

LEICESTERSHIRE

AND RUTLAND

GARDENS

TRUST



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Newsletter

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2010 - THE YEAR OF THE WALLED GARDEN



Doddington Hall



Normanby Hall



Lamport Hall

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CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

As we come towards the end of another year for the Trust, the weather is proving somewhat variable. As I belatedly write my contribution, it is a beautiful autumn day outside, presenting the perfect opportunity to get out into the garden and finish tidying up the borders ready for winter.

I am pleased to say that 2010, from the Trust's point of view, has gone well with a number of excellent visits and a very enjoyable holiday in Surrey. We have had a number of new members join us this year, to whom I extend a warm welcome. Although the Trust is in a healthy position, we are always happy to receive new members and guests at the lectures, so if you know of anyone who may be interested please do bring them along.

Progress is being made on the education front and we soon hope to be making our first grant to a primary school in support of their school garden.

The Trust has recently been informed that English Heritage has proposed, and is funding a consultation exercise between the following organisations, The Association of Garden Trusts (AGT), The Garden History Society, The Museum of Garden History and The Parks and Gardens Database.

There appear to be two main objectives to the consultation. The first is: can the various organisations work closer together, and are there areas of duplicated activity that could be avoided? English Heritage, in its proposals for the consultation, states that it would like a more unified voice to speak for garden heritage than is the case at present. The second is by working closer together, can the cost of running the different groups be reduced, thus reducing the amount of money and support they receive from English Heritage, who have had their budget frozen and in real terms have fewer resources available.

So far the Trust has seen the responses from two other county trusts, who have taken different positions. At their last meeting, the Committee had a short discussion of the proposals put forward for the consultation exercise at the last committee meeting, but felt that they deserved a more considered response, so we will be holding a meeting in early November to discuss them in more detail, before we submit our response to the AGT. I will keep the Trust informed of the progress of the consultation exercise and of its outcome and the impact that this may have on the Trust.

As ever, if you have anything you wish to discuss about the Trust or any suggestions for events or activities for the future please feel free to contact me or any member of the committee.

Stephen Barker, Chairman

EVENTS

2010 The Year of the Walled Garden

We have come to the end of our visits to Walled Gardens for 2010, and I would be quite happy to start the whole thing over again as I have found it most enjoyable. What a way to produce large quantities of fruit and vegetables for relatively large numbers of people: there must be a lesson for sustainability somewhere there. I have decided I would like to live in a walled garden.

The Bunny Guinness Celebrity Lecture went down well. However, it had been arranged well in advance, before the election date was announced. We would have sold a few more tickets

had it not been the same evening and thus made more money for our 'Schools into Gardening' project. Other summer events were well attended and enjoyed by Friends.

Next years programme is now complete. There has been some delay with the holiday and we are now looking at Holland around mid June to accommodate Amsterdam Open Canal Gardens, which, according to Stephen, should not be missed. Other visits will include Het Loo and the garden of The Kroller-Muller Museum. The visit to Holywell Hall cannot be arranged until January. Tim Mowls lecture was to dictate the theme for next year, but the Spring Lecture and the summer visit to Harlow and the Gibberd Garden will now relate to 20th century designed landscapes. So, what with that, other visits, and ornamental garden hermits, it to be promises to be an interesting year. I have enjoyed putting it together, particularly snooping round gardens and trying out various pubs to check their suitability for our programme.

Elizabeth Bacon

Visit to Pine House, Gaddesby 4th May 2010

By the time you read this, memories of the 2010 Election will no doubt be forgotten. I mention it because the weather during the first week of May was as volatile as the electorate appeared to be; and indeed as it turned out, actually were! The darling buds of May were thoroughly shaken by rough (and bitter) winds, as well as suffering hail and rain, bitter night frosts, laced with deceptive moments of Spring sunshine and ravishing blue skies. The evening of our visit was, if not sunny, at least dry, with grey skies and not freezing. Low on the horizon a red sunset below the grey looked vaguely, and appropriately volcanic.

To reach Gaddesby is to drive through some lovely east Leicestershire landscape, and despite everything, there were signs of Spring. But the real glories of an early English May were waiting for us at Pine House. On arrival, we were taken to the top of the lawn in the main part of the garden, by the owner and designer, Mrs. Milward. Whilst we looked across the lawn, which has a steep short slope, or large step, bounded on one side by a magnificent herbaceous border, and on the other by a wonderful copper beech, she told us that 32 years ago, when they first arrived, there was virtually nothing beyond the holm oaks on one side, and the beech on the other.



