

LEICESTERSHIRE  
AND RUTLAND  
GARDENS  
TRUST



[www.lrgt.org](http://www.lrgt.org)

# Newsletter

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## DIDN'T WE HAVE A LOVELY TIME .....



LRGT School visit to Kelmarsh Hall

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## Chairman's Notes

It recently crossed my mind that next year will mark the fifteenth anniversary of the LRGT. Looking back, I have been a member for about the past eleven years and a lot has changed in this time. As a Trust, we have achieved much in developing the annual programme, in particular, the Celebrity Lecture has proved to be a most successful event and has fulfilled a number of our goals.

By making this an event open to the public, we are able to book speakers who would normally be too expensive for the Trust's lectures. As a public event, it raises the profile of the Trust and enables us to achieve one of our aims to encourage the understanding and enjoyment of our parks and gardens heritage and, as our only fund raising event, it has funded the development of our education programme. This enables us to give grants to schools to assist them in creating gardens and to pay for educational visits. We are looking to develop further the role of the education programme in the coming years.

This year we were fortunate to have Tony Kirkham, from Kew Gardens, who gave an excellent talk on the challenges of looking after trees in a changing world. Tony's talk was both informative and entertaining, particularly the hazards of plant collecting in the wild where the choice was between crossing a river in full flood or encountering tigers in the forest.

At this year's Friend's evening in November, we will be welcoming Sally Walker who is a committee member and past Chairman of the Association of Gardens Trusts. As a Trust, we felt it had been some time since we had had a visit from the AGT, so we extended an invitation to come and see what we are doing in the two counties. I hope that Sally will say a few words on the role of the AGT and how this relates to activities of the County Trusts. I look forward to seeing you there.

*Stephen Barker*  
Chairman

## Events

Japanese Gardens are the theme for our 2012 programme. Gillian Ragett, of Writtle College in Essex, delivered the Spring Lecture, entitled "Japanese Gardens in Japan". She spoke about the early influence of China in their development followed by Shintoism and Buddhism and the significance and importance of features to be found in these gardens, for example stones, water, lanterns, bridges, gates trees and plants. She gave a very scholarly lecture which displayed her breadth of knowledge and interest in the subject. Not only was she an excellent lecturer but a delightful personality as well. I look forward to the autumn lecture and to having her as a guest in my house.

Unfortunately we did not go to the Japanese garden at Tatton as there were not enough Friends for the coach; we would have made a big loss. Catering and tour guides needed to be cancelled 7 days before the visit which is what I did. Over the following weekend a couple more did ring, but it was too late to alter plans again.

Stephen prepared us for Stowe with his talk at Long Close followed by a rather chilly tea in John's garden. Little did we know then that this was to be the weather pattern for the coming months. Following Chris Beardshaw's lecture, we went off to **Kiftsgate and Hidcote** in May. The latter was busy, I suppose as it always is, and, whilst being a lovely garden, it cannot be wholly appreciated as there are just too many people about. As Val Hartley said, very wisely, the garden is too small for the numbers of visitors it attracts.

Kiftsgate on the other hand is a different kettle of fish and I have to confess that I am prejudiced, as this where I began to understand about really good planting. I had not been for a few years and I am happy to report that it's still as good as ever: the creation of three generations of women gardeners.



Island House all set for the  
Diamond Jubilee

**Island House at Godmanchester** was an unusual visit. We saw the restoration of a Georgian House with a complete family history thrown in. This was followed by a visit to **Wrest Park** in the afternoon. On entering the garden one goes from the English landscape of Bedfordshire into a 17<sup>th</sup> century French landscape. The recent restoration of the garden by English Heritage is impressive.

**Rose de Jardin's garden in Wing** is probably well known to many, as she used to hold a sculpture exhibition every summer and she also had a nursery with very desirable plants. These are now discontinued, but her garden thrives. It is just fantastic, so imaginative and full of surprises; I particularly loved the knee high rill which ran by the side of the house. The garden was so splendid that we hardly noticed the pouring rain. The Women's Institute in the village provided us with a splendid tea before going on to the **Bell's garden in Ketton**.

