

LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND GARDENS TRUST



# Newsletter

No 33 Autumn 2014

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

Registered Charity no. 1063075

## Time for tea



Friends enjoy a cuppa on the visit to Turn End in September



**Calke Abbey and  
Bluebell Arboretum**

**May**



**Kew  
Gardens  
June**

**OUT AND ABOUT  
2014**



**Painswick**



**Througham Court**

**July**



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## Useful Contact Numbers

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## Chairman's Notes

Those of you who have been members for a few years now will remember our previous Chairman and Secretary, Nick and Chloe Bennett. I recently bumped into them in Edinburgh, when I was attending a one day conference on the squares and gardens of the New Town. Nick and Chloe are now living in Lanark in Scotland. As some of you will know Chloe had been interested in dealing in second-hand books and they have now set up a business, Dove House Books, specialising in Architecture, Garden History, Gardening, Topography and general stock. They both send their regards to all at the LRGT and expressed their appreciation of the work and activities that the Trust is undertaking.

As mentioned previously, discussions are underway between the Garden History Society and the Association of Garden Trusts to merge the two organisations. The proposals for the merger were passed at both organisations' AGMs this year. I will be reporting back to the membership on what effect this will have on the LRGT in the future, in time for our AGM next year. We are awaiting details of how the merger will be affected and the impact that this will have on individual County Garden Trusts.

Some of you who attended the lecture in October will have received a questionnaire on the Trust's outings. This will be sent to all members of the Trust as the committee is interested in your views on our current policy for arranging outings. As Chairman, I would like to stress that the Trust is for the benefit of its members, therefore if there is anything you would like to suggest or you have any comments on our current programme, please contact either myself or any other member of the committee. We are always open to hear from you, the members, and will do our best to reflect your views and wishes.

*Stephen Barker*

### **From the Chairman's Collection**



## Events

It was not by design that two visits by coach this summer were to such contrasting gardens. However, the contrast added to their appreciation and interest as we were able to recognize and compare their varying period styles.



We visited Painswick and Througham on a perfect summer's day in July. The 18<sup>th</sup> century Rococo Garden at **Painswick** with its wonderful historic garden buildings acted as foil to the late 20<sup>th</sup> century garden at **Througham** with its jokes and influences of Charles Jenks and Ian Hamilton Finley.



At **Waterperry**, in September - another lovely day - we saw how the long Edwardian herbaceous border was still gardened according to the original early-20<sup>th</sup> century method. By contrast, we spent the afternoon at **Turn End**. This is an integrated development of three houses and gardens designed by the architect, Peter Adlington, in





the 1960s. It could not be more of its time and one just wishes that there was more of this standard of architecture in the country. The house and garden are fused into a perfect whole.

The **Kew** trip had been arranged as a result of Tony Kirkham's lecture. As a result of his Leicester visit, he had promised us a personal tour of the Arboretum. Unfortunately, on the day of our visit, he had to attend the inquest of the person who was killed in Kew during the storm in 2012. So, we were taken round by his deputy, Ray, and spent a totally absorbing hour or so amongst the amazing variety of trees at Kew. This left plenty of time to enjoy other aspects of the Gardens before going home. It is a fantastic place; one just hopes that its cut in funding will not be too catastrophic. Those of you who know Ann Baer were able to find her seat in front of the Palm House which was presented to her on her centenary.

These trips were really interesting and enjoyed by the Friends but were not well supported. Some of you will have already seen the questionnaire regarding trips and attendance. From the few that I have read so far, I am very relieved to see that it is not the visits in themselves that are unpopular.

The gardens at **Calke Abbey** looked very good and it is sad to reflect that the Head Gardener, Steve Biggins, who gave us such an interesting talk last Autumn died a couple of months after our visit.

Robert Vernon has developed an arboretum at **Bluebell Nursery** which, with his passion for trees, has created an important arboretum in the Midlands for which he deserves great credit. It is a spectacular undertaking. This is a proper nursery and expensive to run but he does not wish to add all the extras, such as a tea shop purely to make it more commercially viable.

