



Newsletter

No 31 Autumn 2013

www.lrgt.org

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From Spuds to Chelsea to Leicester Cleve West comes to town



Members of the Committee with Cleve West, after the Celebrity Lecture in early September. This was a most enjoyable and interesting evening, making around £300 for our Schools into Gardening project.

See page 11



Rousham
Oxfordshire
May



OUT AND ABOUT
2013



Prebendal House,
Empingham
Rutland
June
Old Vicarage,
Burley on the Hill
Rutland



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CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Over the summer, the LRGT was consulted by the AGT along with every other County Garden Trust over proposals to merge the AGT with the Garden History Society (GHS). The background to this is a proposal from English Heritage, who provides a grant to both groups that are involved in garden and landscape heritage, that they should combine their activities with a view to reducing duplication of functions to maximise the resources available for heritage work. The other main aim is by merging the different organisations, this will raise the profile of garden and landscape heritage at a regional and national level. Both these aims are important considerations at a time of reducing budgets for heritage work and greater pressures from the easing of the planning regulations to enable the building of new houses, roads, railways, etc.

The committee has considered the proposals that have been put forward and have given their consent to the AGT to discuss these proposals with the GHS, with the possible inclusion at a later date of Parks & Gardens UK, who maintain the Parks & Gardens Database. In giving their

consent the committee made it clear that they did so on the understanding that the County Garden Trusts will retain their independence to organise their own affairs and activities and that the relationship between the County Garden Trusts and the AGT will remain unchanged. The committee does not want the merger to create a dominant central body dictating policy to the County Garden Trusts.

At this stage the proposals for the merger are being discussed by a committee with members drawn from the AGT and GHS. It is anticipated that their recommendations will be put out for consultation next year. The merger will only take place if the majority of County Garden Trusts and the GHS approve the recommendations. The committee of the LRGT will support proposals that will enhance the membership of our Trust but, as outlined above, will reject any recommendations that curtail the independence and identity of the Trust and policies directed from a central body that the Trust does not agree to. In particular we are concerned about suggestions that County Garden Trusts should become more involved in dealing with planning applications, thereby relieving the GHS who are the statutory body for dealing with planning applications for gardens and landscapes.

I will keep members informed of further developments and the outcome of future consultations.

Stephen Barker
Chairman

EVENTS

Spring and Summer 2013

Caroline Knight opened our year of William Kent with the **Spring Lecture** on his life and work. It was scholarly and an excellent introduction to our planned visits to Rousham and Chiswick later in the year.

Kent was the forerunner of early English Landscape Design and the landscape at **Rousham** is virtually unchanged since the 18th century. It was here on that May afternoon that I really felt I understood what it was all about. I was walking down towards Venus Vale, the sun came out, the effect on the new green of the trees, the statuary and the water was dazzling - a classical painting.

The walled garden, herbaceous borders and dove cote weren't bad either.



Chiswick House, a neo Palladian villa was built by Lord Burlington with help and advice from Kent who, like Burlington, was an admirer of all things Italian. Together, using Kent's skills as a painter, architect and garden designer they created a showcase where Lord Burlington could show off his art collection and entertain his friends in an exquisite setting.



We were given an excellent tour of the house; it was not difficult to imagine how it had been in its heyday, particularly on seeing the small but sumptuous blue room which had been recently restored.

The garden guides did not materialise; it was raining so we did a quick walk round the gardens but did have time to appreciate the Kent landscape. When I was in Central

Park in New York I wish I had known the design was based on William Kent's Chiswick.

In the morning we visited **Syon Park**. I do find the contrast between the sparse Adam exterior and the opulence of the interior difficult to reconcile. The guide was little disappointed that we did not complete the tour and wanted us back in the afternoon. However, we were anxious not to miss the Great Conservatory which was utterly amazing. It was built in 1820 and influenced Paxton in his design for the Crystal Palace for the Great Exhibition of 1851



I did check with Chiswick as to why the garden guides did not appear. There was some miscommunication re confirmation of dates and they have offered a free tour to any of the Friends.

We had a splendid holiday in **Herefordshire** this year and you can read all about this in the Travel Edition, soon to be available on our website. If Friends cannot access this or would like a hard copy of the Herefordshire Travel Edition, they should contact Deborah for details.

