



Bramham Revisited.....brollies up!



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Chairman's Notes

This year's Public Lecture, given by Kim Wilkie, proved both interesting and inspiring. Drawing on his experience as an international landscape designer and farmer, Kim pointed out the challenges facing us with changes to the climate and the pressure on the environment from new development. An example was given of his work in the Middle East, of landscaping a new town, to minimise the impact on local ecology.

He also threw some light on the design process, and relationship between client and designer, when he talked about the *Orpheus* project at Boughton House in Northamptonshire. The challenge was to create a new feature that complimented the existing landscape features from the 18th Century; this was of especial interest in light of the Trust's visit to Boughton this year.

I must again thank Kim Wilkie for his generosity in waiving his fee for the talk. He did this on learning that the proceeds from the evening go towards the educational activities supported by the Trust. We are very appreciative of his action. I am pleased to say that the education sub-committee were able, this autumn, to buy and distribute spring bulbs to a number of schools, which was appreciated by the recipients.

It is with regret that I have to mention the deaths of two long standing members John Oakland and Peter Rawson. John was one of the founding members of the Trust and was for many years on the committee. He also generously allowed the Trust to use his house and garden, at Long Close in Woodhouse Eaves, as a venue for the Spring Sunday talk and tea. I am sure that many members will remember the pleasure in walking around the garden. John was also involved in the organisation and running of the NGS in Leicestershire.

Peter Rawson was a long standing member of the Trust. He will be remembered by many as a regular attender at lectures and on outings

with his wife Simone. He was a keen and talented photographer and we were fortunate to share some of his work at the Friends evening. To honour the memory of both John and Peter we are dedicating this year's Friends evening to them.

Stephen Barker
Chairman

Events

Yet again, the '**Afternoon tea and talk**' in **Hoby** proved to be one of our most successful events. I don't quite know whether it is the afternoon tea that is the attraction or the speaker, but whatever, the combination of the two make for a very pleasing afternoon, with the added opportunity of rounding it off with a walk in the Horsfield's garden. This year's speaker was Christina Shand, who created the wonderful garden "Dyffryn Fernant" near Newport, in West Wales, which we visited during last year's holiday. She did not start off meaning to create an important garden, but thought she should do something with the small area in front of her cottage. It is now an exquisite front garden, which then just grew and grew. It was not an easy task, as she had to cope with bog, rock, blue clay, inhospitable soil and, at times, no top soil. She used these disadvantages to her advantage, and so the garden seems to grow out of the landscape, unbroken to the Preseli Hills. Her planting uses colour, texture and form to their best advantage and is interspersed with various artefacts. She is a very imaginative and adventurous gardener which showed in her photographs and I can't recommend her garden highly enough.

I was rather nervous about Christina and her husband staying with me, as regards my own garden. However, on Sunday evening, she almost insisted on walking round my garden with me. I was a little anxious about this but it was okay and she successfully solved two problems for me. They were both excellent company.

The visit to **Bramham** was one of our return visits in recognition of the 20th anniversary of the Trust. We were welcomed in the great hall by Nick Lane Fox, the owner, with coffee and biscuits. The house and landscape date back to the end of the 17th century when the owner, Robert Benson returned from the Grand Tour. He wanted to create a landscape in the French style, the house becoming part of the landscape, from which it can be viewed. We were given a short tour of the house which has a lived-in feel about it, as it seems well used by the family and



guests from horse trials and pop concerts. I was amused to note that the deep red Victorian wallpaper in the library was in fact nineteen seventies Laura Ashley. I do like the proportions of the house. However, it is the landscape which is really the focus here. It is a rare and outstanding example of the late 17th century and early 18th century formal style. It is a garden of walks and vistas, architectural features and water stretching away from the house, just waiting to be explored.

After lunch in a rather chilly “old kitchen” off we went, with Stephen as our guide, into the garden and pouring rain. It was very wet, but nevertheless, we were able to appreciate some of the finer points of the landscape, which draws you in, regardless of the weather. It was too wet and muddy to reach the temple, where we had a picnic on our first visit, but we did get the overall impression of the landscape which was important. There is restoration work being done to the walks, statuary and fountains.

