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AND RUTLAND  
GARDENS  
TRUST



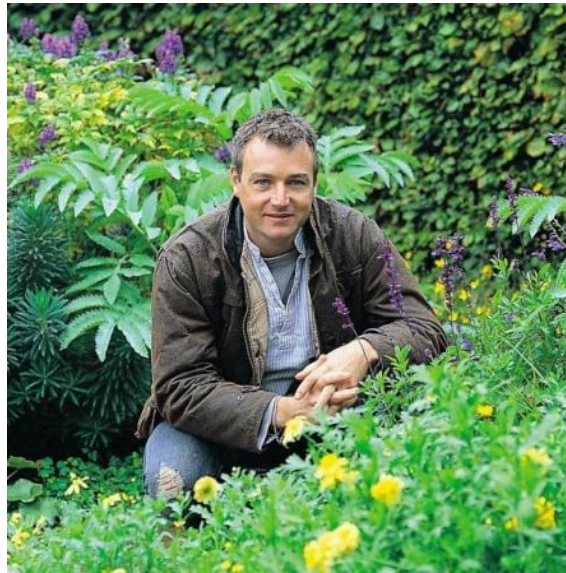
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# Newsletter

No 26 Spring 2011

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## Our Celebrity Lecturer for 2011



See page 18

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## **Chairman's Notes**

As I write this, it is another fine sunny day with not a cloud in the sky. This unseasonal burst of fine weather has been most enjoyable, as has the novelty of the spring bank holidays without rain. That said, I am sure that many of you are now wishing for a mild spell of rain to freshen up the garden and to put some moisture back into the ground. Speaking for myself, I am not usually thinking of watering plants in pots on a regular basis so early in the year.

The fine weather has been compensation for the cold spell over the winter. Everyone I have spoken to has lost some plants in the garden to the cold weather. Whilst this is a blow, it does provide the opportunity to have a fresh look at the garden and to introduce new plants. If gardens never changed they would become very boring.

We have good news on the education front, after many years of looking at ways of how we can best become involved with schools and promote an interest and enjoyment of gardening in the next generation. We have successfully completed our first project with Billesdon Primary School and will be shortly present them with a grant towards the cost of the garden they have created. The Education Group now is in contact with a city primary school who are planning to create a garden and we are looking into the possibility of working with Kelmarsh Hall, where they are running an education programme.

For those of you not at the last meeting we now have the AGT year book which is available to members. This will not be posted out as it would be too expensive, but will be available at meetings and events for those who would like one.

It remains for me to wish you all a pleasant summer in the garden and I hope to meet you on one of our events in the year.

*Stephen Barker, Chairman*

## **Events**

I hope the Friends found the winter programme of the L.R.G.T. more interesting than my winter of discontent, with a variety of viruses and chest infections. At the Friends' Evening, we covered a wide range of topics. These included the origins of the Soil Association, Leicestershire wild flowers, the Fibonacci sequence as illustrated in Pip Wheatcroft's photographs, the Leicestershire gardens designed by Christopher Tunnard and the year as seen through Peter Rawson's photographs, which become more magical each year. The Spring Lecture on Geoffrey Jellicoe was excellent and included a preamble on the latest research on the Painshill hermit. The many lunches which some of us had to eat before finding a suitable venue for our Winter Lunch, were more than justified, as the Nevill Arms in Medbourne came up to scratch. We will go there next year and I particularly enjoyed it as John Woodliffe set the quiz, which was both tricky and entertaining at the same time. I think he said he would do it again next year.

The coach trip to the Fens and Deene Park was the most popular to date - a full coach minus one. I was so pleased about this, as I had no idea what to expect, as we had visited both gardens before and it was likely to be very cold. So, thanks for your support and I was sorry not to have been there.

I am now at work on the 2012 programme - a bit late starting but I will get there. Our holiday destination will be either Suffolk or South Devon. As there is a lot to see in both counties, the location of a suitable hotel will dictate our choice. We also have a very interesting idea for the Celebrity lecture, but that will depend on cost and availability.

I was admitted to Glenfield Hospital early in the morning and did not notice the gardens. The following day, I just happened to look out of the window into the well of the buildings and was amazed to see the most wonderful garden of carpet bedding. It was really vibrant, beautifully kept and uplifting. There is a place at the General Hospital which would benefit from similar treatment. I wanted to find out more about the gardens but the Head Gardener was on holiday at the time and so there will be more on this in the next Newsletter, along with a write up on the Jellicoe lecture.