In June we visited two gardens in Rutland: John Partridge's, the **Prebendal House at Empingham** and Sandra and Jonathan Blaza's, **The Old Vicarage at Burley on the Hill**. They were a good contrast, as Empingham is a mature garden which was developed by the owners when they bought the house in the fifties and the latter, more recently, over the last six years.

I think we all appreciated the fact that John Partridge invited us through his beautiful 17th century house and out on to the terrace where coffee was waiting.



His garden had several different areas including a water garden and a walled garden all of which had a comfortable feel about them and one felt that one could settle down anywhere with a book on a summer afternoon.

The Old Vicarage on the other hand is a tribute to the hard work and imagination of the Blaza's. Over a short period of time and with very little help, they have created a lovely garden complete with new walled kitchen garden. The latter was extremely well stocked with fruit and vegetables, the glass house equally so and there were some wonderful ripe white peaches. The park at Burley Hall abuts this garden and good use had been made of the borrowed landscape with its old mature trees. It was a warm sunny day so we were able to round off the day with the inevitable tea and cake in this lovely setting. It was an appropriate way to spend the longest day.



There was hardly a dry eye in the house when Lucy Boston's daughter in law Diana Boston showed us round the house at **Hemingford Grey** and told us the tale of the pilots who were entertained to tea and gramophone record

recitals on Sunday afternoons during the war. Hemingford Grey is a lovely village and Lucy Boston's small cottage sits in its own grounds, by the river and surrounded by the garden she created. We were running late and therefore our visit was shorter than I would have wished.

Some of us had been to **Abbots Ripton** in 2012 and again I was struck by the size of the garden in relation to number of staff. Gavin, the head gardener must spend every daylight hour working in this garden as well as providing tea and biscuits for the likes of us. It also occurred to me that the tour should begin where he finishes because there is a lot of interest and, bearing in mind the size and time limitation, one begins to feel a bit over gardened. It is a remarkable garden.

Thanks to Women's Institute in Hemingford who provided us with coffee and a good lunch.

Having told everyone that the summer walk was to be in Market Harborough, it was in fact in **Medbourne** as the logistics would not work out in Harborough. We had the lot this time, the organ recital in the church, thanks to Anne De Graeve, a walk through the village and tea in the old school



play-ground. This was catered by a family whose daughter as raising money for her gap year helping a worthy cause abroad, I can't remember what, but the tea was excellent - a change from money for church funds.

After tea, some of us went to the garden where Esther McMillan, as 'Gladys Plum and her Amazing Flower Orchestra', has a business

growing cut flowers for weddings, events and gifts. Some of us bought flowers, as well as picking abundant blackcurrants, which are not easy to come by these days. The cut flowers in the walled garden were fantastic. I think Esther is an exceptional gardener as it all looks so big and blooming with wonderful colours and lots of varieties.

Coach Travel

As some of you already know we had a certain amount of trouble with a coach company, which is why we are now using PAUL WINSON in Loughborough, who came to our rescue at short notice. He is more expensive than other companies but I think he is worth it: his coaches are newer and by definition, more comfortable. We cost the trips on 40 people and, if we don't have that number, we are likely to lose money, if above that, we make a small profit. If the garden guides at Chiswick had materialised we would have lost nearly £100.

Newsletter and Events

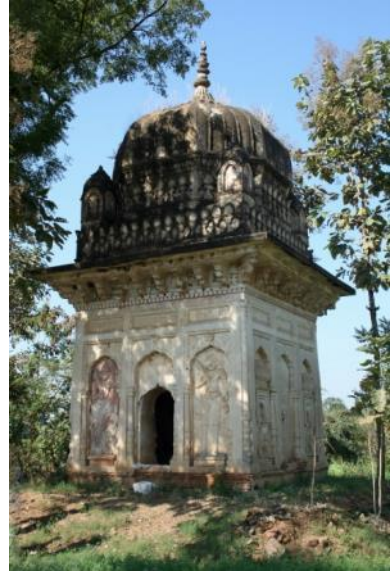
Until this year we have included in the newsletter descriptions of our visits and events. As you will see, Diane Horsfield has written a good piece on The Lost Gardens of Khajuraho followed by afternoon tea at Long Close. After that, nothing. One of the reasons being that I found it increasingly difficult to ask Friends who are, after all, out for the day, to do some homework. I do an overall piece which is probably sufficient but should any of you feel moved to do more, then please let me know.