What we could see was the lawn ending in a hedge topped with a pair of topiary birds, framing the view into the landscape beyond. (The topiary, she confessed, was the result of a conversation with Sir Roy Strong, who suggested that she was probably 'boring' as she had plain hedges. Now there are spheres, a dragon and spirals, but even without, this garden was never boring!).

The herbaceous border was filled with tulips, the green and white striped ones interspersed with pink. Mrs Milward told us that the previous year she had planted five thousand tulips for her daughter's wedding, but not all had come up this year. One would hardly have guessed, there were so many.



To one side of the lawn and borders, was the wilder part of the garden, with a pond, the pet cemetery, and framed by Scots pines, presumably those after which the house is named. Framed by these darker trees was a crab apple in full flower, all the more vivid for being seen in this context. The other side of the lawn, near the house, also had a shady moment, a little auricula theatre of the sort made fashionable by the Victorians.

Hung on a pretty, wrought iron frame, little clay pots of these pretty flowers, mainly yellow ones with their pale waxy leaves made a lovely interlude on the way to the gardens at the rear of the house. Beyond the rockery (more auriculas, as well as acers, tiny pale iris, more tulips, among other things), is the orchard, in full pink blossom, underplanted with pale creamy daffodils and fritillaries in the long grass. A topiary garden, (to please Sir Roy?!), a dry gravel garden, a wisteria covered pergola, lined with a bold planting of pink and purple tulips, all small areas, full of interest and imaginative planting.



The triumph of this garden was to my mind, that despite having a number of 'rooms', or smaller gardens making up the whole, it never felt fragmented, each part appearing to flow naturally into the next. Every natural feature was used to advantage: the views, the shady parts, the large trees; this was a garden whose owner knew and cared about every aspect. And not only did she care for her plants, she also had a parting treat for her visitors. For, with the welcome cup of tea came a delicious piece of

fruit cake, made with a mystery ingredient, which had caused previous tasters to beg, in vain for the recipe, and one man to insist that he must marry her to find it out!

After this treat the party were taken the short and pretty walk to the justly famed medieval church, with its dramatic 19th century sculpture by Gott, of the local landowner having his (fifth) horse shot from under him during the Crimean war. The poor sculptor killed himself on being told that his otherwise lifelike creature lacked a tongue; but the subject is a reminder of the more brutal facts of life, so a garden such as that we had just seen becomes even more important to set against the darker aspects. And even though the Winter had been so very long and harsh, and early Spring not much kinder, the garden looked full of life and promise.

Sue Wragg

Celebrity Lecture Thursday 6th May 2010

Transforming your Garden - Bunny Guinness

Last year we were entranced by Anna Pavord's talk as to *why* we garden and we pondered on this. Many of us will have given thought to our own situation and indeed our own gardens. And if we conclude that some change might be beneficial, *how* is this to be achieved? Step forward Bunny Guinness. Judging by the rapt attention of the large audience at the University for an hour or so she managed to engage most of us. Clearly she has a wealth of experience as a Horticulturist and as a Chartered Landscape Architect. She spoke fluently and her talk was well-illustrated.



With Bunny's guidance (and it seemed directed to us personally so use of just her Christian name comes naturally) we considered the broad scope of garden design. Initially the space available is to be analysed, with balance and proportion foremost. How to use the space? Do we need privacy? Are there existing assets, is there a view to be 'funnelled', or a feature on which to focus (or hide)? We must be realistic as to available time and practical in the planning and phasing of our plot. What are the needs to be addressed – young children perhaps, or the elderly? Where are cars to be parked? What are the important issues?

Yet we were not discouraged by all of this. Bunny was both inspirational and practical. Few areas are flat so use laser lights to check levels. Shelter from the wind and screening options were discussed. Details for planting a native tree wind belt included buying bare-root trees at 20p each from an agricultural merchant, keeping the ground clear for the first 3 years, and, hey-presto, cut a path and create your own woodland glade in subsequent years. For high-level screening, a run of pleached hornbeams could grow quickly if pruned with hedge cutters, and be stronger if not rigidly staked. Nearer to eyelevel, perhaps smaller trees such as Portuguese laurel would do the job, planted in pots. Large containers, no problem – use tanalised planks for tapering tubs, stain and line with sheet lead No 4. Maybe Birch or Sorbus could focus that view?

Paving and paints were detailed, even weed-control matting. Garden structures were explored –the essential shed could be topped with a playhouse for youngsters. Bunny showed us some attractive fencing schemes, including a rustic one for while a new hedge grows (3-4mm oak laminated, topped with willow). Planting ideas were aplenty, with an eye for how these affect the overall design. And Bunny's large pots were bottomless!

We now can appreciate just how a designer of Bunny Guinness's quality can produce so many gold medal gardens yet also be so down-to-earth on Gardeners Question Time. And we benefitted from all this on that Election night last May. Proper swings, not 'Swingometers'.