This garden surrounds a lovely stone rectory and is overlooked by the church spire. What better setting could

one have for a country garden? The sun was now shining and the Friends were able to enjoy the garden, with the owners, in the late afternoon light. I found two particular points of interest, the planting in the large herbaceous border, in spectacular colour and her rose bed where the plants were really crammed in together. It worked very well.

On our way out, some of us sat on the church wall whilst Stephen gave us a short talk about tombstones, surrounded as we were by many interesting examples. Some of the Friends went home while others went onto The Coach and Horses in South Luffenham for an early supper.

In my time of organizing the events for the Trust, some of our events, for no particular reason have an ambiance which makes them stand out and become truly memorable. This I think was one of those.

**Calke Abbey** was our evening visit in July. I sometimes wonder why I don't visit more often, but, when I do go, I realise that it always takes longer to get there than one thinks. This is of course, partly due to the fact that the owners, the Harpur family, guarded their privacy and did not want Calke to be encroached upon by public roads and railways. It remains to this day hidden from public view. Steve Biggins, the Head Gardener took us on tour of the walled gardens, starting with the pleasure garden and ending in the physic garden. Fruit and vegetables from here are put out for visitors. The Grotto is being restored; Steve took us to look at it. As we were the first members of the public to see it, we were honoured. He is going to give the autumn lecture next year, so more of Calke then. It did not rain.



Many of us will have been to **Stowe**, but probably not since it was reconfigured by the National Trust. Visitors now arrive at the site of the original inn. This is where 18th century guests stayed and from where they were taken by carriage up to the house. The idea was that the landscape would gradually open up revealing the grottos, statuary and temples with the mansion in pride of place on top of the hill. Amazing. I should have liked to have approached the landscape from there but we were taken by coach to the house for our guided tour. It is spectacular, particularly the marble hall with cupola. It is a public school now and I could not help but wonder what effect being in that environment would have on pupils in later life. The sun shone that day and we were able to enjoy our walk through the park at ease and with pleasure. The National Trust deserves great credit for the completed work. It is just so much easier for the visitor to understand the landscape from the reconfigured approach.



Marble Hall, Stowe

## Celebrity Lecture 20<sup>th</sup> September 2012

It was Chris Beardshaw who recommended **Tony Kirkham** as our speaker for 2012. I knew of him from a television programme about Kew several years ago, as did several others, so he was invited, and he came to Leicester.

We were a little alarmed to learn in the late afternoon of the visit that there were long delays on the motorway; this did make him rather late but not too late. When I did eventually meet him on the piazza outside the library café, the relief was palpable on both sides, something akin to Stanley meeting Livingstone. However, from his first handshake, I sensed that we would be in good hands.



He stated early on in the lecture that he was not academic, but his fluency would put many an academic to shame. He spoke without notes, managing to combine anecdote and science without effort; surely none of us will ever forget the wine glass, the square holes, the compacted ground and the badly planted and maintained urban tree planting. A tour de force.

After the lecture, drinks were served in the Charles Wilson building. He seemed happy to chat, be photographed and answer tree related queries, after which he left, having given us a marvellous evening.

Since the lecture I have received phone calls and people have told me what a splendid evening it was, so we all felt particularly sad hearing of the death of a visitor, caused by a falling branch, in Kew Gardens the following Sunday. Tony enabled us to raise just over £700 for our schools into gardening scheme. The problem is, who can follow that?

An aperitif is an important part of a good meal and this was provided by Pip Wheatcroft before the start of the lecture with her spectacular photographic compilation of L.R.G.T. events over the year

and WITH MUSIC. Anyone who attended the lecture who was not a Friend would be a fool not to join such a well organised and interesting organization.

## And finally

**Ann Baer**, who will be well known to those of you who have been on our holidays, has been made an honorary member of the Trust. Her descriptions of our visits when on holiday are a delight to read. This may have something to do with a natural talent, (she is a published novelist) and that she was educated some years before us. It is a tribute to her great spirit that she misses nothing when we are away and as a regular visitor to Kew, came up for the Tony Kirkham lecture, so welcome, Ann.