Elizabeth Bacon

The Lost Gardens of Khajuraho

On a (very) cold Sunday afternoon in April we were transported back to 18th century India by Roland Byass. More specifically to Rajnagar, in the district of Chatturpu, to the site of the thirteen gardens that are the subject of the lost gardens of Khajuraho project.

Khajuraho is famous for its dozens of stone temples and attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors each year, with the associated chaos that every major India tourist attraction generates. Yet a few miles out of town the tranquil forgotten gardens are every bit as interesting and evoke a whole vanished way of life. The Belgian branch of INTAC (the Indian version of English Heritage) is funding a heritage based project which aims to bring these gardens back to life, introduce organic farming methods and sustainable tourism to the area.



The gardens were built by the Maharajahs of Chatturpur, local Hindu aristocrats, as places to stay when they visited the nearby temples. Each follows the same basic design, rectangular, enclosed by a five foot wall, with a kothi (a rather fancy shed), a temple and a cremation platform, surrounded by a walled garden for growing fruit and vegetables, irrigated from a step well. Roland captivated us all as he described the progress of the project, the future plans and the joys and frustrations of working with the owners of the gardens and the Indian authorities, all illustrated with his splendid photographs. We could almost feel the heat and smell the flowers!

The lecture ended with Steve Horsfield giving our impressions of the gardens following our visit to them in February. Suitably wrapped up we braved the elements and strolled around the garden at Long Close, which despite the absence of spring, was looking absolutely glorious. The afternoon finished with a traditional LRGT afternoon tea. Many thanks to John Oakland for hosting this event again this year. Thanks

also to everyone who helped set up the room, made the cakes and served the teas.

Diane Horsfield

SCHOOLS INTO GARDENING

Judith Hibbert and I enjoyed a visit with a class of 8 year olds from Eyres Monsall Primary School on 20th May 2013. It was a grey damp day but the excitement, bright eyes and liveliness of the children alerted us to the delight of the Walled Kitchen Garden. We, too, could see it with new eyes. They plant hunted in the morning session and learnt about our food and where it comes from. Tastings took place. After a picnic lunch



indoors we went on a bugs and beasties hunt with great success. Some games followed and the children left for the end of the school day waving and thanking us with enthusiasm.

At Brooksby Melton College on the 24th September the **Gardens Trust Student Award** was given to **Will Miller**, a student in Horticulture. He was given a certificate to mark the occasion and a grant worth £100 for making the most progress within his course of study. The award will be in the form of books or equipment needed on the course. Equipment such as drawing boards and good quality secateurs can be costly. After discussion with the student the college will buy what he has chosen from their suppliers. We had agreed to awards for 3 years in all but this could be extended.



'I have chosen to spend the money on garden design equipment like a drawing board or compasses or pens and pencils that I will need for the L3 Horticulture. I think that this will add value to the course as it will improve the quality of my drawings and then overall help me to get a better grade. Then in the future, I will hopefully become a good garden designer and work for a good company or become self-employed.'

Will Miller

As you know the income derived from our Celebrity Lectures is the source of our funding for Schools into Gardening. Your support in coming to the Lecture and bringing your friends has made this possible. So thank you.

We have ideas for several new developments for next year. We need some ideas from you for one of them though. So thinking caps on, as this is at the first stage of development. Eileen Peers, one of our members, has suggested a way in which we could help secondary school students, probably sixth formers, who are studying Art, History or Photography would be to give them access to our resources on suitable occasions. One or two students could come and join us on one of our visits; this could include our main events, or those made by the

Research group, lectures, or even access some of your gardens for photography for example? We would talk to schools to get their views and try it out with just a small number initially. Please talk to Sue Blaxland, Ann Allsop, Judith Hibbert, Sheila Burnage or myself if you can take our thinking further.

Irene Jones

If this is an area which interests you or one in which you can make a contribution and you would like to join us, please contact Irene Jones on 0116 2709370 or by chatting to me at one of our events

RESEARCH GROUP

The Research Group is making good progress with the project to create a Register of Walled Kitchen Gardens. We have agreed a definition for the sites which are to be included: they must be at least ½ an acre in size, obviously have been walled kitchen gardens, have been productive and have pre-dated the First World War.