*Elizabeth Bacon*

#### **Autumn lecture: 21<sup>st</sup> October 2010**

**The Soil Association – An Overview** Molly Conisbee, Director of Campaigns and Communications of the Soil Association

This talk was not so much about soil, as the historical context and current work of the Soil Association.

Beginning with a cartoon of Eve asking Adam whether the apple was organic, Molly Conisbee argued that the Soil Association's philosophy was at odds with technological solutions to agriculture. She mentioned Colin Tudge's *Feeding People is Easy*, 2007. A biologist, farming journalist and broadcaster, Tudge argues that whilst 1 billion people in the west are overfed, 1 billion in developing countries are underfed. Opposed to industrial farming, he argues farmers should vastly increase the numbers and varieties of plants grown, whilst rearing fewer animals.

This supports recent news items, members may have seen, arguing to retain biodiversity and indicating we should eat less meat and more fruit and vegetables for health. Tudge reckons the 2% of the UK population working in agriculture should be increased to 20%. Given the government plans to make half million people unemployed in the next few years, perhaps Tudge also has the answer to our economic problems! But would many wish to become farmers? Among the Soil Association's current campaigns Molly mentioned providing organic farming apprenticeships and matching newly qualified farmers to the more than 600 vacated farms each year.

Amongst the early organic pioneers, were two who undertook research in India; the first being Major-General, Sir Robert Mc Carrison. Initially a Medical Officer to Indian troops, he published *Studies in Deficiency Disease*, 1921, centred on the relationship between nutrition and agriculture. He showed how many common diseases prevalent in industrial societies were caused by diets involving extensive food processing and chemical additives.

Secondly Sir Albert Howard, who in the 1920s ran a government research farm at Indore, India, and published *The Waste Products of Agriculture*, 1931. Building upon the agriculture of local peasant farmers, he used the new science of soil microbiology in composting experiments. His compost, using manure and crop waste, was twice as rich in nitrogen as ordinary farmyard manure. Using no expensive commercial fertilizers or seed, his research farm had record yields, there were no insect or disease problems, and the oxen became invulnerable to cattle diseases. In our discussion later, a contemporary parallel was provided by a Leicestershire organic farmer who said that this summer he had had high yields whereas neighbouring conventional farmers' crops suffered from the poor weather.

We were shown a short Foreign Office film of 1947 about the 'Peckham Experiment' inspired by the principles of both McCarrison and Howard. Concerned with preventative medicine, **George Scott Williamson** and his wife **Innes Hope Pearse** studied holistically the health of individuals and families in a community setting. After a trial period, in 1935 they had raised sufficient funds to build a purpose-built centre, the **Pioneer Health Centre**, Peckham. Designed by the innovative structural engineer, **Sir Owen Williams**, the building was pioneering in both form and programme: flat roof for outdoor activities; open planning, glazed partitions, and flexible spaces to aid observation of people; a large glazed roof and windows admitting lots of light and fresh air; cork floors for barefoot walking; and finally the provision of a nursery and covered playground.

Local shops failed to provide sound nutrition because vegetables and milk on sale were often stale, expensive or unsafe. So 'Peckham' rented and ran a 77 acre farm at Bromley Common, Kent, to pasture a herd of Jersey cows and grow organic vegetables and fruit using the 'Indore' composting method. This provided fresh organic food and milk for the Peckham cafeteria. Paying one **shilling** a week, some 950 local families could enjoy eating together, physical exercise, swimming, games and workshops within the centre whilst their relationships and health were regularly monitored. 'Peckham' survived until just after the National Health Service Act in 1946.

The one hour lecture/film format seemed inadequate to deal with the huge ramifications of the view that such a simple thing as healthy soil might offer an answer to contemporary problems of environment and human health. But, the large and lively audience was perhaps indicative of an increasing realization that the organic approach might just be it.

*Rowan Roenisch*

### **Friends' Evening 18 November 2010**

The Friends' Evening is an established and popular fixture on the LRGT calendar. The subjects chosen for the presentations reflect the diversity of interests and depth of expertise among the Trust's membership.

Marie Lloyd presented a beautiful photographic record of wild flowers in Leicestershire and Rutland. The survey was based in part on a project carried out by the Womens' Institutes in the two counties. Hotspots include Goadby and Owston woods. The speaker remarked on the close relationship between churchyards and the incidence of wild flowers. We also learned that

English bluebells, in common with their ubiquitous Spanish counterparts, can grow in colours other than blue.