We walked back to the house, soaking wet and much to our surprise tea was served in the big hall and, what’s more, a fire had been lit in the huge fireplace. It was so welcoming. I was surprised just how much

heat it gave out and to some extent we were able to dry ourselves off. Another trip will have to be arranged in better weather.



I cannot remember an event or visit that has created so much comment and conversation as our visit to **Winwick Manor** in June. It is a medieval house, lived in by a medievalist with medieval artefacts and a garden wall, with a renaissance arch, set amongst lovely old trees. The garden is somewhat run down but, the rose

garden in particular, has a faded charm about it. I had been the year before and thought it was all rather charming and so arranged this visit. The owner decided we should be shown round the village and church before lunch, followed by a stroll in the garden and tour of his house. Not quite everyone's taste, perhaps, but an interesting site.

The visit to **Stocktonbury** in July was also a return visit. We had been there on the Herefordshire holiday, when it was a real surprise as we had not heard of it: we loved it. It had been recommended by Herefordshire Garden Trust. The garden is still in the Treasure family, but Tamsin Westhorpe, who used to edit 'The English Garden' magazine is now in charge. There is always a change when a new person takes over a garden and that is how it should be. There is still a wealth of plants but the character has changed, more cottage garden style perhaps, than the more formal style that I remember. Still lovely though.



After lunch we went on to neighbouring **Hampton Court Castle**, which is a castellated country house. From the ticket office we went

through into the walled garden, it was just wonderful. Beautifully planted, but a pity about the “Summer Houses”, which I thought were a bit of a mistake. I found the Dutch Garden with its long pool and irises very reflective and soothing. There is a maze which I did not attempt and a riverside walk which was very attractive. It was another good day out.



In August we visited **Spring Barrow Lodge Farm**. I think there might have been a few raised eyebrows when this was on the menu. However it does relate back to Robert Bakewell, who, through his farming methods, influenced our landscape as we see it today. Mrs Stanley has bred a prize winning herd of longhorn cattle of world renown. Robert Bakewell introduced selective breeding of cattle at the end of the 17th century, with the longhorn cattle and it was said that every part of the beast could be used. So, off we went on a tractor trailer to see the cattle; it was great: the Stanleys told us all about the herd, whilst it gathered round us on the trailer. We then went back to the farm where our Mrs Bridges picnic awaited in the garden. The weather stayed dry so all was well. After the picnic we were shown Mr Stanley’s picture gallery. He deals in paintings of old farm animals. The origin of many of these was to take them around the country to fairs, as a means of advertisement, for the farmers selling their cattle. An interesting and very enjoyable afternoon but I went home with chronic hay fever.

Our ‘**Village Walk**’, in August, was around **Hoby**. I do enjoy these walks. It is now very satisfying, when walking through Hoby, to know that the first cottage coming in from Brooksby is medieval, that there was a work house, a school, a forge, church and chapel, a post office, etc etc. It does bring the village alive, to imagine what was there before. We also found a walled garden that we did not know about and

which was fully functional with an excellent crop of various vegetables and cut flowers. There was also a date for it on the wall, BVH 1879, something we have not come across before. The Bluebell pub provided an excellent buffet lunch with enough to have doggy bags to take home. Excellent.

The garden at **Sudborough Rectory** was another of our return visits. It has changed hands since our first visit, and the new owners have made several changes to the garden, that I remember, from several years ago.

Mrs Toller has a background in fine arts and this is reflected in all aspects of the garden, in her use of colour, form, texture and space. The planting is striking, with a wide variety of plants; lovely rich salvias and dahlias were particularly vibrant in September. The church tower is visible from most of the garden and she has designed a “folly” in the rose garden echoing the tower. Great fun. The weather was good so we all had a very social lunch on the lawn before going on to Boughton House home of Kim Willkie’s Orpheus.



I was just a little surprised at **Boughton House**, that the senior gardener who took us round was not very interested in the historic landscape. No mention of The Grand Etang or the canals was made. However, he was an interesting character and he did give us an informative tour of the gardens which includes



a very large walled kitchen garden. He may not have been interested in

Orpheus but we were, so off we went down to hell and looked up at heaven. We finished off the day with a visit to the Chinese Pavilion, a wonderful summerhouse.