We nearly did not get any lunch or a room for the **Langtons** day in August as I discovered at the last minute that the owners of the pub had left and I could not contact them. Happily, with a bit of detective work, I was able to find the new owners and as a result I think we had a much better lunch than anticipated. Stephen's walk followed his talk about the



three characters that had lived at various times in the Langtons. We went from Church Langton to East Langton and back, and paused on the way to look at the remains of the avenue of trees leading to West Langton Hall. We had tea in Church Langton church during which Anne de Graeve gave a short organ

recital, commemorating the first performance of the Messiah outside London which was held in this church. I love the way that local village churches are being used in this way. Perhaps it will help to create further awareness of just what treasures some of these churches are.

I felt that the holiday in **Yorkshire** this summer did not work as well as previous holidays in relation to timings and the amount of time spent in gardens: some too long, others not long enough. The holiday was enjoyable, but a bit of tweaking was required and local knowledge by Success Tours would have been a help.

On my return I had my usual conversation with Jo Blair of Success Tours. I gave her my thoughts on the above and suggested that, as we are going to the Lancashire and Cumbria, a research trip in advance would be advisable to check the suitability of gardens, timings, the hotel, and coffee, lunch and tea stops. Rather to my surprise she agreed with this and offered to fund accommodation. This enabled Sue and I to have a very interesting trip north at the end of September, planning a completely bespoke holiday which included gardens, pubs and everything else we needed to know to make the most of our time when on holiday.

The landscape is, of course, completely different from the flatlands of the Midlands (as one garden owner described them) and consequently the gardens are equally contrasting. We are just not used to gardens in

moorland areas and this proved why the trip was necessary with regard to access and mobility.

The programme for next year is just about complete as I write; you will have all the details in this newsletter. Wishing you an enjoyable programme of events in 2015.

*Elizabeth Bacon*

### **Yorkshire Gardens Tour – June 2014**

Of recent decades, (and this is how at my age one measures the past,) in driving round the Leicestershire countryside, so familiar to all of you, I first saw and loved its unexpected beauties, its sudden little valleys, its surprising huge views, its slow meandering Nene and its twiddly roads, but how different Yorkshire is. Here it is all on a much larger scale, the wide Vale of York, the valleys of the fast flowing Wharfe, and the Rye and the Ouse and the Swale (what poetic monosyllables their rivers have!). You see what you get, and you get what you have seen. But though we came to see gardens, there were so many wide views on the way to each.

And to match these wide views, goes, in the old gardens, an expanse of time; the long forward vision with which, a century or three ago, were planted avenues of limes or chestnut, probably spindly little trees then, which we now have the benefit of seeing as magnificent avenues of hundred foot high trees with intertwining branches. And these gardeners who built walls enclosing several acres and planted fruit trees against the southern walls and orchards protected within. We, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, benefit from their vision, and from the tenacity of that vision.

But not all of these delightful gardens that we saw had such ancestors. Many were without grandeur or opulence, and had been created with equal imagination in the last thirty years or so, and were intense and intimate. Many were yew-enclosed squares, a small pool or statue in the centre, paths paved with patterns of stone or brick or an old millstone, a bed here overflowed with pink and purple columbines, salmon and black poppies, blue and purple geraniums, and everywhere splendid



irises. Surely irises are bigger than they used to be? Here were so many exuberant baroque irises, port-wine coloured or delicate blue-mauve, pale clean yellow, and the smaller Dutch irises of Gothic design, precise and taut in deep purple or clear blue. If only irises, when dead, fell off instead of remaining on the stalk in shrivelled discoloured knots.

As we wandered and looked at the rain falling into half-opened patches of lupins, sugar pink or fondant yellow, tall spikes of delphiniums (one of the few large, truly blue flowers) and lilies in all variety of white and cream, gold, orange and crimson, all flecked and speckled.

On most of our days in Yorkshire, it rained at some time, and though we could mostly walk round gardens dry, (Rievaulx was the exception) it had recently rained. Do we flowers smell less than when dry? Or is it that one spends less time idling and relished scents than in a sunny garden? It seemed we rather missed the abundance of varied perfume that one hopes for in June.

How is it that some gardeners never seem to be at war with weeds such as oxalis, which seeds itself everywhere and has roots of wire, or goose grass, which grows secretly under bushes and, suddenly overnight climbs all over shrubs? And some gardeners are able to train their snails never to eat hostas, which we saw flourishing and hole-free with great shields of leaves twenty inches high.