Pip Wheatcroft offered an amusing and quirky perspective on the Fibonacci sequence (spirals) as seen through the lens of her camera which she trained on subjects as varied as flower heads, a hand X-ray, a feline curled up asleep, a cauliflower head, and block paving in an Austrian town. Pip's ongoing photographic pursuit of the 'golden ratio' that underpins the Fibonacci sequence was sparked by the LRGT visit to the inverted pyramid in the grounds of Boughton House, Northants, in 2009. We were reminded by Pip that the use of a camera in everyday contexts is viewed increasingly by officialdom as a threat to national security.

Stephen Barker provided a fascinating overview of the life and times of Christopher Tunnard, a long neglected modernist landscape designer active in this country in the 1930s and responsible for the design of two gardens in Leicestershire. The first garden was commissioned in 1936 by W.D. Keene in Ingarsby; the second in 1938, by his brother, Charles Keene, an influential Leicester civic dignitary and business man. In the same year Tunnard expounded his ideas in *Gardens in the Modern Landscape*, described recently as 'a polemical book' (Tim Richardson, *English Gardens in the Twentieth Century* (2005)). Stephen is intending to research further into Tunnard's work. We look forward to an update in due course.

The evening was rounded off with a stunning display of the photographer's art that we have come to associate with Peter Rawson. His wonderful eye for 'the bigger picture' was on show here - not just plants and flowers but perspectives, places and people. Among many memorable photos, Easton Walled Garden in the snow really hit the spot.

A most enjoyable evening concluded on a calorific high with an array of mouth-watering homemade cakes.

*Pat and John Woodliffe*

### **Winter Lunch, Nevill Arms, Medbourne**

Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> January saw 42 members heading south of the county, to the Nevill Arms in Medbourne for the Winter Lunch. Elizabeth and company had already carried out a dry run on an earlier Saturday, to give the place the 'once over', so we knew we were in for a treat, and the weather was also very obliging, especially after the earlier snow - what a blessing!

For those of you who do not know, the village of Medbourne lies on the main road from Market Harborough to Uppingham, approximately 14 miles south-east of Leicester. There are many interesting buildings including the Nevill Arms, a Tudor style inn built of the local ironstone in 1863, and a very pretty pack horse bridge.

Medbourne is perhaps most famous for the ancient game of 'Bottle Kicking' which takes place every Easter Monday between the people of Medbourne and Hallaton. There are parades in both villages with the distribution of hare pie; this precedes the scramble for 3 wooden barrels (the bottles) of ale. The players from both villages are keen to win this annual event and there is much celebrating before and after the game.



What can we say about the food? We thoroughly enjoyed all 3 courses. There was a choice of 5 starters, 5 mains and 4 puddings, and as we had ordered beforehand no real problems with the service, all you had to do is remember what you had ordered, and if that was a problem Elizabeth was on hand to put you right. There were various sizes of tables to sit, at and judging by the buzz of conversation, members soon found a table to join.

When the food and wine was coming to an end Stephen gave his usual Chairman's welcome speech and informed us that he had not set a quiz this time, but not to fear another member, John Woodliffe, had kindly volunteered.

John had been very thorough with his job, he set a selection of titles, such as Garden History, Plant Miscellanea, The Garden in Literature and Music, to test the party, and, in our case, test was the word. But, not everyone was as daunted as we were, and the winners: Paul and Gill Knight, Malcolm and Jennifer Elliott and Eileen Peers, managed a very respectable score. Well done! And a big thank you to John for all his effort.

Well, all good things must come to an end. You know it's time to go when the waiters/waitresses begin to hover too long, so reluctantly we all began to make our way out of the restaurant and on our way home. Finally a big thank you must be given to Elizabeth and her helpers. I know from experience it is not an easy job to organise a lunch out for a large group, although on the plus side you do have the pleasure of trying out places to eat; the greatest pleasure must come from knowing that it was a job very well done.

*Jane Wilford*

## Visit to Guanock House and Deene Park 17<sup>th</sup> February 2011

Our return visit to **Guanock House** took place on a dull February morning; very different from the visit last June (memories of tea on the lawn under the mulberry tree).



Guanock is situated at the end of a farm track. On arrival there is no sign of the garden which is hidden behind the house. In fact, no garden existed until 15 years ago. In the late 1990s the designer Arne Maynard moved to Guanock and began to develop the garden as a ‘living portfolio’ of his work.