As you all know, Phillip Tydesly was unable to give the **Autumn Lecture** as he has left Bradgate Park. Sue and I had heard **Phillip Lindley**, at Loughborough, in the summer; give a lecture on his research on the gardens at Boughton House. We found it interesting and thought that, as we had Kim Wilkie and the trip to Boughton coming up, he could replace the other Phillip. At short notice, he agreed. The problem was, that if one had not been to Boughton it did not make a lot of sense. For those who knew the site, it was excellent.

This year's **holiday** was to **Kent and East Sussex** and included a visit to **Sissinghurst**. We had heard of the latest developments there when Troy Scott Smith, gave our Annual Lecture. It is such an iconic garden that one hopes it still lives up to expectations. I need not have feared. When we arranged the holiday we paid a premium for early bird entry which meant there were just us and our guides. This was more than worth it and I was delighted that Sissinghurst can still bring tears to the eyes with the perfection of the place, I need say no more.



Parham House is not well known up here and those who did not know it were delighted by this lovely Elizabethan House, with a well-designed and well planted garden with a good nursery. Other gardens included **Eltham Palace**, which we visited on the way down, best known for its stylish nineteen thirties décor, **Great Dixter**, **Pashley Manor** and **Wisley**. I had not been to the latter before and I was very impressed with everything about it. All were interesting and worth visiting. Other highlights were a visit to the newly restored De La Warr modernist Pavilion at Bexhill and Beachy Head, where to my horror, I saw Rowan laying on the very edge of the cliff examining a tiny plant.

She told me afterwards she does not like heights. Thanks are due to Success Holidays who arranged the trip, Mrs Bridges for the picnic but most of all to Richard, our driver, from Paul Winson Coaches who could not have been more helpful and who had to put up with our chatter as he made his way around the busy roads of the south east. Another few gardens under our belts, here's to the next one.

The **Annual Lecture** was given by **Kim Wilkie**. I first became interested in landform landscapes when visiting the *Garden of Cosmic Speculation* designed by Charles Jenks and then *Orpheus* by Kim Wilkie at Boughton and his work at Great Fosters in Surrey. When choosing a speaker one can have some idea of how popular they are going to be. I thought Kim would be interesting, but not a household name, although; he is world renowned as a landscape architect and works on many projects, such as The Barbican in London and abroad. Other advantages were that he was easy to contact (sounds crude but it does make it easy for me)) and we do have a broad canvas from which to draw. So, it was a bit of a gamble inviting him and, when he said there would be no fee, the decision was made, (we could not have afforded him). It was the right one. Of all the speakers we have had for this event he will be remembered as one of the most memorable. His philosophy is that we should work with nature not against it. He showed us some of his projects, one of the most interesting being his work in Oman. He worked with an architect to build a new town in a very parched valley. The idea was that the town would be at the top of the mountain whilst the gardens would be in the valley, so whatever water there was would be channelled to irrigate gardens and of course it worked. We were shown this and other projects which showed the genius of the man. It was a brilliant lecture which I can't do justice to, I think probably the best way to see more of his work, rather than me try to describe it, is simply to buy his book.

Led by the Land: Landscapes by Kim Wilkie (ISBN: 9780711233256)

He is also the sort of person who thanks you for thank you letters! A really good evening.

Postscript When we were sitting on the trailer at Spring Barrow Lodge Farm, John Stanley gave us the farmer's side of the argument re beef farming and climate change. In the opinion column of *The Guardian* on Monday November 4th there is a really well argued and informative article on farming with regard to climate change by his son Joe. If you can find it, it's worth reading.

Elizabeth Bacon

We have not increased the cost of membership for Friends for a long time and have no immediate plans to do so. However, **we have decided to increase the cost for visitors to the Spring/Autumn lectures etc from £2 to £3 from the start of 2020.**

Research Group

The summer has been quite a quiet time for research, though the (industrious) "South-East Group" has finished researching Saddington Hall. This is currently sitting on my desk for proof-reading and editing.

The "West Group" has finished writing up Whatton House – a very comprehensive and excellent piece of research. It has to get final approval from the owners before we can publish it on our website.

We were delighted that, thanks to their knowledge of the site, we were able to assist the Conservation Officer of The Gardens Trust with a planning application, submitted by the owners of Whatton House, to build a café, visitor facilities and visitor parking for the garden. As a result of this background knowledge, we were happy to support the application.