*Elizabeth Bacon*

## Visit to Kiftsgate and Hidcote Manor Garden

The weather had been awful for days, cold, wet, windy, hail even! But we were lucky: not a drop of rain and the sun actually shone!

After an early (and quite good) lunch, we were free to visit the garden at **Kiftsgate** as we wished: indeed one didn't need any guiding. As soon as one comes round the corner of the house, the garden starts, a terrace round the house, the first designed by the first gardener, very logically close to the house; from then the garden developed in stages, following the contours of the site: and this is how one inevitably visits it. So, from the terrace it is down to the Squares, then the Wide Border, then the North Border and so on, following the top of the escarpment on which the house is built. A series of "Garden rooms" then, or, rather, of natural spaces fitting together in an organic way; everywhere the planting is rich,



varied, imaginative, compact and very healthy (superb hostas); a real plant lover's garden (the result of a lot of work by the dedicated women gardeners); a homely garden on a grand scale.

It was still a bit early in the season (which is late anyway) but there are lots of lovely different peonies, a variety of tulips (I particularly liked the groups of pink tulips in the rose border), bluebells of course and geranium pratense and much, much, more which I can't name. One knows that come mid June- early July- the garden will be a riot of colour in the yellow and red borders and, in particular, in the rose border with its double row of Rosa Versicolour (mostly red) and, especially, the famous climbing Kiftsgate rose! (In fact there are well established rose trees all over the garden.)

The same variety and abundance of planting is found in the Banks and lower Garden: having landscaped the top of the site, the ladies of the house then went down the steep slope, the only way left to go, to create an extra garden in the shade of the magnificent Scotch firs; this ends in a semi-circular grassy terrace with a dark pool of similar shape,





reflecting the sky and the surrounding trees: it is the "point final" to this vast, complex exciting garden.

Except that it is not, as the present gardener, having decided no doubt, that she could not alter or improve upon what her mother and grandmother had created, has added a completely new and different space, the New Water Garden. A rectangular pool, within a rectangular stone surround, within a rectangular frame of grass,

enclosed by a high, perfectly clipped, hedge: black water, white stone, green grass; six stone slabs as steps to a tiny square grassed island (significance-? whatever you like!) and at the top of the pool twenty four "stems", each supporting a gold leaf which waves gently in the breeze and drips a thread of water into the pool: utterly simple, utterly refined; stunning! This is an enchanted and enchanting room which inspires visitors to be quiet and contemplative: I think everyone loved it. An extraordinary addition to a magic garden.



By contrast with Kiftsgate, I found **Hidcote** disappointing: this iconic garden (which had inspired Kiftsgate, Sissinghurst and many others) appeared rather stiff, colourless, not to say, in parts at least, dull. The very small "old garden" next to the house was pretty enough with its small beds of bluebells interspersed with tall white tulips (a colour scheme repeated wherever there were flowers) ; but the famous "garden rooms" seemed very conceptual, very design conscious; smallish, (there was hardly room to walk round the pool in the Bathing Pool garden),

several of them had very little or no planting and so, little colour (one exception were the four lilacs at the four corners of Mrs Winthrop's garden (?), such a welcome sight! The red garden, the one that was really colourful, was cordoned off! Admittedly there are impressive spaces; the Long Walk is a fine perspective, the Theatre Lawns are vast but empty; the Stilt Garden is very elegant with its pleached hornbeams, but very cool, the Mediterranean, Pillar Garden had some lovely peonies at the foot of the clipped yews, roses later, I dare say. Even so, it was nice to revisit Hidcote, an exceptional garden to walk round, to admire, rather than to





feel at home in and enjoy; but having now seen so many other gardens, it was hard to understand its very high reputation.