Arne has now left Guanock but Robin has continued as gardener to the present owners who only use the house at the weekend. In the early stages of planting the garden, 7,000 snowdrops and aconites were planted every year. Now the original plantings are divided each year immediately after flowering; last year 2,500 bulbs were lifted and replanted.

The first of eight small gardens, the courtyard garden, has drifts of crocus, snowdrops, cyclamen and aconites beneath yew topiary. The many hellebores are

Bradfield hybrids from Harveys Garden Plants at Bury St Edmunds (the website is worth a look). The bulbs are left to die down until the grass is mown at the end of June with an Allen scythe.

The unusual and skittish Mouflon sheep in the adjoining paddock drew a crowd of admirers and across the paddock we could see a carpet of snowdrops in the distant orchard. On the day of our visit, the orchard trees were underplanted with a magnificent display of snowdrops and aconites. The flowers continue until May with *Narcissus lobularis*, *Fritillaria* and *Camassia*.



We were amazed by the huge clump of mistletoe at eye level in a small ‘James Grieve’ apple tree. Robin had chip budded this in May, 8 years ago. For the first 3-4 years nothing happened and then a tiny shoot appeared. The clump is now over a metre in diameter.



Robin and his new WRAGS (Women Returners to Amenity Gardening Scheme) trainee, Mary, spent 4<sup>th</sup> January, (Mary’s first day) cutting 600 coppiced hazel stems which they have used throughout the garden to create distinctive plant supports. In the rose garden, Peter Beale China, Portland and Moss roses, chosen for their scent and repeat flowering are meticulously trained spirally around hazel pyramids and domes, allowing light into the centre of the plant and encouraging maximum flowering to cover the support. The theme continues with sturdy supports over the dormant perennials and every conceivable shape and size of hazel structure in the kitchen garden.

The walled kitchen garden induced groans of envy for the sturdy broad bean plants, well organised tool shed, traditional apple store and the tempting gardener’s room with blazing log fire and comfy arm chair.

*Val Hartley*

In sharp contrast to Guanock, the gardens at **Deene Park** encircle a grand 16<sup>th</sup> century mansion, the home of the Brudenels since 1514. It was the home of the Earl of Cardigan under whose command the infamous charge of the Light Brigade took place. Ushered into an outbuilding, we sat down at long tables reminiscent of Christmas Day in the workhouse, but the soup was very welcome, as were the varied sandwiches and warming tea and coffee. Afterwards we were free to wander anywhere in the grounds. For the specialist, there is an area close to the house where 35 different varieties of snowdrops are labelled. Close by we sensed the fragrance of wintersweet.





To the east of the house is an area of grass and a weeping beech carpeted with snowdrops, beyond which is a fine bridge created out of a former balustrade. Snowdrops cover the woodlands to the north and west of the house, where some of us chanced to see a muntjak deer bound from the undergrowth. A winding path leads to a large area of water, dammed to feed a lake below the south front. On this south front is an herbaceous border and formal gardens laid out with box and lavender and roses. Beyond the lake is naturalistic parkland and between the formal gardens and



natural landscape is a row of pink and white viburnum. This is one of the features of Deene that reflect the wishes of the owner, Mrs Brudenel, in contrast to the preference of Andrew, the gardener, who would rather emphasise the contrast between informality and artifice by taking out the viburnum entirely. But at this time of the year one has to be grateful for such colour. Another mark of Mrs Brudenel's taste are the delightful tea pots, not only created from topiary yews, but also crowning the obelisk erected as a memorial to the millennium.



*Malcolm and Jennifer Elliott*



Unfortunately the following article was omitted from the last newsletter

### **Timeout from Leicestershire and Rutland Garden Trust.**

I attended two events this summer which really impressed me and I thought might be of interest to Friends of the Trust, the first being the Hoby Weekend and the second being Cottesbrooke Plant Fair.

The former event happens every two years and involves the whole village. Hoby obviously got to the Big Society long before David Cameron. There are lunches in the village hall, exhibitions in the church, cream teas in various houses, a Pimms bar and many other attractions including 12 open gardens and as I did not get to the other attractions except Diane's cream tea, (she made 200 scones) it was these that really impressed me. I was there with Fliss manning a Trust stall in Diane and Steve Horsfield's garden. I had done the same two years ago and enjoyed the day but did not visit any of the other gardens. This year I was determined to see some of those on offer. Fliss and I set off and managed to visit, I think, about six. I have been to other village open gardens days and usually find only one or two that impress, and not always that many, but Hoby is obviously different: all the gardens we saw were impressive. What is it about this village that can produce such a high proportion of really talented gardeners producing imaginative and interesting gardens? There are many differing garden styles and plantings and, if my memory serves me right, managing to echo the house which they surrounded. For example the more modern houses had a more modern approach, while the cottages had cottage gardens. One so often sees plantings inappropriate to their setting.