The Register will go on to the Trust's website with individual entries for each site researched. We have produced a template for these; however, there will be detailed case studies of sites which are of exceptional interest or where there is a great deal of material. For

example, we have discovered a "Garden Wages Book" for the Beaumanor Estate (1885-1899) at the Record Office, which has a wealth of information, not only about wages but also all the vegetables and flowers that were produced, the daily tasks of the gardeners and the

weather. We have also found sale catalogues for Baggrave Hall and East Langton Hall. At Baggrave, the sale catalogue of 1939 even listed every plant in the glasshouses, down to the last carnation! We have been delighted to welcome a new member to the Group, who is an expert on greenhouses, particularly those by Thos. Messengers. Already his knowledge is proving invaluable to us.

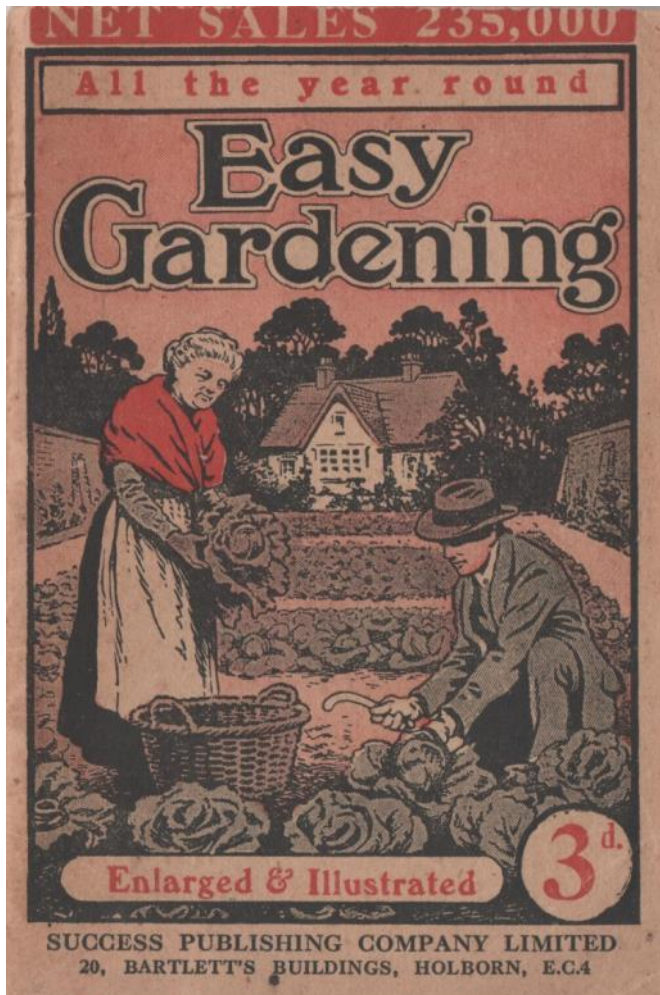
Our aim is that the outline for the Register should be on our website by the end of the year and that individual research will be added as it is completed.

We have undertaken various publicity activities for the project, including a BBC Radio Leicester interview for their “Living History” programme. This took place in the former walled kitchen garden at Wistow, now a garden centre. Contacts with local history groups are providing us with some leads as well.

We were pleased to visit the walled kitchen garden at Nevill Holt, with the kind permission of the owner. We used this as a training exercise for the Group, looking at what remained and trying to relate it to the information on the historic maps.

Finally, we are hoping to have a stand at the Beaumanor History Fair next spring. The theme of the fair will be Wartime Leicestershire. So, if you have information or pictures which might be useful to us to prepare a display – we are thinking “Dig for Victory”, do please let us know.

Sue Blaxland



Easy Gardening by T Geoffrey W Henslow and was published c1930.

“Easy gardening does not mean so much easy labour in the garden as it does the simplest and correct way to set about the carrying out of all those necessary operations that we take in hand and desire to accomplish”

MEMBERSHIP

Our membership has reached a healthy 153 members. We have 12 new members whom we hope have enjoyed their time with us this year. Our membership continues to reach all parts of our two counties. However we were thrilled to extend our welcome as far as Essex as Dr Jill Raggett who delighted us with her two lectures related to Japanese gardens has joined us as a member this year. The saddest point in the year was hearing of the death of our Trustee and former Treasurer David Walkinshaw in April this year. We will miss his cheerful common sense delivered in that lovely Scottish Borders accent. His wife Margaret would be very welcome to join us on any of our visits or lectures either as a member or guest.