*Simone Rawson*

## Island House and Wrest Park – 31<sup>st</sup> May 2012

**Island House** can be found in Godmanchester, a small town in Cambridgeshire. Godmanchester lies on the south bank of the river Great Ouse, just south of Huntingdon. Island House itself is located in Post Street, in the centre of the town, set on the banks of the river, overlooking the ornamental island from which it takes its name. The house is a fine example of early Georgian architecture with the frontage to the road exactly matching the garden and river front. Possibly because when the mansion was first built access to the house was by road and river.



We began the visit with tea/coffee and biscuits in the main hall of the house, the refreshments were then followed with a most entertaining talk by the current owner, Christopher Vane Percy. Christopher

regaled us with more than the usual potted history of the house and its owners his enthusiasm was infectious as was his obvious love for the place. After a quick tour of various rooms the gardens beckoned.

The gardens are enclosed with 18<sup>th</sup> century brick walls and mature trees, and are connected by a Chinese-style bridge to the island. The Chinese bridge was rebuilt in 1988 and is a replica of the original long lost 18<sup>th</sup> century one. One interesting little snippet from the talk was that many of the snowdrops on the island originate from a bunch brought back from the Crimea by General Baumgartner. Apparently many soldiers brought back snowdrops as a keep-sake.

I particularly enjoyed the informality of the island, with the river and the view across to the extensive water meadows. The parterre garden, with its six pyramid yews, allowed the house to 'sit well' within its surroundings. Across the lawn, Christopher had done extensive replanting of the long border, in 2007, after the loss of a cedar tree that was 168 years old. Our exit took us through the mill garden,





with its box hedging and hornbeams and splendid 18<sup>th</sup> century wrought iron gate.

**Wrest Park**, was in complete contrast to the above garden. Here we had a 90 acre, historic landscape garden and French style mansion, which had recently been restored by English Heritage after years of being an agricultural research institute.

We began our visit with a quick look around the few rooms of the mansion that are open to the public.

This gave us a

good idea of how the house and garden had evolved. We came out of the house from the integral conservatory into the newly restored Italian gardens.

2.30pm found us all assembled by the Wyvern statue awaiting our guides for the afternoon tour of the gardens. Where to begin? In the walled garden, I'm sure most of us were impressed by the 100 year old Judas tree, the grape/cape myrtle bush, and the magnificent wisteria, that is supported by chains – in its day it was reputed to be the largest chained wisteria in the county, now much reduced in size.



From the terrace in front of the mansion we had a splendid view across the parterre and rose garden to the more informal gardens beyond. The rose garden has been restored to its original shape, this shape being taken from an aerial photograph. The French parterre has been restored to its mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century layout.

On reaching the round pond, originally the site of the old house, we took a right turn to view the French-style orangery; this was built in the 1830s

during a re-landscaping of the upper gardens. Beyond the orangery could be found the bath house, which was altered in the mid 1830s, but was originally designed in 1769-70 to resemble a semi-ruined classical building, a style very much in vogue at that time.





We retraced our steps to view the American garden. This is being restored and is now as it was originally, divided into four symmetrical rectangular sections. These will be defined by two tiers of yew hedging and planted with yews, laurel and rhododendrons. The Bowling Green House, as its name suggests was built to provide a sheltered view of the bowling green. Sadly, it is no longer there, having being removed to open the view from the American garden.

The Great Garden is a rare example in England of a formal woodland garden in the French style. There are a network of rides and paths, now with restored gravel surfaces, many of which were bordered by clipped evergreens, some of which are being restored. The main rides are straight and arranged symmetrically on either side of the Long Water – a canal structure which may have been modelled on the 1660s canals at Hampton Court. Formally positioned at the end of the Long Water is Thomas Archer's pavilion. The

pavilion was designed as a pleasure house, to entertain hunting parties and suppers. But there is no doubt in my mind that the main purpose of this building was as a central focal point to the gardens; the pavilion aligns directly with the centre of the mansion. The central rotunda is crowned by a dome which rises through three floors, it has six projecting bays, and these were aligned to give views along the six principle walks. The view back to the house from the pavilion is well worth the walk.

Wrest Park can only get better under the stewardship of English Heritage and I have no doubt that it will be one of the foremost gardens of England in the not so distant future.