I was sorry there was insufficient time to visit more of the gardens and all the other attractions, but, considering everything on offer, the weekend is a marvellous tribute to the village and its spirit of community.

**Cottesbrooke Plant Fair** is in its second or third year, and, although I really love Cottesbrooke, this year was my first visit. The reason for going with Sue and Debbie was to hear Dan Pearson speak. I had heard him on Radio 4 and thought he would make an excellent speaker for our 2012 Celebrity lecture. He was asking a rather large fee and we wanted to hear if he was worth the money if we decided we could afford him.

For those of you who know Cottesbrooke, you will be aware that it is usually approached from the East, but, because of the expected numbers, the car park was on the north side of the house, so the approach was from there and it was just lovely. It was a sunny June day and all the plant stalls were arranged in a sort of circle on the east lawn under cream umbrellas. We were anxious to book our tickets for Dan Pearson and so went to the booking tent first. Having bought our tickets, I then realised that there were two other lectures which were free: Ursula Buchan, the garden writer was to talk about the garden, no longer existing, that Valerie Finnis created at Boughton House and Tim Richardson, Garden Historian about his latest book on Great North American Gardens. I was interested in all of them which meant spending most of the day inside and not enjoying the garden or spending money on plants. All three lectures were of interest, and I sat there thinking "Can we afford them and would the Friends enjoy them?" Valerie Finnis was, among other things, as some of you will remember, one of the first TV women gardeners and, with her husband, she created a significant garden at Boughton House. It was a lovely glimpse into the gardening world of the 30s 40s 50s and 60s. Tim Richardson made me want to jump on a

plane and go to America. It was amazing to see an 18<sup>th</sup> century parkland ending in a rice paddy and to be reminded again that the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> American Presidents visited Painshill to get ideas for Montecello. The afternoon ended with Dan Pearson - the purpose of our visit. He based his lecture on his latest book "Spirit, Garden Inspiration". He was excellent, entertaining and erudite. I will say no more and will await our next Committee Meeting with interest. In the course of the lectures I met Phylip, who was our lecturer last October and a couple from Argentina who were distant relatives of the Macdonald Buchanans (owners of Cottesbrooke), and who were staying at the house. I tried lobbying them for more opening days of the garden.

Debbie and I did manage a quick look at the herbaceous borders which had been replanted and were quite beautiful. Subsequently I learned that Arne Maynard was the garden designer responsible.

The day turned out to be stimulating and quite different from what I had anticipated, which is why I recommend the event to you There is lots to interest and you can make of the day what you will: mind you, as ever, the weather did help.

For details of the 2011 Fair see page 19  
*Elizabeth Bacon*



## Membership

Many thanks to all those members who have renewed their subscription so promptly. Our membership currently is 133 members, with one Association-Newbold Verdon Gardening Club. We have 10 new members, so 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 you will all continue our policy of introducing like-minded friends to the Gardens Trust.

Welcome to:

Janet Lee, Dr Elaine Brown, Dr Noel Simpson,  
Anne Stanford, Joan Meakin, Bronwyn Cragg,  
Carol Borthwick, Ruth Taylor

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

The number of members who have opted to pay their subscription by bankers order continues to increase and is now about 40% of our membership. So many thanks to those of you who have chosen this method of payment. The form is available both on our leaflet and on the website. It reduces costs for us, which means we have more funds to use for visits, lectures or even educational grants as we expand our activities.

*Irene Jones*

## **Education: “Schools into Gardening”**

This area of the Gardens Trust’s activities is progressing well.

The Committee has agreed to award a grant of £350 to Billesdon Primary School in Leicestershire, once the Sensory Garden is completed. This has now been done and Sue Blaxland and Irene Jones will visit the school on Thursday 5th May 2011 to see the garden. The grant will be awarded shortly afterwards, at a small ceremony

Hope Hamilton Primary School has applied for a grant this year. This is a larger school, within the City, with 334 pupils some of whom have Special Educational Needs. They too want to build a sensory garden within an irregularly shaped courtyard. Sue Blaxland, Sheila Burnage and Irene Jones visited the school on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2011 and were impressed by the enthusiasm of the Project Leader. An allotment and pond with decking has already been produced, although the school is only 6 years old. The design of the courtyard garden has been redone with help from a landscape gardener. The school will require at least £2,000 for its scheme and will be fundraising in a big way. Our contribution, which has been agreed by the Committee, will certainly help.