Susan Scutt

Visit to Guanock House, Sutton St Edmund, Lincolnshire, 17th June 2010

Once again Elizabeth arranged the perfect weather for garden visiting; she gave us snow for our snowdrop garden and for these June visits we had a beautiful sunny day. John, our coach driver entertained us en route with his extensive local knowledge of the area. We arrived at Guanock House to very welcome refreshments served under the mulberry tree, posies of sweet peas and peonies on the tables and strict instructions to eat up all the cakes.



The house is situated at the end of a farm track, fronted by a grassy area dominated by the mulberry tree and surrounded by fields of wheat stretching out into the distance. There is no hint of the delights that await as you walk around to the back of the house.

Robin, the Head Gardener (and only full time gardener, assisted by a WRAG volunteer), accompanied by a friendly and docile golden retriever, led us around the gardens, giving a very informative and practical guide to the history and the planting.



Guanock House was built between 1640 and 1680, as the country seat of a London business man who owned the nearby woad mill.

In 1992 the restored house was bought by the garden designer Arne Maynard who used it as his 'living, working portfolio' for the next 15 years. From flat farmland he created a garden divided into hedged and walled compartments, each of which can stand alone as a garden and could be used to demonstrate designs to clients. Arne has now moved on but Robin,

who worked for Arne continues his work for the new owners.

The formal gardens are hidden behind high yew hedges; a tiny entrance through the hedges cleverly revealing the spectacular fountain garden with its simple planting of *Iris florentina*, symmetrical blocks of clipped Holm oak and the vistas through the garden.

The two summerhouses of pink stucco, with curved lead roofs were offered to any takers with £30,000 to spare. One housed two impressive overwintering orange trees and the other was heated by a tiny wood burning stove.

The rose garden was at its best for our visit; the scented roses carefully trained onto homemade hazel frames which blended sympathetically into the garden.



Against the side of the house, a tiny knot garden, surrounded on three sides by pleached hornbeams was particularly effective.

An enormous 350 year old yew tree had been meticulously trimmed into a cylinder shape, providing either a dramatic focal point to the garden or completely blocking the line of a vista (opinions were divided!)



More home made hazel structures, topped by tiny old terracotta plant pots had been used enthusiastically in the delightful walled kitchen garden to support beans and peas, prop up delphiniums and create an elaborate cage to protect the brassicas from pests.

We were tempted by the promise of thousands of spring bulbs planted underneath the trees in the orchard and the spring garden; perhaps another snowdrop garden to visit?

Valerie Hartley

Park House, Glaston – 17th June 2010.

Our second visit of the day was to the gardens of Park House, home to LRGT friends Sheila & Stuart Makings. This is a garden full of curiosities. Few gardens can boast a fine wall, 350 metres in length, variously built of brick, coursed stone and stone rubble with short sections of laurel and conifer hedging. Thought to have been built by Thomas Riddlington in the 18th century to provide shelter, it now provides an interesting backdrop to a series of beds and runs the full length of the garden to the lake.



Possibly an ancient fish pond but more likely created by Thomas for pleasure, the lake is a tranquil spot and just the right place I'd say for enjoying that first gin and tonic of the evening. To add to the ambiance, we were treated to the delightful sight of a family of newly hatched mallards taking their late afternoon swim.

There was more to test our walking legs as the garden then continues beyond the lake via a shady woodland walk. More interesting features reward you on the return journey; a lime



tunnel skirts a box parterre filled with fragrant roses and then you reach the second curiosity, the ha-ha, another 18th century feature. We all know the purpose of a ha-ha but why is it only fifty yards away from the wall? This is a mystery yet to be solved. The garden contains many fine specimen trees, survivors of the original Glaston Hall planting plan. The recent loss of an old Holm oak, whilst sad has opened up a section of the garden previously shaded.

Gardening keeps you fit and active and the proportions of this delightful garden must certainly do this for Sheila and Stuart

Diane Horsfield

Mima And Jim Bolton's Garden, Acre End, The Jetties, North Luffenham. 1st July 2010



On a slightly threatening evening, we found our way to a real “plantsman’s garden”. Our first sight was of a huge white climbing rose cascading down the garden wall. A traditional cottage garden, then, how wrong could one be! We stepped into the front garden: surprise! A knot garden like a wall to wall carpet filled almost all the space. The box edging very neatly clipped, the gaps filled with bright flowers, very unexpected! Yet close to the house grew a yellow Graham Thomas standard, blowsy with blooms, against the deep purple of a small lavender bed: gloriously colourful and cottage like. Then on to the real entrance to the garden: there was a well-stocked bench of healthy plants for sale, many exotic looking, next to a casual group of pots of rockery plants.

