

LEICESTERSHIRE  
AND RUTLAND  
GARDENS  
TRUST



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

# Newsletter

No 35 January 2016

Registered Charity no. 1063075

## £660 from the Celebrity Lecture



The 2015 Celebrity Lecture given by James Alexander-Sinclair, was a great success raising money for the work of our 'Schools into Gardening' projects.

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## **Chairman's Notes**

Happy New Year to all members and I wish you all the best for 2016.

As you will have no doubt seen, 2016 marks the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Capability Brown. He is acknowledged as one of the most important influences in the development of the English Landscape Movement in the Eighteenth Century. This is often held to be the major contribution by Britain to European Artistic Culture.

Our two counties have only a couple of sites where Brown worked. We will however be learning more about Brown from Steffie Shields, Chairman of The Gardens Trust, who has been researching his work for many years, when she comes to speak to us in March.

Later in the year, the Trust will be visiting Croome Court, Brown's first major commission where he remodelled the house and grounds and where restoration work has been carried out by the National Trust in recent years.

I look forward to seeing you all in the course of the year.

*Stephen Barker*  
*Chairman*

## **Education -Schools into Gardening**

The means to help schools into gardening is dependant of the success of the Celebrity Lecture and James Alexander Sinclair has made it certain that we can continue with the work we started some years ago. Also, over the last two years we have been delighted to receive generous donations from several people which have made our budget more secure. The Education group has been pleased to welcome Mary Dunford and Margot Fawcett to our ranks so that with Ann Allsop,

Judith Hibbert and I, we have a good working team. However anyone else who would like to join us would be equally welcome.

We are hoping to find ways to extend our communication channels with schools or other agencies involving young people. We have a variety of ideas in progress and I will inform you as they come to fruition. We have had a paragraph in a newsletter sent by the University of Leicester's School of Education to all schools. Information or ideas from members of the Trust would be of interest.

The Gardens Trust Award for the student who has made the most progress on a full-time horticultural course is Adam Hannabus who is now beginning his third year of study. He has chosen to use our award of £100 for a drawing board and drawing equipment. He is the third student to receive this award. Sue Blaxland continues to work for the group as our link with Brooksby and Melton College.

Charnwood Primary School was delighted to send a group of pupils from its inner city school to visit Kelmarsh Kitchen Garden on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2015, on a rather grey and soggy day. However, the bright faces and enthusiasm of the schoolchildren made the sun quite unnecessary. Although I have been to the Kitchen Garden several times before, I find each school brings a new experience of the day and it is one of the experiences I always look forward to. The facilities are well prepared for any type of weather with a large pleasant room we use as a base and a roomy marquee in the kitchen garden for activities in an open air setting.

All went well in the morning. Herbs and vegetables were named and tasted. The gardens themselves were much admired.

After lunch we hunted down



bugs and beasties most of which had decided to burrow well out of sight of both the rain and twenty five ardent hunters. Undeterred we had an interesting walk along the lake and then made our own version of beasties based on a large potato and adorned with feathers which proved a hit with everyone.



We were sorry to see them depart amid many ‘thank yous’ and waving arms and have to admit that come hail or shine this visit is well worth the funding that we are able to provide.

*Irene Jones*

## **Obituaries**

### **Pat O Brien**

We are saddened to have to record that Pat O’Brien died on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> July 2015. She had been an active member, with her husband Dennis, of the Gardens Trust for many years.

Together they supported the Gardens Trust in every way. They attended lectures, visits and came on many of our Residential holidays in June to various county gardens. We all remember Pat raising her eyes dramatically to Heaven when Dennis would emerge triumphantly with a find from a nearby charity shop.

I shared many happy moments with her discussing plants in the varied gardens we enjoyed. Despite a triple heart by-pass Pat returned to such visits and would pace herself slowly when going uphill but she continued to enjoy the countryside and the gardens.

Pat had a long and successful career as a Health Visitor in the Aylestone and Saffron Lane areas for a period of 24 years service. Before that she had been a nurse and midwife in Sheffield, Leeds and Hampshire. I am sure that many have reason to thank her for her care and dedication.

Pat and Dennis had been married for 41 years and can be described as Good Companions. Although Dennis will undoubtedly miss her he is determined to continue an active and sociable life. So I am sure he will continue to enjoy our events with the friends they both made.

With him, I and many of our members will miss her very much.

*Irene Jones*

### **Alfred Allcott**

It is with sadness that we heard of the death of Alfred Allcott in September 2015. He had been an active member of the Gardens Trust, with his wife Jackie, for seventeen years. Their daughter Joanne is a Friend of the Gardens Trust also and we send our best wishes and thoughts to all members of his family at this time.

Alf was a very pleasant sociable man who was happy to fit in with any group of people but who had clear views on many topics when required. He and Jackie supported the Gardens Trust in every way. They attended lectures, and visits consistently over these many years.