I trust you will all have renewed your membership this October and will also continue our policy of Friends introducing like-minded friends to the Gardens Trust. The majority of our new members have nearly all been introduced to the Gardens Trust this year by members, so many thanks to you all.

Our healthy membership allows us to fill a coach for visits more easily and the visits and Celebrity Lecture have been well supported. The number of members who have opted to pay their subscription by bankers order continues to increase. 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 (lrgt.org). It reduces costs for us which we can use for visits, lectures or even educational grants as we expand our activities.

Irene Jones

OBITUARIES

David Walkinshaw

The Friends of the Gardens Trust lost a friend indeed on 17th April 2013.

David Walkinshaw was a founder member of the Trust. He was a Trustee and Committee member with Grant Pitches, our earliest Chairman, from the first meeting in 1997. He agreed to be Treasurer, a job which he did with great assiduity, accuracy and good humour. We owe him a great deal for the contribution he made in giving the Trust a sound foundation, from which we could develop. His accounts must have taken up a lot of his time, time he must have preferred to spend on either of his two allotments. Plants were his delight and he loved his garden, as well as the the allotments one of which he used for vegetables, the other for soft fruit. He was a member of the NCCPG and the Caledonian Society, for his homeland was always recognisable when he began to speak.

As I was membership secretary we used to compare our lists on a regular basis. This originated when in the early days we made the shocking discovery that we had a different totals. We were amused to discover the revealing facts; that I counted people, David counted cheques. Thus joint membership for me was 2, for him it was only one. I do not remember either of us having a problem after that.

Although David resigned as Treasurer a few years ago he remained a committee member and Trustee until his poor health made it too difficult for him. His wife Margaret was a delightful fellow member. We will all miss David very much and send our good wishes to her. Their family however, is a close one and we wish them all well as they adjust to life without him.

Irene Jones

Noel Simpson 1916 - 2013

One of our oldest Friends died on March 8th. He did not join the Trust until his mid nineties when he said he would like to go to lectures and meals but under no circumstances would he go on a coach trip. He had lived in Elms Road since the early fifties when he came to the LRI as Consultant Rheumatologist, a post which he held until retirement, after which he was responsible for the commissioning of the new hospital at Glenfield. He was also medical officer for Leicester Tigers. As his neighbour for many years I miss him a lot. I had enjoyed chatting with him about his childhood in Wales as the son of a mine owner, his work as a medical officer in the war and the early days of the health service. He said he was always impressed by the standard of presentations at the Friends evenings and he expressed an opinion about the Celebrity Lecture, whether good and bad. I do miss him as a neighbour.

It is with sadness that I heard that **Bob Long** died on Monday October 7th There will be an obituary in the next Newsletter

Elizabeth Bacon

IN DEFENCE OF GARDEN DESIGN

The point at which a bit of gardening becomes a 'design' is not entirely clear. Surely deciding to widen a border and change seasonal bedding is 'gardening', even if you've planned it? Making major changes involving hard landscaping and giving your garden a total rethink, with the inevitable cost considerations, usually requires a 'design'.

Thinking things through and looking at all the options available with a pencil and rubber is usually the best bet. My favourite landscaper, Mick, quipped 'It's not like it's set in stone!' as they dug out the footings for a small retaining wall at the start of a large project that we

did together. Well, of course it is...and rubbing out pencil walls until you've got it exactly right is by far the most economical option.

Whenever I get asked to look at a garden with a view to a design, I want to know what the reason is for the change. Human nature generally doesn't like change, much preferring to stick with what's there and make minor adjustments.

Sometimes the need for a design is obvious, perhaps when a new build house has only a building site for a garden. Often the need for a rethink is less obvious and I am presented with a well tended, lovingly planted, established garden. In this case, a change in health and mobility of the owner, can force the change. I particularly enjoy making garden designs for keen gardeners and this is often the case for older folk, downsizing in later lives, who still want to enjoy the creativity of gardening, but reduce unproductive maintenance chores.