Kelmarsh Hall and Gardens are well on their way in offering children the experience of the Outdoor Classroom. The Education Group held their last meeting in the Old Servants Hall at Kelmarsh with Esther McMillan, the Head Gardener and Katie Thomas, who leads the day-long activities when the children attend. The day takes place in the walled kitchen garden and focuses on the food we eat, There are tasting sessions and activity sheets for a class of 25-30 which will be subdivided into smaller groups. In the afternoon the children can choose between making food or hunting for bugs and beasties. The Gardens Trust is hoping to fund the hire of a coach or bus to take a group of children there from Inner City Schools there and Esther will waive the normal fee of £3 per head to support us. This project is in its early days and I shall report more in the next Newsletter.

Sue Blaxland has found us a source of excellent child size gardening tools at a reasonable price. We hope to give a set to each school that receives an award and to pass on our source to other schools who are interested in acquiring small scale tools.

“Schools into Gardening” is part of our obligation as a registered charity as well as our commitment to gardeners and lovers of the landscape of the future. The main source for our small grants will come from our Celebrity Lecture, so we need your support in attending and bringing friends as guests to our lecture to enable us to help the young people. At the AGM, there was no disagreement to the proposal that, at some events, a voluntary collection could be made to raise additional funds for schools. We have learnt that school budgets have been cut by 10% and this will be repeated over 2 more years. Consequently visits and new projects in schools are likely to cease.

**If this is an area which interests you or one in which you can make a contribution, please contact me.**

*Irene Jones*

## **Volunteers wanted as guides for Kelmarsh Kitchen Garden**

Here over the border at Kelmarsh Hall and Gardens, we are looking for individuals to help lead public tours of our kitchen garden every Thursday or Sunday for 3 months – probably June, July and August. The focus of the tour is really the design, layout and structures in kitchen gardens, to try to communicate to people all the effort and ingenuity put into growing food in the past.

Information will be provided, but if you are a Susan Campbell fan and like chatting to people – even better! We are planning a training morning with a chap who will train you in guiding techniques!

Why all this activity? Because we are starting a wall repair project mostly funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and we are keen to tell others about the glories of the walled garden tradition. The grant will also cover most travel expenses too!

For more details please email headgardener @kelmarsh.com or phone me on 07764 366 563

*Esther McMillan. Head Gardener*

## **Research Group**

The Research Group was unable to visit Rothley Court as planned in November because of the ‘big freeze’, but we did return to Quorn Hall for a most enjoyable Christmas lunch to round off the year. Our other winter activities saw us complete sorting the Belgrave Hall archive and visit the Record Office to discover more about Rothley Court. Barbara Lofthouse and Fliss Hector have now put their research on Evington Park and the Arboretum onto the Parks and Gardens UK database.

In February, we finally managed to visit Rothley Court and were shown round the garden and Templar Chapel by members of the Rothley Heritage Group. This included climbing up and down two sets of step ladders to get into the walled garden, as the gate was padlocked! It was a very interesting visit and we were able to see traces of the landscape design which had been



prepared for the estate by William Emes, the “Capability Brown of the Midlands”, in 1782. The history of the estate will form an entry on the database and a possible future Newsletter article.



The walled garden at Rothley Court

We had a guided walk around part of Aylestone Meadows in March. The weather was good and it was easy to see why there had been so much opposition to the planned new football pitches. It was hard to believe we were so close to the City and busy ring road, a beautiful green space many of us were unaware of.



Our next visit will be to Lyveden New Bield to learn more about the “Labyrinth” which was created for Sir Thomas Tresham and whose design was discovered from Luftwaffe photographs from the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War. We are also planning a summer picnic in the wild flower meadow at

Long Close. We have welcomed another new member of the group and look forward to an active programme of visits and research. If you are interested in joining us, please get in touch.

*Deborah Martin*

### **Statues at Belgrave Hall**

In the Spring 2010 Newsletter we asked for information on the Belgrave Hall statues.

“A little bit to add to the story of the statues (more mysteries rather than facts.)