Alf and his wife ran the bakery shop Nigella's on Knighton Church Rd near to the junction with South Knighton Rd. However after retirement they had more time for their own garden, the Trust's activities and, even more rewarding, for their grandchildren. Like many other members I will miss his genial company.

*Irene Jones*

## Research Group – Walled Kitchen Garden Project

We are making slow but steady progress on this project, which is absorbing our time and interest.

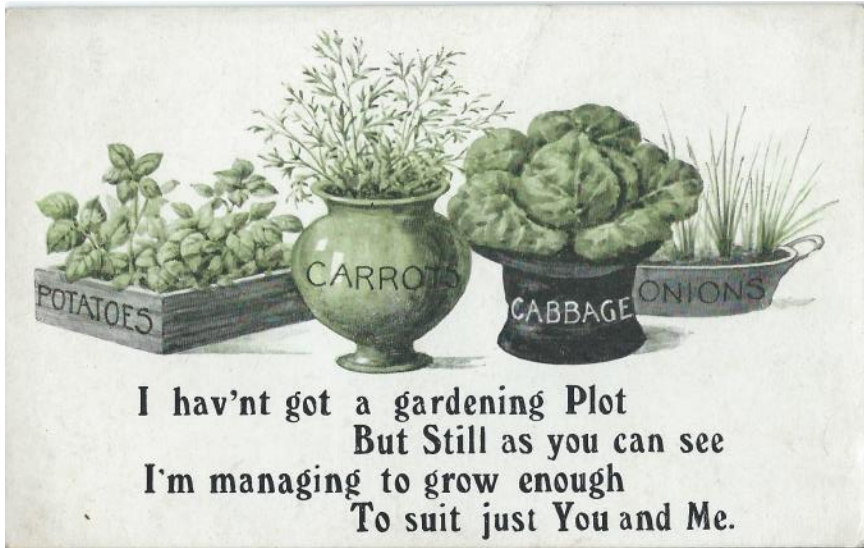
13 sites have now been researched, written up and recorded on the Register on our website. There are a further five where research has been completed but have not yet been written up or we are awaiting approval from the owners. There are a further five that we are currently working on. We have identified 82 sites so far and have redesigned the Register pages on the website, to list all of them, by borough. It is interesting that the largest number of them is concentrated in the Borough of Harborough, reflecting the location of the country houses that they were associated with and the size of the borough.

I mentioned our research at Buckminster in the last newsletter. This has led to a fascinating piece of oral history and we have acquired some wonderful photographs. I will write about this in detail in next Spring's newsletter. Another site of interest, where research has just been completed, is Launde Abbey, which had a heated wall. Group member, Keith Aldridge, who has researched this, is rapidly becoming our expert on hypocaust walls. Incidentally, we have discovered that the walled kitchen garden of Cold Overton Hall, now Gates Garden Centre, had heated walled on all four sides. It is possible to see traces of these inside the structures of the modern garden centre.

In August, the Group visited the Exhibition "Painting Paradise: The Art of the Garden" at the Queen's Gallery in London. Whilst not "great art", this was a fascinating illustration of garden history and it was wonderful to see paintings that were familiar from books. Eating out features highly in our social calendar and we had our usual summer picnic in the garden at Long Close and, just recently, a delicious pre-Christmas lunch.

*Sue Blaxland*

## From the Chairman's Collection



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## Events 2016

- Saturday 13th February      Coach trip to Easton Walled Gardens and Little Ponton Hall Gardens
- Saturday 12th March          AGM and Spring Lecture  
Leicester Bowling Club 2.00pm  
Speaker: Steffi Shields. *"Capability Brown"*
- Sunday 24th April              Sunday afternoon lecture and tea.  
Hoby Village Hall 2.00pm  
Speaker: Noel Kingsbury.  
*"Piet Oudolf-Garden Maker"*
- Thursday 19th May              Coach trip to Croome Park
- Wednesday 15th June          4-day holiday to Dorset
- Sunday 26th June                Coach trip to Renishaw Hall and Gardens
- Sunday 17th July                Town walk in Oakham with Blue Badge Guide, followed by afternoon tea
- Tuesday 16th August          Coach trip to Heath House and Trentham Gardens
- Tuesday 20th September      Annual Lecture  
University of Leicester 7.30pm  
Speaker: Pamela Smith, National Trust  
*"Archives, Potting Sheds and Databases"*
- Saturday 1st October            Saturday afternoon lecture and tea  
Speaker: Prof. Tom Williamson  
*"The Making of the English Landscape"*
- Thursday 20th October        Autumn Lecture  
Leicester Bowling Club. 7.30pm  
Speaker: Peter Tydesley, Park Ranger  
*"Bradgate Park"*
- Thursday 17th November      Friends Evening  
Leicester Bowling Club. 7.30pm