The Yorkshire Sculpture Park, of which I had often read, but never seen before, is on a grand scale, not “gardened” at all, but wide grassy hills, clumps of trees, stretches of water, the perfect setting for the largest Henry Moore sculpture, entirely appropriate, in which the sculpture and the landscape complement each other. What vision he had, probably from making a clay model, held in his hand, and developing ultimately this land-dominating carving.

*Ann Baer*

## An Old Apple Tree.

Forty years ago we bought the house I still live in because it had an apple tree half way down the garden. It held a metal sided swing hanging from a sturdy branch that hung over the lawn. Before we entered the house, my three year old daughter trotted down the garden and perched happily on the swing and beamed at us. We bought the house.



Over the years, standing in thick clay, the apple tree lurched steadily to the right. In time the weight of the swing-bearing branch pointed towards the grass and bit by bit the branch was removed. I still loved it and it gave large crop of apples on alternate years. I searched for it in a big book on apples and decided it was a *Blenheim Orange*. Delicious to eat and it cooked well. Branch after branch lurched earthwards until only two branches remain. It looks like a giant tuning fork. It must have been planted around the time the house was built. I grew sad as I realized it would not last for many more years. The wise thing to do would be to plant another like it to start growing now.

This time I searched the internet. It took time to track down a standard *Blenheim Orange*. Most trees on offer are now small by the standards of my tree. It would need a companion tree I was informed and three possible ones were recommended. I did not need another but idly checked on the three that were proposed and there it was!

*Annie Elizabeth* was developed from the *Blenheim Orange* in 1857, by Samuel Grestorix, an amateur gardener of Knighton, Leicestershire. The fruit was sold commercially until the 1930's and then was popular in private gardens. It produces a large crop biannually. He named the tree after his baby daughter. The photograph of the apple confirmed its identity.

A young *Annie Elizabeth* will arrive in November 2014.

*Irene Jones*

## **Research Group**

Progress on the Walled Kitchen Garden project has continued throughout the summer – somewhat slower than during the winter months, due to the other commitments of Group members. We will shortly be adding a list to the website of all the gardens that we have identified so far. We hope that this will encourage visitors to the webpage to notify us of sites which we have not yet discovered. It will also give us a good idea of the scale of the project – one which is going to keep us busy for years to come!

As mentioned in the last Newsletter, we had a display at the Beaumanor Hall Heritage and History Fair in March. The number of visitors to the stand was quite overwhelming and our display material, which related to the walled kitchen garden at Beaumanor during the period of the First World War, caused a lot of interest. To our delight, several of the visitors owned walled kitchen gardens or knew of sites which we had not yet identified. So there are further leads to follow.

The garden designer, Bunny Guinness wrote an article about walled kitchen gardens in the Daily Telegraph and made specific mention of our project. As a result, we have been contacted by two more owners of walled kitchen gardens. Elizabeth Bacon and I will be following this up. In addition, a member of Northamptonshire Gardens Trust has contacted us. They are planning a similar project and would like some guidance from us.

In May, we met Verena McCraig, who is the Historic Landscape Project Officer for the Association of Gardens Trusts. She was very impressed with the work that we are doing and has given us some useful contact details for Leicestershire County Council's Historic Environment Officers, who would like to meet us.



The project is not “all work and no play” as we have had a couple of delightful summer picnics – in John Oakland’s wildlife meadow and in the walled kitchen garden at Nevill Holt.

*Sue Blaxland*

## Education - Schools into Gardening



Ann Allsop and I enjoyed a warm sunny day with a class of 8-year olds from **Forest Lodge Primary School** on 19th May 2013. The children were delighted to be there, expressing surprise and wonder as they looked around the beautiful approach to Kelmarsh Hall. They entered into the spirit of the Walled Kitchen

Garden with open minds. The vegetable samples were scooped up and tasted; herbs were smelled, named and ticked off their work sheets. Their pleasure and interest was such that teachers and helpers began to see the fruit and vegetable bounty with new eyes. After a picnic lunch indoors we went on a bugs and beasties hunt with great success. They then used coloured bits and bobs to make their own bugs using a potato for a body. Some amazing and bizarre insects appeared. Some games

followed and the children left to be at school for the end of the school day, thanking us with enthusiasm and waving vigorously from the bus. It was a day well spent for all of us.

