

LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND GARDENS
TRUST



Newsletter

No 34 Spring 2015

www.lrgt.org

Registered Charity no. 1063075

£870 from Joe Swift's lecture



Thanks to the success of the 2014 Celebrity Lecture given by Joe Swift, we have raised £870 for the work of our 'Schools into Gardening' projects.

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Chairman's Notes

As I write this, it is the first day of March and it is definitely beginning to feel like Spring is coming. As many of you will know, I am a volunteer at the Hammond Arboretum in Market Harborough. This morning, I was there helping to tidy the site in preparation for the NGS Open Day later this month. It was good to see the snowdrops and aconites in flower and the

daffodils and bluebells coming through. Many of the trees and shrubs are now in bud or in the case of the Japanese Apricot already in bloom.

As we enter 2015, the Trust is in a strong position both in terms of membership and finance and in the activities it carries out. Both the research and educational projects are going well and I thank all those who are involved. My particular thanks go to Elizabeth Bacon for organising the programme. The survey we carried out last year, to gauge the membership's response to our events and outings, was overwhelmingly supportive. This was reassuring to the Committee, as we had been concerned that the programme did not reflect the wishes of the membership, as we had had a low turnout on a few of the outings.

The feeling of the Committee is that the Trust could do with some more members to take us up to around 200. Currently the membership stands around 150. With a larger pool of members, we feel it would be easier to fill a coach for outings further from home. This would ensure that we can keep the cost of the trips down and not incur a shortfall in income. As Chairman, can I encourage you to invite any friends or colleagues along who may be interested? If they are doubtful can I suggest one of the lecture meetings where only a small charge is made to visitors and which is refundable if they take out membership. I should add that guests are welcome to all of our lecture meetings.

I look forward to seeing you all at the first lecture this Spring on Oxford Botanic Gardens which follows the AGM.

Stephen Barker
Chairman

Events

Simon Scott, Marketing Director of Haddonstone (located just a few miles down the road at Brixworth), gave us a very comprehensive account of services offered by Haddonstone to aspiring gardeners. If, for example, you were a country landowner with a large estate and a crumbling terrace, Haddonstone would, without hesitation, come along to sort out your balustrades, restoring them to their original glory. If, on the other hand, your garden is more modest (but perhaps not much) then Haddonstone is on hand locally to offer various pots, garden ornaments and classical figures. He, very helpfully, provided all of us with catalogues of everything that they can offer.

The Friends Evening provides an opportunity for Friends to reveal their private passions (other than historic gardens and landscape of course.) Who knew, for example, that Ralph Leek was an expert on bees. He gave a very knowledgeable and interesting presentation on bees; he told me later that he had only scratched the surface, so he may well be back with more at The Friends Evening 2015. Joyce Farnese's other passion is railways, so she combined a holiday on the Pacific coast of Canada, to include both these interests. We did not see any trains, but her photographs of gardens were brilliant: it was interesting to see contrasting styles of garden design and planting which echo the environment of the area. Peter Rawson finished the evening with his view of the year through his photographs. It's always good to be reminded of those visits.

The White Peacock was recommended by friends and was a possibility for the Winter Lunch. Situated at the bottom of New Walk, it is a relatively new restaurant so that was where we went. The atmosphere was very lively, the food excellent and conversation flowed. I think the last person left at about

3.45pm. However, I did have a couple of reservations about the restaurant. We did have to wait a while for our food and then there was the problem of the missing pudding. Would the person who ate two puddings or spirited one away in their handbag please contact me in order to be admonished.

We were particularly grateful to all who completed the questionnaire regarding visits. This was prompted by a slightly low turn-out for coach trips, which means a loss of revenue. Whilst we may be able to cover the odd loss, we cannot afford to do that all the time. We are very relieved to learn that it is not the choice of visits that put Friends off, but a variety of other reasons: family, holidays and other interests. You all seem to be happy with our basic format. Bearing in mind all those considerations, the main problem seems to be that the Trust does not have quite enough Friends to ensure reasonably full coaches each visit, so tell your friends, relatives and neighbours what a lovely time you have with us.