Then we stepped into the Japanese garden, (another surprise), originally “a not very successful rockery”, complete, as the notice at the entrance told us, “with stepping stones, a water basin for cleansing the mouth, heart and mind before entering the tea house (which was missing), stone lanterns, rocks, stones, gravel and the Dragon Gate waterfall”: a very crowded small space which, I am afraid, failed for me, to evoke the essence of Japanese gardens, stillness and tranquillity.

So, following the arrow to the main garden, we now found ourselves in a very long alley which is in fact a traditional double mixed border, backed on one side by a good stone wall and on the other by a long hedge, tightly planted with a wonderfully rich combination of plants, mixing shapes,





colours, textures, heights, a plantsman's garden, packed with as many plants as possible. I can name only a very few, a clematis with clear bluebell shaped flowers, an "amazing Deutzia" (Elizabeth said), a very floriferous "Buff Beauty" rose ("a headache to dead head", according to Dennis O'Brien) and many many more, some familiar, some not. Following this alley to its end, one enters a wood; a complete contrast. The old elms had died, of course, but have been generously replaced by a tightly planted variety

of trees. Quite a dark space, but very carefully designed, in particular a bed of interesting plants, "difficult to grow because of lack of light and moisture". Obviously these obstacles are not going to prevent Jim Bolton from packing as many plants as he can. In any case, as he told us later, there is a very good nursery in Wales which supplies the right type of plants. So Mima and Jim take a three day holiday in Wales each Spring to fetch more plants, for the beds are still evolving i.e. growing. "I love plants" Jim tells us which is amply demonstrated. I think he loves planting: the selecting, acquiring, digging the ground and shaping the beds and putting into the soil his newly acquired jewels. He simply can't stop. He has been making his garden for 33 years and it is still evolving. As if the wood wasn't full enough, it is peopled by wooden animals, a leopard in a tree, a salamander on a branch, an owl on a post, etc.



Continuing through the wood, we come to the vegetable garden: it looks as if it was originally part of the neighbour's garden, which may explain why it has, in the middle, a rather tired little formal flower garden - not really Jim's type. In the rest of the vegetable garden, the now expected mixture and abundance of plants: raised vegetable beds in beautifully made boxes, flower borders and rows of espalier apples (there are some very old apple trees in another part of the garden). At the back of the garden between the enclosing hedge and the wall of espaliers, there is (obviously for functional purposes) a completely

empty alley-just weeds – which comes almost as a relief: (in the middle is a very mouldy wooden bench which is never sat on! How could anyone sit in such a garden)?

Then back into the wood to reach what must be the heart of the garden - so far unseen and unsuspected: a round lawn surrounded by another mixed border; Jim likes to have lots of different plants - but also different shades of the same plant; in this border we discover a very colourful patch of achilleas: one pale yellow, one dark yellow, one



pale orange, one dark orange and several reds, the complete colour range! Through an arch in the hedge we come to another richly planted border (lots of roses and a blue phlomis!), then another 'room' with formal clipped box on a paved ground and a very mossy bench, opposite Mima's studio; then back to the start. What a journey! This less than one acre garden is so varied and so tightly packed that it feels much bigger. I think we were all amazed by it, some of us more delighted than others; though I admired it; - I certainly greatly admired the gardener for his industry; I found the garden a bit too busy and too tight, too full really; so much so that it didn't seem to invite rest, relaxation, contemplation. Nevertheless I found the visit interesting and enjoyable (it didn't rain). Some of the group went on to a fish and chip supper in South Luffenham, but we didn't, so I can't comment on that; but I trust that they had raised sufficient appetite from their walk through the garden! We thank Mr. and Mrs. Bolton, who were very welcoming and helpful hosts.

P.S. Not being a plantswoman, I feel I haven't done justice to this garden. Fortunately the members of the Garden Trust will be able to fill in my many omissions.....

Simone Rawson

Evening Visit - Walled Gardens of Lamport Hall and Kelmarsh Hall. 21st July 2010

When I arrange these garden visits I always imagine us on balmy summer evenings strolling through sweet smelling gardens, enjoying the plants and shrubs and watching the light change. It does not always happen, remember the Pimms in Whissendine church porch. However, on this particular evening it did.



We started with Lamport Hall, one of the largest walled gardens in the country. This has been the first year of a major replanting scheme. With the help of Piet Oudolf a leading Dutch Garden Designer who specialises in ornamental grasses, it has been planted with a mixture of known and lesser known herbaceous perennials and some grasses. There are rows and rows of them. The oranges, browns

and reds of the heleniums, echinaceas, crocosmias and dahlias looked particularly stunning. We were a bit uncertain as to the purpose of the planting, as its main function would be a cutting garden, but judging by the amount of seed heads not an awful lot of cutting had been done. We were a bit disappointed that there was no labelling of the more unusual plants and varieties. In spite of these reservations it was lovely and perhaps this was just a first trial year.