At Brooksby Melton College, for the academic year of 2014, the **Gardens Trust Student Award**

was awarded to Marcus Chevin, a student in Horticulture. He was given a certificate to mark the occasion at the college prize giving in July. A grant of £100 for his success as the student making the most progress within his course of study was given to him by Sue Blaxland and me in early October.



Upon receiving his award, Marcus commented: ‘I am really happy to have won this award. The funds have enabled me to purchase drawing equipment for my Garden Design module, such as compasses, drawing pens and set squares.’ Marcus is currently working for a garden landscaper, when he is not in college, and hopes to develop his own garden design and landscaping business when he graduates.

On their way to the presentation, Sue and Irene bumped into Will Miller, last year's recipient of the award. He is hoping to go to university now to study Crop Rotation. We felt that he had been encouraged by receiving the Trust's Award.

**Maplewell Hall School**, Woodhouse Eaves, which had its greenhouse damaged in high winds, has spent its award of £500 on a better quality



replacement. This was soon in place. Their tutor, Alison Hodges was pleased to attend the Joe Swift Celebrity Lecture and to have a few words with him.

We have had a very successful year which means we have spent nearly all the money we had raised from earlier Celebrity Lectures. However, we wait to hear what has been earned for us from the Joe Swift lecture, which was



Joe Swift with Alison Hodges and her husband



well attended and well received. We live in hope. Your support in coming to the Lecture and bringing your friends has made this possible. So thank you.

We are in need of at least one more member of the Gardens Trust to join the Education Group. More than that would be even more welcome. We must have several members with an interest or experience in education and working with young people. We have a maximum of 3 meetings a year, so if you can spare a minimum of 6 hours out of 12 months please contact me directly or on **0116 2709370**.

*Irene Jones*

## **Obituaries**

### **JENNY WAKELY**

Jenny Wakely, who sadly died in February, overcame serious problems to gain a PhD in Anatomy and then pursued a successful career teaching anatomy to medical students at Leicester Royal Infirmary Medical School. Not many people knew her, as she only came on a few trips. She was a remarkable woman, a printmaker, a photographer and gardener in spite of increasing problems with her sight. She was also a walker and a volunteer at an Asylum Seekers Project. Not only that, but she was also a recognised hymn writer who had won a national prize. She had found the church late in life which was a great comfort to her. At her funeral her sister read a short piece, written by Jenny, in which she contrasted her outer and inner selves; it was very moving. She was much admired by those who knew her well.

*Elizabeth Bacon*

### **EILEEN PEERS: 1936-2014**

My partner, Eileen Peers, who has died after a short illness, was not an obvious candidate for membership of the Gardens Trust. By her own admission, she could hardly tell a peony from a poppy and tended to

refer to the plants in our garden as "that blue stuff" or "that purple thing".

However, she did play an important (but unsung) role in the Trust as Newsletter proof-reader, "Signing-in Supervisor" at lectures and, most importantly, tea maker for Research Meetings. At the beginning of each meeting, she would enquire: "What time do you want tea?" and "How many for Earl Grey and how many for Builders'?"

Although I never saw her with a spade or fork in her hand, she did produce various garden artefacts for me - trellises, planting containers and compost bins. Most valuably, as a passionate photographer, she captured the evolution of our garden over many years. Whether it was a particular planting combination or a little detail, she recorded them all and I am left with a wonderful record of an "outdoor room" that we both loved.

As a Trust member, she enjoyed our lectures and the breadth of subjects that were covered - making the connections between gardens, social history, art and architecture. She joined some of our trips, particularly if they had an interesting historical or artistic aspect beyond the merely horticultural - such as Eltham Palace and Kelmscott. Latterly, her poor mobility made this difficult but she did join the annual village and town walks. Friends have reminisced about how her mobility scooter was manhandled over gates and stiles so that she could complete the full tour!

My friends in the Trust became her friends as well and she relished the lively and stimulating discussions that took place. They, I think, welcomed her kindness and generosity and I know that they all miss her very much.