This year, therefore we have decided to base the cost of each coach trip on 35 Friends rather than 40. I am sorry about this but it is obvious from your replies that you don't want too much change in the way we do things, particularly in terms of shared meals and choice of visits.

We are also trying to take into consideration departure times. Most of our visits involve the ring road, which seems to get busier each year and has resulted in long delays even before we get to the motorway. The other consideration is the duration of the journey, which is not always easy to predict. The drivers always tell us they know best, but I don't have access to them when arranging times, so it's a matter of the coach company, on-line information and prior information with regard to road works etc.

2016 is the tri-centenary of the birth of Capability Brown so, the main theme will be, of course, him, and plans are well ahead for related visits as well as other treats.

I think I should add our thanks to the drivers at the Paul Winson Coach Company, who are truly excellent, always trying to avoid tailbacks when they occur, negotiating country lanes and finding the most suitable routes. They are much appreciated; difficult drivers can ruin a day out.

Elizabeth Bacon

Research Group – Walled Kitchen Garden Project

By the end of 2014, we had completed research on eight sites of walled kitchen gardens and these have all been published on our website. We are feeling very pleased with the amount of interesting information that we have discovered. There are a further eight sites where the research is almost complete and is in the process of being written up.

We have been amazed by the wealth of research material that we have uncovered. This has ranged from the gardeners' wages books at Beaumanor Hall, the accounts and order books of greenhouse manufacturers, Thomas Messengers of Loughborough, to sale catalogues for country houses, which have listed the various buildings in the walled kitchen garden: bothies, fruit stores, mushroom houses, potting sheds, vineries, peach houses and more.

A series of Ordnance Survey maps showing the same site over a period of years can reveal changes in the layout of a walled kitchen garden - typically starting with a more elaborate design and a larger number of greenhouses in the First Edition maps of the 1880's but then becoming simplified as the country houses started to go into decline and labour became more scarce.

So far, we have identified 75 sites in Leicestershire and we know that there are more that we have yet to discover. We plan to redesign the walled kitchen garden pages of our website so that we can list them all, whilst still making it straightforward to search for a particular site or in a particular area.

One of the sites that we are currently researching is Buckminster Hall and we were thrilled to discover that a former head gardener is still alive and is in his eighties. He remembers when he first started work during the 2nd World War, at the age of 15 and climbed all the trees in the orchard to harvest the fruit. His father was head gardener before him, leaving with two other lads from Buckminster to fight on the Somme at the outbreak of the 1st World War. His father was the only one to return. He has recently written a book about his father's experiences of the Great War, based on his letters and diaries. We are planning to interview him properly in the near future and hope to record this on our website as a piece of oral history.

As well as our research projects, we have various social activities planned for the Research Group for this year - including a visit to the Exhibition: "Painting Paradise: The Art of the Garden", which will run at Buckingham Palace from March to October. We will, of course, hope to have our traditional summer picnic in the wild flower meadow at Long Close.

The Group now numbers 14 members but we are always glad to welcome anybody who is interested in garden history research.

Sue Blaxland

Membership

Our membership is a healthy 146 members so far this year. We have 7 new members whom we hope will enjoy the lovely programme of events planned for us this year. Our membership continues to be very stable and extends to all parts of our two counties.

We were sorry to hear of the death of Barbara Caple in November 2014. Steve Horsfield has written her obituary, elsewhere in this newsletter. A few members are finding their working lives very busy and in two cases have withdrawn their membership. However, both plan to return as soon as possible.

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. Although we have a healthy membership, increasing it would allow us to fill a coach for visits more easily.

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 (www.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

Obituary

Barbara Caple died in November after a short illness. She was a Leicester girl, one of the two children born to Wal and Nance Warne. Her mother was a refined and gracious lady from whom Barbara inherited her sense of style and taste. The glamour, which came later, she added herself. She loved life and believed that life was to be enjoyed to the full. Barbara had created a lovely garden around her house in Hoby and generously shared the garden with visitors to the Hoby Open Gardens weekend. In recent years Barbara had joined the LRGT and she very much enjoyed the trips and lectures when she was able to get to them. She was much loved by all those that knew her well.

