*

Red valerian – *Centranthus ruber*

Wild plants for a wilder garden

Betony – *Betonica officinalis*

Black knapweed – *Centaurea nigra*

Bugle – *Ajuga reptans*
Devil's-bit scabious – *Succisa pratensis*
Ivies
Teasel
Viper's bugloss

Eva Penn-Smith

History and Heritage Fair

In October 2007 the Trust took a stall at the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society's History and Heritage Fair at Vaughan College. This was a well attended and successful event which not only enabled us to showcase Trust activities, but also to make useful contacts with other county organisations.



Research and Recording Group

The Research and Recording Group has had a busy year. As well as our visits and work related to the database project, we have been involved with Launde Abbey and have met with James Friel of BEN, (Black Environment Network) to hear about the work they do to establish ethnic environmental participation.

Parks & Gardens UK (PAGUK), the new national web resource on historic landscapes across England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, is being given its public launch this spring.

In October 2007 County Garden Trusts and other interested organisations had a preview of PAGUK, which will form a permanent home for thousands of garden history records from the UK's 36 gardens trusts and other heritage organisations.

The three-year project is an initiative of the Association of Gardens Trusts and the University of York, and is supported with £1million from the Heritage Lottery Fund. It will link local, regional and national records, and enable the sharing of information across geographical boundaries.

PAGUK now holds information for 4,000 sites. New data is being added constantly, so that by August 2008 records for some 7,000 historic parks and gardens will be online, with in-depth information on some 500 sites.

The records will be linked to a variety of images, including historical documents, maps, illustrations and photographs. There will also be some 2,000 profiles of the people historically linked with gardens, including designers, gardeners and nurserymen.

The Research and Recording Group is currently in discussion with PAGUK about how its records can be incorporated into the database.

Elizabeth Bacon and I attended the October preview in York and heard how 'PAGUK will showcase the work that Garden Trusts do, and make the information available to a much wider audience than has been possible so far. This will help to increase awareness of historic gardens, and improve their protection and conservation.'

Encouraging new volunteers to get involved in researching gardens is one of the project's key aims. PAGUK is running training workshops, and a volunteer training manual has been distributed to all gardens trusts, as a practical guide for volunteers at all levels of experience in researching and recording gardens. The manual also gives guidance on how to contribute information and materials to the PAGUK database.

To view PAGUK records or find out more about contributing to the database, visit www.parksandgardens.ac.uk.

The Research and Recording Group is now armed with new tape measures as well as the splendid training manuals and we are hoping to have 12 entries for sites in Leicestershire ready for PAGUK by the end of the year. Although we have already done much of the background work needed to do this, we have a lot to do to meet this target. No previous research experience is necessary and any Friends interested in joining the group, which meets on the last Thursday morning of each month, will be given a warm welcome.

Deborah Martin

Launde Abbey

We were approached last autumn by Tim Blewitt, the Warden at Launde Abbey, asking if the Trust could carry out some research into the history of the gardens. He has plans for some alterations to both the house and the gardens and is concerned that nothing they might do should destroy important remains of garden archaeology.

He is particularly interested in two key periods in the history of the Abbey: the early 17th century, when the Jacobean house was built, and the late 1820's when Thomas Rickman, an architect working in the Gothic style, carried out alterations at the back of the house.

So the Research and Recording Group has been delving into the "Dawson Archive" at the County Record Office; the Dawsons were one of the last major families to own the Abbey. We've also spent quite a lot of time out at Launde, checking the information that we have gleaned from early Ordinance Survey maps, and attempting to date the major trees in the gardens.



So far, we have located the site of a possible “parterre” and terraces at the front of the house, a network of paths and the position of a fountain in the gardens at the back. Thanks to some really valuable oral history, we are also getting a feel of the importance of the walled kitchen garden. We have discovered the position of cold frames and “hot beds” and have learnt that grapes and peaches were grown in the glasshouses.

I spoke to the granddaughter of the last gardener from the time when Launde was privately owned. She was able to bring to life for me her vivid childhood memories of the flowers and scents of the garden that her grandfather had tended over 50 years ago.