We have a volunteer, Erica Statham, who is doing some research into the Hall. In a book 'History of Belgrave' by David Campton, she had picked up that he says about the statues '*some of these were removed to Enderby.*'

By coincidence she lives in Enderby and has written a local history. She says that an old lady told her that there were life size statues in a garden there, in the 1920's. She is trying to get access to the garden to see if any are still there.

Maybe she'll find Pomona and Flora!”

*Val Hartley*

### **Launde Abbey and the power of the internet**

In 2007, the Trust was approached by Launde Abbey, asking if we could help to research the history of the garden. This was to support their grant application for funds for structural repairs and modernising the accommodation to bring it up to 21<sup>st</sup> century standards.

The Research Group spent an enjoyable few months on this project. We visited Launde, explored the archives at the Record Office and spoke to the grandchildren of staff who had worked there.

In due course, we produced our report, which we also published on our website.

As a result of this, we were contacted by an Ian Dawson in Canada. Ian is a descendent of the Dawson family who owned Launde during much of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He told us that he had inherited the family photograph albums and wondered if we would be interested in having copies of some of the pictures. We were, of course, really excited by this. We thought you would be interested to see some of these photos, which not only gave us evidence of how the garden looked but painted an evocative picture of upper-class country life in the summer before the Great War. One cannot help wondering what became of the carefree young men who were playing cricket in the field in front of the Abbey.

*Sue Blaxland*



*View of the Cottages at Lamsde Abbey  
1914*



*The garden at Lamsde Abbey 1914*





## ***'Bottoms in the air'* Leicester University Botanic Gardens Plant Identification Course**

If you get a kick out of plants and enjoy looking at the intricate structures of their flowers or leaves, then the Plant Identification Course run by Leicester University Botanic Gardens might be for you.

If you know the names of a few plants or weeds but would like to know the names of more; if you passionately believe in preserving plant diversity or are fascinated by the fact that urban areas nowadays may support wild plants rarely to be found in the countryside then seriously think about this course. You won't find a course that is more fun nor has more supportive and helpful tutors and you will be studying with others who share your passions...and, there's a delightful local group of the British Botanical Society which you can join afterwards to continue to keep up your interests!

I completed the course last summer with a range of people including a botanic artist, rangers from local wildlife trusts, gardeners, and several retirees and enthusiasts. In the first term (which can be taken on its own as a taster course) we looked at the basic forms of plants and learnt the names of about thirty or so British flowering plant families. We then learnt about plant habitats, hybridisation and reproduction.

Once the winter was over most of the time was spent 'bottom in the air' out in the field. We went to a range of sites enabling us to sample plants that frequent very different environments including Charnwood Forest, the Derbyshire Dales, the Norfolk coast and Birmingham. Our aim being to learn to name as many plants as possible and note variations between species through noticing things such as the presence of hairs, the shape of petals or the number of stamens. Understanding plant form often revolves around the complexities of reproduction. Sex or the

lack of it can be mind-bogglingly weird and leads to much humour. Botanists are the most congenial group of experts that I have ever worked with and you can be sure of lots of laughs on the way.

The course can be taken in optional stages. You can just take the first term and learn the families with no commitment to do more. If you enjoy this you can take the next two terms. Then at the end you can opt in or out of the FISC Test (Field Identification Skills Certificate). Delightfully, no-one fails; you just achieve a score showing the level you have reached! So what's to lose? Why not join the course next September?

Rowan Roenisch October 2010

## Dates for the diary

### Celebrity lecture 2011

*Unlocking the Charm of Hidcote Manor Garden*  
Speaker, Chris Beardshaw

Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> September

Ken Edwards Lecture Theatre, University of Leicester

Hidcote Manor Gardens is one of the most visited and popular gardens in this country but, what is it about Hidcote that has captivated so many people over so many years? Chris Beardshaw has visited the gardens since his early childhood and decided to design and build a Chelsea Flower Show garden in 2007 to celebrate their centenary – which earned him the People's Choice Award for the second consecutive time. Chris will be giving an illustrated talk which looks at the arrangements of spaces and plant combinations that have delighted us all and which will enable you to better understand how you can bring those ideas home to your own garden.

Further details nearer the time.