So to Kelmarsh, where we met the splendid Esther, Head Gardener, who was to take us on a tour of the garden. She started by giving us a short history of Kelmarsh Hall and Gardens including the connections with the garden designs of Norah Lindsey and Geoffrey Jellicoe. Off we went on our walk and I was amazed to see the changes to the double herbaceous borders and the very long south facing border. I had not seen them for about three years, when they did look a bit shabby. They are transformed. Esther and her team have done a lot of research on the original Norah Lindsey planting plans and have tried to reproduce something similar to her rather cottagey, exuberant style. Whether Norah Lindsey would have approved I don't know or particularly care, all I know is that they were absolutely marvellous.



We then went into the walled garden planted with a variety of herbs, cutting flowers and vegetables. These are maintained with the help of volunteers. The glass houses looked good and are in good shape, as they have been restored with Lottery funding. Esther encourages children of all ages to visit the garden, that morning she had entertained a pre-school group. She had sent them on a bug hunt, got them tasting vegetables and smelling herbs. (Although, when I tried the latter on Edie, just three, with rosemary and fennel she threw them away in disgust.) What an imaginative way to introduce children to the natural world and the seasonality of our food.

Esther had arranged tables and chairs for us by the glasshouses, so as the light changed, we were able to enjoy the late summer evening with a glass of wine and sandwiches. Her efforts on our behalf were much appreciated and for which she was enthusiastically thanked.

So we did enjoy the summer evening of my imaginings. On a balmy July evening both Country Houses looked their best, standing in parkland, both with their adjacent churches and commanding views over the rolling Northamptonshire landscape. It was a really lovely evening.



Esther is very keen to encourage children to visit, so if anyone out there knows of any groups of pre-school or school children who may be interested do ring Kelmarsh on 01604 686543

Elizabeth Bacon

Afternoon Walk round Ashby de la Zouch 8th August 2010

In June 1849, Thomas Cook brought 1000 excursionists from Leicester to visit Ashby: in August 2010, the LRG T organised a somewhat smaller party of 40 to learn about the history of this ancient town.

We assembled in the car park of the Royal Hotel to meet our guide, Dr. Ray Sutton, who gave us a brief outline of what he proposed to cover, before we set out on a circular walk round the main points of interest.

The rather exotic name of the town is somewhat obscure in origin. The “Ashby” part could be derived from a Danish root, or from Ashlar – a local stone, or from the many Ash trees which once grew here – no-one is sure. “De la Zouch” comes from the name of a Breton Family who married into the manor in 1160, and flourished greatly in their new environment.

Having gained its first charter in 1219, the town went through the usual development of medieval market towns, the market having moved after 1285 from the churchyard to what is now the wide main street, with its characteristic side alleys leading to other streets. A number of inns served the people, one of which, the Bull’s Head, dating from the 16th century, still stands.

The next excitement to hit the town was the rebuilding of the Castle by William, Lord Hastings, during the reign of Edward IV (1461-1483) who was his friend and patron. After the execution of Lord Hastings by Richard III, his heirs were allowed, rather unusually, to inherit the estate, and the family continued in possession for almost 200 years, until the country was convulsed by Civil War in the 1640’s. Ashby Castle was a Royalist stronghold, and, as a result, was “slighted” i.e. rendered indefensible, in 1648, though parts of it were inhabited until the 18th Century, still by members of the Hastings family, who were given back their property after the Restoration in 1660.

A final flourish was the attempt by Francis Rawdon Hastings, 11th Earl of Ashby, to build a spa to rival Buxton, mainly as a revenue-raising measure. Mineral spring water from Moira, 3 miles away, was transported by canal, and a range of buildings catered for visitors. However, the spa never rose to more than provincial status, nor made much money, and finally came to an inglorious end in 1962 when it was demolished by a philistine council, despite vehement protests by the great and the good, including John Betjeman.

Our tour began at the end, as it were, with the Royal Hotel itself, and nearby Rawdon Terrace, both of which were built to accommodate visitors to the spa, some of whom also came to hunt.



Nearby stand Catholic and non-conformist churches, and an imitation Eleanor Cross, designed by Gilbert Scott, in memory of a Lady Hastings, who died in 1879.

We then walked up Market Street. The street plan conforms to the medieval layout, although most of the actual buildings are Georgian. The names, for example, Lamb Lane, would have indicated the particular trade carried on there.