*Jane Wilford*

### **WE ARE MOVING AGAIN.**

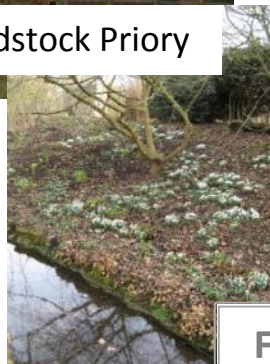
The Friends Meeting House has in many ways been an excellent venue for our lectures but it does have its disadvantages, parking being one and also several other organisations use the building on a regular basis. This meant that when booking speakers I had a limited number of choices which were mutually convenient. From 2013 we are going to use the Leicester Bowling Club in Kenwood Road (LE2 3 PL) There is lots and lots of parking space, room bookings are simpler and once you have found it we think you will like it. Details and maps etc will be in the next mailing.



Hodstock Priory



Clumber Park



February



Kiftsgate



Island House,  
Godmanchester



May



Hidcote



Wrest Park





Wingwell,  
Wing



Old  
Vicarage,  
Ketton

June



IN 2012



Calke Abbey



July



Oundle Walk



August



Stowe



Lyvedon New Bield



## Education

### Belgrave St Peters C of E Primary School

#### Visit to Kelmarsh by Year 2 (aged 6 to 7) for a day workshop

#### Arranged by Leicestershire and Rutland Gardens Trust

The day of the Kelmarsh visit had arrived at last and the double decker bus waited for twenty seven excited children and five somewhat anxious adults. Their teacher brought them smartly to order as they boarded the bus for the hour long journey to Kelmarsh. The journey passed off with much chatter punctuated by loud whistles from the teacher signalling interludes of calm and quiet however brief.

At last we arrived and, with much anticipation the children alighted in front of the lovely Kelmarsh house to be met by three brave Trust members and the Kelmarsh teacher. Intrigued by miles of shingle paths the children sand danced their way to the beautiful walled garden where the day's events would take place.

The first two sessions were all about the identification of vegetables and herbs, and the children could sample various vegetables as they went about their work. Many of the children come from the Mowacre Hill and Stocking Farm area of the city and have little access to gardens or allotments so the source of many foodstuffs is not well known to them, consequently this opportunity to experience the growing of food is invaluable ...as well as fun.



Off the groups went with their group leaders, including our staunch Trust volunteers, to complete their tasks. Much was made of sampling such delights as cauliflower and rhubarb with cries of “Ugh” and “Yummy”. One young man consumed every sample with relish, including rhubarb, and proclaimed enthusiastically “I love everything” – clearly a potential

vegan. Herbs were popular with much smelling, crushing and occasional eating. The dog graves, discovered with great interest by the children, gave Sue Blaxland the opportunity to present a much appreciated if somewhat unexpected maths lesson using the dates on the gravestones to work out, how long the dogs had lived. Well done Sue, schools are always looking to add value to the school day!

Sue was particularly impressed when one small girl asked if a plaque with a female face above one of the doorways was “Mrs Tree”. It took a few moments for Sue to realise that she was referring to Nancy Lancaster (then Nancy Tree) who had designed the gardens in the 1930's. Another child asked Elizabeth a similar intelligent question about William Hanbury, who designed the house. She didn't get the name quite right – “Mr. Tambourine” – but full marks for effort. Apparently, they had checked it up on their laptops before the visit!

The groups returned to the Kelmarsh teacher who, using the common potato explained the process from soil to the many products potatoes make, and she explained and discussed some of the negative additives that many foods contain. Then it was lunch and silence reigned for an unbelievably short time, followed by playtime in the maze and a very welcome quiet time for some of the helpers.

Then it was to the woods for the bug hunt in which all participated. I ended up on my hands and knees trawling through undergrowth with net, bug container and magnifying glass surrounded by observant and exploring children shouting “There’s one, Miss” “No, over here, I’ve got one”.