*Sue Blaxland*

## **You may be interested.....**

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

Parks and Gardens UK website: [www.parksandgardens.org](http://www.parksandgardens.org)

## Exhibitions

*Gardens and War* at the Garden Museum, Lambeth Palace Road, London SE1 7LB, until 5<sup>th</sup> January 2015.

[www.gardenmuseum.org.uk](http://www.gardenmuseum.org.uk)

*Monet – The Water Garden at Giverny* at the National Gallery,

In 1918, the day after the Armistice was signed, Monet promised a group of paintings to the French nation as a 'monument to peace'. Known as the 'Water-Lilies', they continue to captivate visitors almost a century later.

[www.nationalgallery.org.uk](http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk)

## News

### ***Art Happens* The Dan Pearson and William Morris Meadow**

Compton Verney announced on Friday 3 October 2014 that it successfully raised £10,437 to fund a new commission by leading landscape designer, Dan Pearson, which will transform their West lawn into a wild-flower meadow mown with a William Morris design.



Visual of the proposed Parterre at Compton Verney  
©Dan Pearson Studio

### *Knighton Park Gardening Club*

- *Would you like to be involved with a flourishing community garden?*
- *Do you like listening to talks about gardening matters?*
- *Do you like practical learning sessions?*

If your answer is "yes" to any or all of these, then why not give Knighton Park Gardening Club a try?

Our main project is the maintenance and development of an award winning sensory garden on Knighton Park which we carry out with the support of the City Parks Department's Head Gardener.

The sensory garden was started in 2006. It is always changing and each year we have a different aim or project. We have talks and demonstrations and are a very practical, hands-on gardening club.

Meetings are held on Monday afternoons fortnightly in the Spring, Summer and Autumn and monthly in Winter. We are a friendly group of amateur gardeners and always welcome new members.

For further information, meeting times etc., our contact details are as follows:

Mike (Chairman) 0116 2104217  
Valerie (Secretary) 0116 2701972  
Email [KPGC@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:KPGC@hotmail.co.uk)  
[www.knightonparkgardeningclub.com](http://www.knightonparkgardeningclub.com)



## EVENTS PROGRAMME 2015

January 25 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Winter Lunch</b> at The White Peacock, New Walk, Leicester
March 19 <sup>th</sup>	<b>AGM and Spring Lecture</b> Timothy Walker <i>"Oxford Botanic Garden"</i> Leicester Bowling Club 7.00pm/7.30pm
March 26 <sup>th</sup>	Coach trip to <b>Evenley Wood Garden</b> with lunch
April 19 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Talk</b> by Rowan Roenisch <i>"Stoneywell and the philosophy behind the Arts and Crafts Movement"</i> followed by tea. Hoby Village Hall
May 6 <sup>th</sup>	Coach trip to <b>Manor House, Chenies</b> preceded by light pub lunch
June 8 <sup>th</sup> /11 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Holiday</b> visiting gardens in Lancashire and Cumbria
June 25 <sup>th</sup>	Visit to <b>3 Rutland gardens</b> with pub lunch Own transport
July 11 <sup>th</sup>	Coach trip to <b>Oxford Botanic Gardens</b>
August 9 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Town walk in Stamford</b> with Blue Badge Guide, followed by afternoon tea. Own transport
September 9 <sup>th</sup>	Coach trip to <b>Througham Court and Misarden Park Gardens</b> in the Cotswolds
September 16 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Celebrity Lecture</b> Speaker: James Alexander-Sinclair
October 15 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Autumn Lecture</b> Speaker: Twigs Way <i>"Allotments"</i> Leicester Bowling Club 7.30pm
November 19 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Friends Evening</b> Leicester Bowling Club 7.30pm



Yorkshire Sculpture  
Park



Jervaulx Abbey



Ripley Castle



York Gate

## Yorkshire Tour June 2014



Duncombe  
Park



Helmsley Walled  
Garden



Harrogate



Scampston Walled  
Garden



Newby Hall



Harlow Carr



Parcevall Hall





June



Hammond Arboretum  
Market Harborough

## OUT AND ABOUT 2014



Langton Apple Tree

August



Village Walk  
In the Langtons

September



Waterperry



Turn End