At the top of Market Street, Church Lane led us round to St. Helen’s Church. A church is recorded here in Domesday Book, but the present building was created by William Lord



Hastings at the same time as the Castle. We spent 15 minutes exploring the interior, which included a “finger pillory”. Some intrepid souls tried this out.

Outside the churchyard stands an 1811 building which was part of the Grammar School.

We then paused outside the Castle, where Ray related its history, and Stephen Barker talked about the history and archaeology of the gardens. Plans and illustrations were handed out.

From the Castle, we walked across playing fields which were once part of the medieval Great Park, to the site of the Spa and Pump Room, of which only an embankment leading to the Royal Hotel car park remains.

Finally, we went into the elegant interior of the Royal hotel, where tea awaited us.

It had been a most instructive afternoon, even for people who know the town well.



Eileen Peers and Sue Blaxland

More information about the garden archaeology carried out at Ashby Castle is available on-line in the publication: English Heritage Research News 2006-07:

<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/research-news-05>

Doddington Hall and Normanby Country Park Sunday 5th September 2010

Two Special Walled Gardens

It was a perfect September day; sparkling, sunny with a gentle breeze. This day would be when we made our final visit this year to walled gardens- and a delightful contrast these two proved to be. Doddington walled garden is surprisingly within sight of the splendid Tudor windows of the Hall. It lies to the East, with its dipping pool and rows of pumpkins, beans, cabbages, and bush fruits; most of which are destined for the wonderfully well stocked farm shop.



The garden skirts round the turreted Hall, completed in 1600, with grounds of 5 acres. The front of the house faces Lincoln Cathedral, 5 miles away. The south garden is famous for the irises that crouch unusually within the knot garden. From here one can gaze down an avenue



beyond the red Lincoln cattle to the rural scene beyond. There are plans to plant English oaks outside the existing lime trees and place an obelisk as a focus point at the end of this vista.

John Lawrence, the Head Gardener, led us past the turf maze, which is a copy of the Neolithic Alkbrough maze, and into the orchard or wild garden. Like the rest of the garden there were surprise viewpoints



which made the garden look larger than it is. There are some magnificent trees; Cedars of Lebanon planted about 1840 are dotted around the perimeter. However the real star was a trio of Sweet Chestnuts planted in the original garden. They are loaded with chestnuts and have massive, sculptured trunks, which despite being hollow are perfectly healthy.



Many of us, after a wonderful lunch, decided to return in May to see this delightful garden wearing clothes for a different season.



On the outskirts of Scunthorpe, Head Gardener Sue Hoy, was waiting for us to reveal a quite different walled garden. Samantha Cameron's father, Lord Sheffield, has leased Normanby to Lincolnshire County Council for 99 years, half of which has now passed. This kitchen garden with its Victorian brick walls was intensively cultivated and its autumn harvest was abundant; pumpkins, peas, gooseberries, cabbages, plums and dahlias. The step-over apples provoked great interest. Lincolnshire asparagus with its 3 uses; as asparagus tips, for salads and as spinach intrigued us. From the apple arch which was supporting a good crop, we caught sight of lurking peacocks. They breakfast at 5 am but were keeping an eye on us. Sue loves the names of many of her choice crops – the French Drunken Woman and the Fat Blonde are among her favourite lettuces.

We travelled along a series of glasshouses. The display house was full of plants from the Empire - such as abutilon, heliotrope and morning glory. The Peach House had a splendid display of scented pelargoniums; Hanson's Wild Spice with a sherbet smelling leaf was the most popular. The Vinery and the Fernery led us to the Fruit Store, the Bothy, and the Potting Room which had pale blue walls to deter flies.

There was so much more to see at Normanby; a magnificent house and extensive grounds. So once again we departed declaring that we would have to come back soon. What a wonderful day!

Irene Jones

Highgrove 24th September 2010

An exceedingly young looking policeman asked Elizabeth if she was 25..., he meant the number in the group!!! So began our visit to Highgrove. Formalities were quickly over and we met our lady guide, wearing wellies, raincoat and smart rain hat! She began with the information that the restaurant & shop were over a massive water storage system which recycled water over the estate.

The areas we visited had lots of narrow paths so often only the first few heard the guide's commentary. I'm afraid I missed a lot of what she said. Early on we noted the yew hedging and topiary. It takes months to trim them all. The clippings are collected and donated to provide a special cancer drug.

The Prince loves trees and much is open woodland containing some old and lots of younger trees. Each glade featured something special. There were gateways and arches, superficially looking like classical heirlooms but cunningly fashioned out of wood; great use was made of tree stumps and remnants of ecclesiastical buildings i.e. much recycling!