We will soon be presenting our findings to Tim Blewitt and hope also to share them with Trust members when we visit Launde in September.

If you are interested in getting involved in some research like this, maybe just for a “one-off” project, the Research and Recording Group would love to hear from you.

Sue Blaxland

Obituary

The Trustees, Committee and Friends of the Gardens Trust were sorry to hear of the death of **John Taylor** in July 2007. He and his wife were Friends from its inauguration and have supported us throughout that time. It is likely that without his initial efforts and dedication we would not have a newsletter in which to make this sad announcement.

He is remembered by our founder Chairman, Grant Pitches.

John was an invaluable member of the committee in the early days of the LRGT. He embraced the role of editor of the Newsletter with enthusiasm and professionalism.

I remember visiting the Taylor’s elegant flat to discuss the final contents. The draft was typed, and within 48 hours the final copies were sent to Irene and the committee for distribution.

He had a warm, quiet charm and will be greatly missed.

Membership News

The number of Friends in our Gardens Trust in the current year has reached 110. This position is very encouraging and we have already achieved our target of a 25 per cent increase. Most new members have come from the efforts of existing Friends who are doing a really fine job of spreading the word about our aims, events and developments. It is proving an exciting anniversary year.

A few new members have come from reading the article by Joan Stephens in "Leicestershire Life". Five new members are from the city but the majority are from various parts of the two counties, which makes for a widespread representation of interests.

The lure of champagne cannot be entirely responsible, can it? Please continue to distribute our new leaflet to like-minded friends and I hope to update you further on our progress at our AGM and Spring lecture.

Irene Jones
Membership Secretary

AGT News

Mrs Gilly Drummond, President of the Association of Gardens Trusts was awarded an OBE, for services to the environment in this year's New Year Honours List.

For AGT news and events visit www.gardenstrusts.org.uk

What's On Elsewhere

Hammond Arboretum Open Days

Spring Open Day, Sunday 13th April 2008. 2.00 - 4.00pm
Summer Open Day, Sunday 8th June 2008. 2.00 - 4.00pm
Autumn Open Day, Sunday 12th October 2008. 2.00- 4.00pm

There are also going to be a series of Thursday Open Days for visitors to walk around unescorted on 27th March, 17th April, 15th May, 19th June, 17th July, 21st August and 18th September all between 2.00 to 4.00 pm. All visitors will be given a map and information sheet to assist them and volunteers will be in attendance to answer questions.

The Hammond Arboretum is part of the grounds of Robert Smyth Upper School, Burnmill Road, Market Harborough, Leicestershire.

Kelmarsh Hall

Garden Talk 'How to be a greener gardener' Sunday 20th April at 10.30am
Tulip Week 22nd, 23rd, 24th, 27th April, 2.00pm-5.00pm
Hardy Plant Fair Sunday & Monday 4th & 5th May 10.00am-4.00pm
Highgrove Talk Sunday 4th May at 11.00am
Norah Lindsay Day Wednesday 14th May 10.00am-3.30pm

Details:- www.kelmarsh.com Telephone 01604 686543

Forthcoming Events

Thurs	15 th May	Botanic Garden Lecture - Dr Alexei Leporc At University of Leicester
Sunday	18 th May	Coach Trip to Bramham (See enclosed flyer)
Mon.	2nd June	6 day trip to Paris
Thurs.	26th June	Kelmscott Manor and Buscot House Coach trip
Sun.	20th July	Village Walk around Hallaton with Stephen Barker
Mon.	7th July	Evening Visit - Two Gardens Whissendine
Sat.	9th August	Packwood House and Baddesley Clinton Own transport
Sun.	14th September	Launde Abbey
Thurs.	16th October	Autumn Lecture – <i>The National Forest</i>
Thurs.	20th November	Friends Evening

Useful Contact Numbers

Chairman	Stephen Barker	01858 433545
Membership	Irene Jones	0116 2709370
Events	Elizabeth Bacon	0116 2705711
Research and Recording	Deborah Martin	0116 2707525

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