Very satisfied groups of children, followed by weary adults, returned to the walled garden to settle down to making their very own fantastical bug from potatoes, sundry interesting plastic items including eyes and colourful feathers. Suddenly it was home time. Twenty seven tired children and a large box of wonderfully exotic bug creatures made their way to the waiting bus as did five equally tired but well pleased adults.

We left the Garden Trust members and the Kelmarsh teacher, all of whom had organised and supported us so professionally during the day, to go and lie down in a dark room with a well deserved large glass of red wine.

We at Belgrave St Peters were very proud of our Year 2 children. They behaved in an exemplary fashion, and were active, interested and involved in every part of the day. All the children will remember this experience and for some it could well be a positive turning point.

On behalf of the staff and Governing Body of Belgrave St Peters I would like to thank everyone involved from Kelmarsh for making the day so successful. To the Leicestershire and Rutland Garden Trust our grateful thanks for making it all possible.

*Sheila Burnage*  
Chair of Governors



## Research

The Research Group has had a very interesting and action-packed programme over the last few months, taking advantage of longer days and, occasionally, better weather to get out and about.

In April, after a long wait we visited the site of Papillon Hall, near Lubenham (see Sue’s article below). We also went to London to look at the **Olympic Park**, in order to see the landscaping.

This was a wonderful day as we were guided around the Stratford area and the site of the developing Olympic Park by a Blue Badge Guide, Diana Kelsey. She showed us parts of old Stratford, the new Stratford City, the Olympic Village and, from various vantage points, identified for us the sporting venues on this site for London 2012. Unfortunately, we were unable to get onto the site and could only view it from the perimeter. It was hard to imagine that everything would be ready in time and disappointing that so little of the actual landscaping for the park was in evidence.



I was lucky enough to go to the Olympic Park during the Games. In many ways, I was more excited about seeing the landscaping than I was the athletics and was certainly not disappointed at the final transformation. The meadow planting around the venues and along the river banks was fabulous. It is planned that the central part of the park around the stadium will remain when the site is developed and, if it can be maintained as it is, it will be legacy indeed. I look forward to a future visit to see how it has progressed.



In May, we visited **Scraptoft Hall** and were dismayed by the condition of the site. The Hall and out-buildings are no more than shells and there was really little for us to record after so much vandalism. We also went into Scraptoft parish church, where we were shown an 18<sup>th</sup> century memorial to James Wigley, the owner of the Hall. This depicted him supervising the planting of trees on his estate.



For the second year, in June, we took a picnic to John Oakland's wild flower meadow at Long Close. It was looking beautiful and I think we were all amazed at just how many orchids there were. John set us a competition to count them!

In July a few members of the group went on a guided walk round Stonton Wyville (part of the British Archaeology Festival). This was to look at the remnants of a 16/17<sup>th</sup> century water garden.

In August, we visited the walled garden at **Osbaston**, where there is a rather unusual, partially sunken green house. We were shown round by the Head Gardener Flick Rohde who gardens organically and has a particular interest in growing herbs.



The winter is the time when we aim to consolidate our on-going research and delve further into the archives at the Record Office. Sue and Judith are both working on research for the Parks and Gardens Database – Papillon Hall and Knighton Park, respectively.

As you may remember, 2010 was the Year of the Walled Garden for the Trust and, since then, the Research Group has wondered if we could get more involved in this area. Now, particularly driven by Elizabeth's enthusiasm as she attended the Walled Garden Forum Conference recently, we are making the walled gardens of Leicestershire and Rutland our focus for the immediate future. Initially we are setting out to compile a register of as many walled gardens as we can, in the two counties, and we will then move on to start their recording. Local knowledge will be invaluable in locating the gardens, so if you know of any please let us know.

*Deborah Martin*

## **PAPILLON HALL: HOW THE RESEARCH GROUP SPENT A SURREAL AFTERNOON IN A LEICESTERSHIRE FARMYARD**

We don't usually write in detail about visits that the Research Group have made, but our trip to the site of Papillon Hall, last Spring, was so interesting that we thought Friends would like to hear about it.