### Kelmarsh Hall

Talk *The Omnipotent Magician, Lancelot 'Cabability' Brown 1716-1783* By Jane Brown

Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2011

Ticket includes time for a walk in the Gardens and light refreshments £10.00

For further information or to book contact Estelle Chapman on 01604 686543

Exhibition of Photographs by Peter Rawson

New Walk museum 20<sup>th</sup> May – 10<sup>th</sup> July 2011

Hungarton Open Gardens (The Trust will have a stall here)

11<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> June 2011

### **Cottesbrooke Plant Finders Fair 2011**

**Friday 24<sup>th</sup> June – Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> June 2011**, 10.00am – 5.30pm

Tickets £8.50 per adult., children are free

Further details [www.cottesbrookehall.co.uk](http://www.cottesbrookehall.co.uk) or telephone 0845 130 7778

### **Exhibitions at Compton Verney, Warwickshire**

*Stanley Spencer and the English garden*

*Capability Brown and the landscapes of Middle England*

Both exhibitions run from **25<sup>th</sup> June to 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2011**

Details [www.comptonverney.org.uk](http://www.comptonverney.org.uk) Telephone 0192 6645500

### **London Open Garden Squares Weekend**

Open Garden Squares Weekend will take place on June 11th / 12th 2011. Organised by the London Parks and Gardens Trust, the annual event, now in its 13<sup>th</sup> year, includes approximately 200 gardens in 22 of the London Boroughs.

The weekend offers the rare opportunity to get behind walls and gain inspiration from London's private community gardens and squares. The majority of the gardens are not normally open to the public; rich in variety and often hidden from view they range from the historically memorable to the small and quirky. They also present a glorious reflection of London's diversity and visitors will discover contemporary spaces; renowned roof gardens; cemeteries and working allotments.

Open Gardens Squares Weekend continues to offer free guided cycling and walking tours between the gardens. Two podcasts and self-guided bike rides can be downloaded from:

[www.londongardenstrust.org/guides](http://www.londongardenstrust.org/guides) and [www.opensquares.org](http://www.opensquares.org) provides all the latest news and updates.

One ticket allows entry to all venues over the entire weekend. Ticket prices will be £7.50 in advance and £10 if bought during the weekend. These will be available from **May 5th 2011**.

### **Annual Conference of the Association of Gardens Trus**

*Power Gardening - Dukes & Generals in Early-18th Century Oxfordshire*

This year the conference is organised by Oxfordshire Gardens Trust and is based at Worcester College, Oxford, September 2nd - 4th 2011

The conference will examine the development of four great gardens in Oxfordshire in the early 1700s: Blenheim, Heythrop, Rousham and Shotover. There will be visits to each of these with expert guides, highlighting links between their creators (including two dukes and two generals). These gardens illustrate the transition in landscape gardening from rigidly imposed geometry to Arcadian informality.

The conference will appeal to anyone with an interest in historic gardens and the development of the English style of landscape gardening in the eighteenth century.

To obtain further information or to reserve a place, please contact the conference organiser at [www.agt.org](http://www.agt.org)

### **Walled Kitchen Gardens Network Forum October 1<sup>st</sup> 2011**

The Walled Kitchen Gardens Network is an informal group of national organisations and individual experts, with the aim of offering help and support to owners, enthusiasts and

professionals who wish to restore or find suitable new roles for these all too often abandoned gardens

This year's Forum will be at **Dyffryn Gardens, near Cardiff**, owned and managed by the Vale of Glamorgan County Council. The 55 acres of Grade I listed pleasure grounds were laid out in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century by Thomas Mawson, which are among the best, if little known, examples of his work. However the walled kitchen garden is of an earlier date, but is included in Mawson's plan. With assistance from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the gardens have been undergoing an extensive restoration programme, and last year work began on the walled kitchen garden. This is being restored to reflect the Edwardian period, cultivation began this Spring and the glasshouses are due to reopen this summer.

This restoration project is of great interest as there are a significant number of publicly owned walled kitchen gardens throughout the country. The subjects under discussion will explore the problems and rewards of restoring these often large and important gardens for the benefit of the general public.

This will be an all day event, with an opportunity to tour the gardens in the afternoon. Tickets will cost £60 for the day, to include lunch, refreshments and guided tours.

For further information please contact Fiona Grant [f.grant14@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:f.grant14@tiscali.co.uk) or ring 01743 860664.

Walled Kitchen Gardens Network  
[www.walledgardens.net](http://www.walledgardens.net)

<b>Useful Contact Numbers</b>		
Chairman	Stephen Barker	01858 433545
Membership	Irene Jones	0116 2709370
Events	Elizabeth Bacon	0116 2705711
Research Group	Deborah Martin	0116 2707525
Secretary	Sue Blaxland	0116 2609748

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

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