There is a popular belief that, whilst you might seek professional advice for other jobs like car maintenance, electrical or plumbing installations, your garden is something that you should do yourself, and presumably in a very short time span. We've seen it done with consummate ease on the telly, so pop out and buy your decking and a packet of seeds! TV garden shows repeat the myth, where journalists, purporting to be gardeners, go to the garden centre and buy anything in flower, then stand back and take the praise for it.

I love gardens that have just evolved over time, with the loving attention and critical eye of their owner. This is truly skilled gardening and requires horticultural knowledge, dexterity, strength, stamina, an artist's eye and probably a reasonable bank balance. If we decide to do an interior design in a room and then closed the door for three years, not much would change. This is not the case with a garden, maintenance is a constant issue.

Our two dimensional design on paper has not only to work in three dimensions, but the added fourth dimension of time plays a large part as the garden grows. There would arguably be less need for design if we were better at maintenance, or perhaps more willing to invest time and money into it. Even the large horticultural institutions of this country plan for huge capital expenditure but cut every corner to reduce outlay on upkeep.

In the design process we have to consider all the options and come up with solutions that work for both the garden and clients. It's a big responsibility with which to be entrusted. Precision in the site survey and scaled drawings are vital. Contractors love working with an exact plan which makes for accuracy in quoting and clarity for the construction. Everyone involved - client, designer and landscape contractor - know in advance what their responsibilities are and how much it's all going to cost.

Perhaps surprisingly, I don't initially do detailed planting plans with a design, unless specifically requested. Knowing what widths and sizes to make borders and beds lets me give an outline for planting which is easily followed, along with suggestions for recommended plants, trees and nurseries. Many clients enjoy being able to put their own stamp on a well thought out plan. As far as the design goes, planting is just the icing on the cake.

For large gardens, a cohesive design that can be tackled in phases is most useful. Allowing the garden to be completed in stages, as funds allow, but ending up with a unified result.

Smaller gardens require even more attention to design detail. Allowances for utilities are a big issue which cannot be overlooked. Storage solutions for wheelie bins, recycling, dormant pots, washing lines and compost can all be included as necessary, with a bit of creative thinking, but every last inch has to be accounted for and the width of a brick can make a significant difference.

We seldom get a chance to completely create a garden from scratch and it can be one of life's great satisfactions. The phrase, 'the more you sweat in practice, the less you bleed in battle', often reverberates in my mind. Time spent on preparation will be well rewarded. Whether you attend a night school to learn the rudiments of garden design, or employ an experienced professional, the joys of having a tailor made garden can be hard to beat.

Pip Wheatcroft

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

EVENTS PROGRAMME 2014

January 26 th	Winter Lunch To be confirmed
February 26 th	Coach trip to National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas
March 27 th	Spring Lecture Speaker Leigh Hunt from the RHS “The importance of trees and plants in an urban environment”
April 27 th	Tea at Long Close with talk by Roland Byass, landscape architect
May 14 th	Afternoon tea at Calke Abbey followed by evening visit, with guided tour, to Bluebell Arboretum, Smisby
June 2 nd	4 day holiday visiting Yorkshire gardens
June	Coach trip to Kew with guided walk with Tony Kirkham Date to be confirmed
July 10 th	Coach trip to Painswick and Througham, Glos
August 17 th	Village Walk The Langtons
September 4 th	Coach trip to Waterperry Gardens, Oxfordshire and Turn End, Aylesbury
September 17th	Celebrity Lecture Speaker: Jo Swift
October 16 th	Autumn Lecture “Follies and Artificial Stone” Speaker Simon Scott of Haddenstone
November 13 th	Friends Evening



Hemingford Grey

July



Abbots Ripton

OUT AND ABOUT 2013

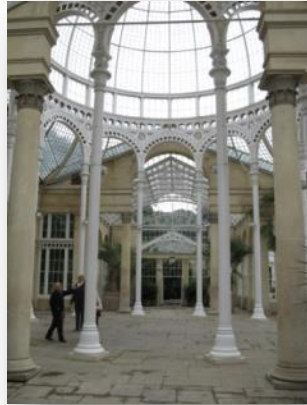


Medbourne
Guided Walk
August





Syon House



**OUT AND ABOUT
2013
September**



Chiswick House