We have been aware of Papillon Hall, near Market Harborough, since the early days of the Trust but gaining access to the site (now a farm) has eluded us. However, persistence, and an introduction from the Lubenham Heritage Group, finally opened the way for us. We were delighted to be joined on our visit by Dr. Douglas



Cawthorne, an architect and academic from De Montfort University and his partner, who is an art historian.

First, a little background: Papillon Hall was originally built in the 1620's by a French Huguenot, one David Papillon. The house was in the shape of a squashed octagon (wider than it was deep). The roof gables formed a cross shape with flat areas in each corner which could be used as gun emplacements. (David Papillon was an expert in military engineering and used the design of his house to put his theories into practice.) The house remained in that family until the mid 18<sup>th</sup>



Century and then passed through a series of different owners until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, when it was purchased by Captain Frank Bellville. The Bellville wealth came from the family business which was Robinsons (barley water) and Keens Mustard. In 1903, the company was acquired by Colmans Mustard.

In that year, Bellville engaged Sir Edwin Lutyens to redesign the house. Lutyens, with his typical wit, added four wings so that it formed the shape of a butterfly – “Papillon” in French, creating an elegant and stylish new building. Both the house and garden featured in Country Life magazine in 1911. We had obtained a set of photographs which showed us what a beautiful place it must have been. The house stood high in the landscape with commanding views of the Leicestershire countryside in all directions.

Bellville died in 1937 and the house became dilapidated as his son did not wish to live there. It was requisitioned by the Army at the outbreak of the War and continued to deteriorate. No buyer could be found after the War so, in 1950, it was demolished and the land was purchased by a farmer.



We had been warned that there was very little left to see on the site but nothing could really have prepared us for the rather surreal nature of our afternoon. For example, imagine, if you will, an elegant Lutyens-designed lily pond, with York stone steps leading down to the water, surrounded by a rickety wooden fence and what appeared to be a graveyard for old tractors!

Then alongside a pile of rubble and at ground level, we found a patch of attractive narrow bricks laid on edge. We scraped back the soil to reveal its shape and, from its position, realised that it must have been the dining room fireplace. We had not expected that amateur archaeology would form part of the afternoon's activities. Elsewhere on the site, we found red tiles, also laid on edge. These were revealed to form a circle – one of Lutyens 'signature' design details, often with a millstone in the centre.

An original feature which did remain and was clearly identifiable from the Country Life photograph, was the wall running along the north side of the garden. A pretty little octagonal summerhouse, with a pointed roof, had been built alongside it, but it is now in a parlous state of repair. The tall pillar at the end of the wall, which was originally surmounted by a lead statue, was still standing. We could admire the fine detailing of Lutyens' brickwork design.

Fighting our way through the undergrowth and into a thicket, we found the skeletal remains of a greenhouse. The glass had long gone, but the structure was still there, along with the benches and



a water tank. We were able to read the manufacturer's name in the metal work; unsurprisingly, it was by Thomas Messenger, who made the Rolls Royce of greenhouses.



The extensive stables were still standing and were used by the farmer to house equipment. We learned that American troops from the 92<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division had been billeted in these, four to a stall, prior to D-Day.

The juxtaposition of all the paraphernalia of a farmyard, alongside tantalising fragments from an elegant Edwardian house and garden was a strange combination. Our visit to this site really brought home to us how much was lost by the demolition of country houses in the aftermath of the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War. We will now continue with our in-depth research to try to find out all we can about the history of Papillon Hall.

*Sue Blaxland*



Photographs by Pip Wheatcroft

## Cards for sale

Profits to 'Schools into Gardening'

**£1.50 each**

Cards available at meetings or from  
Elizabeth Tel 0116 2705711

## THE NEWSLETTER IS CHANGING

As a result of the recent huge rises in postal charges it is likely that the next newsletter will see a change to the smaller A5 format, although this would definitely not mean the use of a smaller font as well. This then seems like a good opportunity to review the content, style and delivery of future editions.