There were lots of intriguingly constructed fountains with trickling water. HRH prefers their quiet sound. Importantly they enable wild life to come and drink and they all had their hedgehog escape routes. We paused at a tree house constructed so that only children could reach it and later on we saw the retreat where only the Prince is allowed to go.

In the walled garden, the original box hedging had had the "DREADED DISEASE" and had been replaced with a low growing *Teucrium* sp. The fruit and vegetable produce was either used in the house or sold in the shop. A gift of 60 tree ferns from New Zealand gave the theme for another garden, which also had other plants from that part of the world.

Everywhere there were pots, statues and busts, often displayed in amusing ways... (The Prince appears to have a quirky sense of humour.) We walked past two zig-zag rows of native hedge plants. These were crinkle-crankle hedges which keep away evil spirits! We then paused on the Bath-Bristol road, which had been diverted in the 18th century. At the main house we studied the modifications to the facade. Turning round we were given the history of two long views; of the spire of the parish church in Tetbury and the tall column (recycled) at the end of an avenue of limes.

The meadow was now being grazed by a flock of sheep. Earlier in the year it is covered in wild flowers and spring bulbs. Once the seeds have matured, it is mown by shire horses so that the seeds can be distributed round the estate. The Prince is delighted that wild orchids have now appeared.

The final few gardens included an herbaceous border (no longer at its best); a paved breakfast garden, and a wooden house built to enclose the massive trunk of an old cedar. One bottom branch had been left and showed the spread of the original tree. That branch was also used as a hanging place for a bird cage. Intriguingly an oak seedling had now sprung up from the roots of the old tree and the roof of the house had been modified to accommodate it. Finally, there was Middle Eastern walled garden where the planting was based on the pattern of a Turkish carpet. Tiles on the painted walls and round the fountain plus an abundance of flowers made this the most colourful garden we had seen.

So ended an absorbing visit AND IT DIDN'T RAIN.

Sylvia Canetti

2011

Tim Mowl

I was really pleased that I was able to book Tim for our Spring Lecture in 2011. I heard him speak at Leicester University in 2009 when he was very entertaining. He is Professor of History of Architecture and Designed Landscapes at Bristol University and, among other things, author of the Historic County Gardens series of books. However, I had a phone call from him full of abject apologies to say he would be unable to come to Leicester due to various circumstances and personal problems.

In his place we have Jan Clark, who was our guide at Painshill in the summer. She was excellent and so she is coming to speak about Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe. This will link to our visit to the Gibberd Garden in Harlow New Town in the summer, when we will be looking at 20th century designed landscapes.

Visits by Coach

Just after I retired, I went on a holiday visiting Italian Gardens. It was very badly organized as regards coffee, lunch and loo visits. It meant that on arrival at a site one was either in need of at least one or if not all of the above, with no possibility of any facilities. On one visit, we went from about 8a.m. till until after 2p.m. with nothing, so my memory of William Walton's Garden is not happy. It made me realise that ones personal comfort is important to get maximum enjoyment out of visits etc. So when I started arranging visits for the Trust I bore this in mind. There was the further consideration that we were a new group and needed a social dimension to bring the group together, which is why we arrange coffees, lunches etc as we do.

The reason I mention this is, that with the gloom and doom which is being forecast for the future, our trips may become more expensive. Prices could be reduced perhaps, with more own transport and packed lunches. I really would like your views on how we should continue arrange our visits. Friends evening could be a good opportunity to discuss this.

Elizabeth Bacon

MEMBERSHIP

Many thanks for all those members who have renewed their subscription so promptly. We had a healthy membership of 150 last year: 2009-2010.

This year, we already have 5 new members Welcome to all of you and I hope you will enjoy the coming programme of lectures and events. Our membership is widely dispersed through the two counties and I hope the policy of introducing like-minded friends will continue.

Welcome to:

Ms J Allcott, Miss P Clayfield, Mrs J Elliott,
Mrs E Hassall, Mr and Mrs K Jones,
Ms E Mc Millan, Mrs M Moore, Mrs S Shaw

We have some attractive gift cards to be used with gift membership, so some of you may wish to provide a year of pleasure for a friend or relative this Christmas or as a birthday gift.

The number of members who have opted to pay their subscription by Banker's Order continues to increase. The form is available both on the leaflet and on the website, and we are grateful to those who use it. It reduces costs for us, which we can use for visits, lectures or even educational grants as we expand our activities.

Irene Jones

EDUCATION

'Schools into Gardening'

This October 2010, we are delighted to have offered our first grant, to Billesdon County Parochial Primary School, for a garden seat and a small water feature. These will be placed in their sensory garden, which should be completed by spring 2011. The committee was impressed by the school's application and imaginative plan.