Steve Horsfield

East Langton

Last summer the Trust visited the Langtons for lunch and a guided walk around the village of Church Langton and East Langton. This took in the work of the Reverend William Hanbury, Rector of Church Langton in the Eighteenth Century, who used the proceeds from tree plantations and concerts of the works of Frederick Handel to raise funds for charitable projects. In East Langton we were looking at the work of John William (Paddy) Logan who was responsible for remodelling the village in the later Nineteenth Century and early Twentieth Century. Since our visit the Trust has acquired, for the Research Group, copies of sales catalogues dating from 1925 and 1926 for the East Langton Grange Estate,

John Logan came to East Langton in 1876 to oversee a project for the construction of the LNWR & GN Joint Railway in East Leicestershire. He acquired the Grange which was a small country house and added to it, introducing modern conveniences including a reliable water supply, private electricity supply and central heating. The Grange was to remain Logan's home until his death on 25th May 1925.

During his time at the Grange he represented the Harborough seat at Parliament between 1891 to 1904 and again 1910 to 1916. As an MP, Logan was interested in the plight of agricultural workers.

John Logan was a keen sportsman. He rode to the hounds with the local hunt and suffered a bad fall which caused him to suffer from poor health in later life. He had a keen interest in cricket and was President of the Leicestershire Cricket Club. His son Hugh played in one first class match for Leicestershire. At East Langton John Logan created the village cricket ground, which has been described as one of the most beautiful village cricket grounds in the country. The ground is to the north of the village and is ringed by mature lime trees. Logan's most notable sporting interest was in Racing Pigeons. He was one of the founding fathers of the sport and was the owner and breeder of many champion pigeons. He was the author of 'Logan's Pigeon Racers Handbook' and in 1898 he founded the 'Racing Pigeon Magazine' with A H Osman.

Following Logan's death in May 1925 the East Langton Grange Estate was put up for sale by auction on Tuesday 28th July 1925 with a low reserve. The Estate was the house and grounds totalling 55 acres, stables and offices, walled kitchen garden, pigeon loft and 13 cottages in the village. The house was described as a Residence or Hunting Box with every modern convenience. Small but beautiful grounds, consisting of picturesque gardens with a croquet and tennis lawns, an

orchard well stocked with young fruit trees in full bearing, the whole partially enclosed by a pretty summer wall. There was a large walled Kitchen Garden with 2 vineries, greenhouse,



Map from the sale catalogue for East Langton Grange Estate 1925

forcing frames, 2 forcing pits, rustic arbour and a completely fitted pigeon aviary.

In the village there were 13 modern cottages for sale, a number of which were named after his daughters Isobel, Nora, Ida and

May. Allotments were provided for the cottagers in a field of 1.479 acres. Isobel and Nora were active in the suffragette movement. Isobel was on one occasion arrested and sent to prison for a short period.

Despite a low reserve price the estate was not sold. In the following year the estate was again put up for sale on, Thursday 2nd December 1926. In the sale catalogue the Grange, stables, racquet court and pigeon loft are being sold for demolition purposes and the ground along with the walled kitchen garden being described as potential high class building sites, This sale was also unsuccessful and the estate was eventually sold on the death of Mrs Logan to Lt-Col J D Hignett who rebuilt the Grange in a Neo-Georgian style in 1934-35. Lt-Col Hignett was a well-known figure locally and was a joint master of the Fernie Hunt. He lived at the Grange until his death in 1994. Following his death some development has taken place in the village on the site of the walled kitchen garden, but the village is largely unaltered since Mr Logan's time.

The acquisition of the two sale catalogues gives the research group a wealth of information about the estate and the gardens which is difficult to find elsewhere. With the 1925 sale catalogue is a detailed map of the estate showing the features described in the catalogue.