You will notice that this newsletter has fewer descriptions of our visits and this is because Elizabeth has become more reluctant to ask for your contributions and so as she says "I took the easy way out and did nothing". Perhaps one way of dealing with this would be for Friends to offer to write something about a visit which they found particularly interesting to them.

We are also looking into the possibility of introducing some colour, as this really seems to bring the newsletter to life.

It is also possible that some Friends may prefer to receive their copy of the Newsletter electronically or just look at it on our website.

We would welcome your comments and ideas for content, presentation and delivery of future newsletters and also like to hear from Friends who would like to actually contribute articles.

There will also be an opportunity to discuss the newsletter at the Friends Evening in November

*Deborah Martin*  
Newsletter Editor

## You may be interested...

The Association of Gardens Trusts [www.gardenstrusts.org.uk](http://www.gardenstrusts.org.uk)

**Annual Weekend Conference 2013**

**Friday 6<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> September**

***EASTERN PROMISE Transforming London's Landscapes: From Abercrombie to the Olympics***

This will be hosted by the London Parks and Gardens Trust and based at Queen Mary's College, University of London, Mile End, London, E1 4NS and will look at the transformation of East London's landscapes since Patrick Abercrombie's seminal 1940s London Plan. Lectures and visits will focus on Mile End Park, Canary Wharf and the Thames Barrier Park and will conclude on Sunday with a guided tour of the Olympic Park.

Further details and booking forms will be available in late 2012

To receive further information please email: [office@londongardenstrust.org](mailto:office@londongardenstrust.org)

or telephone: 0207 839 3969

**Book:**

**Uvedale Price (1747-1829) Decoding the Picturesque** by Charles Watkins and Ben Cowell

Published Spring 2012 by Boydell Press 978 84383 708 4 Hardback £25.00

The first biography of the 16<sup>th</sup> century landscape gardener, Uvale Price, whose varied roles also included landowner, art collector, forester, landscaper, connoisseur and scholar

**FRIENDS EVENING**

Thursday 29th of November  
2012 (7.30pm)

This is one of our most enjoyable events and this year as well as the usual mix of contributions we hope we will be joined by Sally Walker, Chairman of AGT who will give a short presentation about the AGT. We are sure that she will be as impressed as we always are by the variety and ingenuity of the contributions from Friends.

**Location:** Friends Meeting House,  
16 Queens Road Leicester, LE2 1WP

**Useful Contact Numbers**

Chairman	Stephen Barker	07977923631
Membership	Irene Jones	0116 2709370
Events	Elizabeth Bacon	0116 2705711
Research/Newsletter	Deborah Martin	0116 2707525
Secretary	Sue Blaxland	0116 2609748

Or you can contact us at [www.lrgt.org](http://www.lrgt.org)

## EVENTS PROGRAMME 2013

20th January	Winter Lunch
13th February	Winter Coach Visit: Colesbourne, Gloucestershire
7th March	AGM and Spring Lecture: "William Kent" Caroline Knight, Architectural Historian Leicester Bowling Club, Kenwood Road, Leicester LE2 3PL AGM 7.00pm Lecture 7.30pm
28th April	Sunday Afternoon Lecture and tea: "The Lost Gardens of Khajuraho – India" Roland Byass Long Close, Woodhouse Eaves, where the garden will be open to visit
18th May	Coach Trip to Rousham, Oxfordshire
4th June	4-day holiday, visiting gardens in Herefordshire
21st June	Visit to two gardens in Rutland
4th July	Coach Trip to Hemmingford Grey and Abbots Ripton, Huntingdonshire
11th August	Town Walk in Market Harborough, including the Arboretum Date to be confirmed
15th September	Coach Trip to Syon House and Chiswick House, London
17th October	Autumn Lecture: "The Gardens at Calke Abbey" Steve Biggins, Head Gardener Leicester Bowling Club, Kenwood Road, Leicester LE2 3PL 7.30pm
14th November	Friends Evening Leicester Bowling Club, Kenwood Road, Leicester LE2 3PL 7.30pm

CELEBRITY LECTURE: To be arranged

**A colour version of this newsletter is available on our website**