We are looking to continue this policy with a city school in the near future. Our grants are largely earned for us by any surplus made by our Celebrity Lecture. Your support in attending the lecture and, if possible, bringing some guests, will enable us to help young people acquire a love of gardens, growing plants and appreciating our green landscape.

Rutland primary schools will be targeted next. Any information or comments by members on these developments is welcomed by members of the Education Group (Sue Blaxland, Sheila Burnage, Irene Jones and Pam Ward). If this is an area which interests you or one in which your experience will make a contribution, please contact any of us and join us.

Irene Jones

RESEARCH GROUP

The Research Group has had an interesting and busy summer, and we are delighted to have welcomed Gill Knight and Jennifer Elliott to the group.

In June some of us made a preliminary visit to Welford Road Cemetery to get a general impression of the site. We are hoping to follow this up with a guided visit. In July, Jane Wilford arranged us a visit to Gumley House and we had a delightful afternoon looking for evidence of the original garden of Gumley Hall, now demolished. In the woods, we found the remains of an ice house and there was a pulhamite grotto by the lake. August saw some of us in Abbey Park and we were impressed with what we saw.

In October we visited John Oakland's beautiful garden, Long Close, in Woodhouse Eaves. John, a Friend and Trustee, invited us along, the main purpose of this visit being to measure and age some of his splendid trees. Novices at this



Long Close



technique, we were quite surprised, as we discussed our results with John, to find that our results were plausible for many of them. I'm sure we will be back,

as this garden is an obvious candidate for the Parks and Gardens Database. The garden is open to the public and I would certainly recommend a visit.

Future planned visits include Beaumanor Hall next month, the site of the demolished (1950) Papillon Hall, near Lubenham, and Coleorton Hall, but over the winter we will return to Belgrave Hall to complete our work on the archive there. We also hope to add more research to the Parks and Gardens UK project before long. One of these will be research done by Stephen Barker on Carrygate, Gaulby, a garden designed by Christopher Tunnard.

If you are interested in joining us, do please get in touch.

Deborah Martin

AGT NEWS

A date for your diary

The AGT AGM and Annual Weekend Conference, 'Power Gardening', will be hosted by Oxfordshire Gardens Trust, 2nd-4th September 2011. Details from the AGT, 70 Cowcross Street, London EC1M 6EJ, Tel 02072512610, www.gardenstrusts.org.uk

AGT e-newsletter

The AGT produce an e-newsletter, 'Eyecatcher'. If you would like a copy forwarded to you, please contact us, via the website or by phone.

Useful Contact Numbers

Chairman	Stephen Barker	01858 433545
Secretary and Publicity	Sue Blaxand	0116 2609748
Membership and Education	Irene Jones	0116 2709370
Events	Elizabeth Bacon	0116 2705711
Research and Newsletter	Deborah Martin	0116 2707525

Or you can contact us at www.lrgt.org

Events Programme 2011

Sunday 23rd January	Winter lunch at Neville Arms, Medbourne
Thursday 17th February	Winter Garden visit to Guanock garden on the Fens and then to Deene Park (coach trip)
Wednesday, 16th March	A.G.M. and Spring Lecture : <i>"Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe"</i> . Speaker: Jan Clark Friends Meeting House, 16 Queens Road, Leicester LE2 1WP AGM: 7.00 p.m. Lecture: 7.30 p.m.
Sunday 8th May	Afternoon visit to Belvoir Castle (own transport)
May/June	Afternoon visit to Holywell House and garden. Holiday: date and destination to be confirmed
Thursday 16th June	Afternoon visit to Cedar Farm in Desborough (own transport)
Wednesday 6th July	Visit to two gardens in South Leicestershire: Croft Acre in South Kilworth and Thorpe Lubbenham Hall, with lunch at Gilmorton. (own transport)
Thursday, 4th August	Visit to The Gibberd Garden in Harlow, owned and designed by Sir Frederick Gibberd, architect of Harlow New Town. This will include a coach trip to see some of the many sculptures in the town and a short visit to the Civic Gallery
Friday 2nd September	Visit to Broughton Castle and Broughton Grange in Oxfordshire
Thursday 8th September	CELEBRITY LECTURE Speaker: Chris Beardshaw Ken Edwards Lecture Theatre, University of Leicester.
Sunday 2nd October	Afternoon Town Walk in Market Bosworth
Thursday 27th October	Autumn Lecture: <i>"Ornamental Garden Hermits"</i> Speaker: Professor Gordon Campbell 7.30. p.m. Friends Meeting House, 16 Queens Road, Leicester LE2 1WP
Thursday 24th November	Friends' Evening