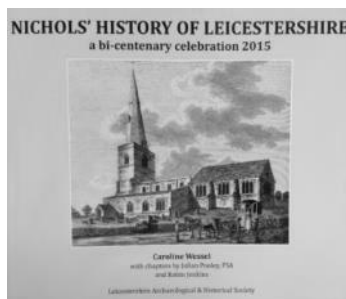
Stephen Barker

NICHOLS' HISTORY OF LEICESTERSHIRE: A BI-CENTENARY CELEBRATION

For two hundred years local historians have studied and rejoiced in the outsize tomes of John Nichols' remarkable *History of Leicestershire* (1795-1815), assimilating and recording its huge volume of information on the county's multi-

faceted history. So a new full colour publication has been launched by the Leicestershire Archaeological & Historical Society, entitled *Nichols' History of Leicestershire: a bi-centenary celebration 2015*. It is a timely and appropriate addition to the county's literature in this significant Nichols bi-centenary year.

The publication, compiled and written by LAHS Vice Chairman Caroline Wessel, explores the remarkable lives, talents and achievements of three generations of the Nichols



family and the literary and antiquarian world of London and Leicestershire they inhabited. The 'User's Guide' and 'Who's Who' chapters are invaluable tools for the Nichols researcher, whilst a chapter by Leicestershire archivist, Robin Jenkins, and contributions from present-day Leicestershire

people with specialist expertise, bring Nichols' concept of enlisting the local populace right up to date. Two further erudite chapters are provided by Julian Pooley, Surrey archivist and Nichols enthusiast, whose online Nichols Archive Project calendars around 14,000 Nichols family letters and journals.

A particular delight is the inclusion of some original watercolours, engravings and sketches taken from John Nichols' own copy of his Leicestershire *History*. He and his family spliced hundreds of additional pages of fascinating material into his personal copy- a miscellany of paintings, drawings, manuscripts, pamphlets, maps, letters, handwritten notes, pedigrees, autographs and newspaper cuttings. So it is exciting to find some of Nichols' own private collection within the pages of this bi-centenary celebration publication.

This highly readable new book, with its evocative illustrations and gentle humour, is a must for historians and for all those who love Leicestershire.

You can purchase your copy from -

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Or go online at www.lahs.org.uk (Paypal welcome)

You may be interested.....

Association of Gardens Trusts website:

www.gardenstrusts.org.uk

Parks and Gardens UK website: www.parksandgardens.org

Dates for the diary

15th May 2015

The Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society is also organising an **18th century candlelit banquet at The City Rooms, Leicester to celebrate the bi-centenary**. Further details www.lahs.org.uk

Friday, 20th March to Sunday, 11th October 2015

Painting Paradise: The Art of the Garden

The Queen's Gallery, Buckingham Palace

This exhibition reveals the way in which gardens have been celebrated in art across four centuries

Details: www.royalcollection.org.uk

Saturday 13th and Sunday 14th June 2015

Open Garden Squares Weekend in London, opening over 200 hidden and little known gardens to the public

Details at: www.opensquares.org

14 March 2015 to 7 June 2015

Canaletto: Celebrating Britain

Compton Verney

This is the first time that these magnificent paintings and drawings by Canaletto have been brought together to provide an overview of Canaletto's work created between 1746 and 1755, whilst he was visiting Britain.

Saturday, 27th June to Sunday, 13th September 2015

The Dan Pearson William Morris Wild Flower Meadow

Compton Verney

Dan Pearson's commission takes the form of a wild flower meadow into which William Morris' Trellis design will be mown in the form of a parterre.

Details at: www.comptonverney.org.uk

Friday 24th-Sunday 26th July 2015

AGT Annual Weekend Conference, based at **Newcastle University**, is being held jointly with the Garden History Society.

With Northumbria Gardens Trust help, explore the iconic urban landscapes of Newcastle and Durham, 18th century gardens and lakes at Croxdale and Hardwick, 19th century Belsay, Alnwick Castle gardens and more.

Details at: www.gardenstrusts.org.uk

EVENTS PROGRAMME 2015

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