Leicester Frith (Glenfield Hospital) continues to occupy the “North-East Group”. Sarah Bailey and I were very fortunate in being able to revisit the site, meet and interview June Wallace, the daughter of one of the gardeners at “The Frith” from 1934 till his retirement in 1970.

Her younger sister, Jenny Nuttgens, has written a beautiful recollection of her childhood visits to the garden and this is included separately in this Newsletter, along with a photo of her father and his fellow gardeners.

I have joined a small “Historical Advisory Panel” of people who are interested in the history of the site in relation to “The Secret Garden Project” at Glenfield. We have had our first meeting and I have already gained more useful information and contacts relating to the history. Volunteers are now working on a regular basis to maintain the gardens which were created last summer for a TV programme on Channel 5, aired back in the spring.

We were very sorry that Keith Aldridge who has done some excellent research work in Rutland for this project, has decided that, due to other commitments, he can no longer spend time on research. We thank him for all the great work he has done for us.

Sue Blaxland

Recollections of the Walled Garden at Glenfrith Hospital by Jenny Nuttgens, daughter of Jack Hyman, who was one of the gardeners.

I have known this precious garden for as long as I can remember. I was born in 1937. My parents and older sister were living in Glenfield since it was in close proximity to Glenfrith Hospital where my father, Jack Hyman, was employed in the walled garden. He had previously worked for Admiral Lord Beatty in the gardens of Brooksby Hall where he had lived as a Bothy Boy since leaving school (and Thrussington) at the age of 14 years in 1924.

It was not until after the end of the War in 1945 that we were able to visit my father's place of work. By this time, the family was living in Thurmaston and we were old enough to make the 14 mile return journey by bicycle.

My father worked a 5½ day week (as did many people in those days) having only Saturday afternoon and Sunday off. However, every alternate week, he returned to work on Saturday late afternoon to close the greenhouse ventilation, water plants and to stoke the greenhouse boilers. Sunday would not be a day off either, as the greenhouses needed tending too, again, opening-up in the mornings and a return journey to tend them again in the evenings. These journeys were always by bicycle.

Apart from the years my father spent in the Army after the outbreak of the Second World War, and subsequently recuperating after being wounded in the battle of El Alamein, he worked at the Frith from around 1935, faithfully tending the gardens until 1970 when he retired at the age of 60.

It was always a treat for us to be invited to join him on a weekend mission to tend the hothouses – some for propagating seedlings and cuttings and being shown some of the different ways that plants can reproduce and seed be dispersed. I especially loved a succulent which produced hundreds of babies along the edge of its fleshy leaves – when ready they dropped off into the welcoming warmth of the waiting compost and began again a whole new cycle of life. Another plant (I think it was the African Violet) could grow itself from a simple slice of leaf placed edgeways into the moist compost.

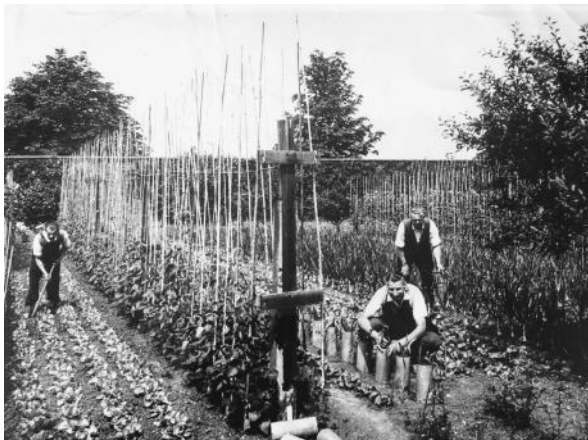
I remember the humid heat in the glasshouses where the tomatoes and cucumbers grew – almost too sweltering to breathe in there – and the rich mouth-watering scent of the ripe tomatoes smelling just as tomatoes should – but seldom do these days.

One glasshouse was full of exotic plants, the most impressive of which was the Passion Flower (*Passiflora caerulea*) and of being shown how each part of the flower represented the Passion of Christ – the three crosses, the Hill of Calvary, the nails and the spots of blood.

In addition to the rows of beans, onions, leeks, cabbages and many other vegetables, there were also heavily scented herbs: mint, sage, fennel, thyme, lavender and lemon balm.

A peach tree grew against a south-facing wall and there were other fruit trees – pears and apples especially. Once we were allowed to climb the ladder to look at the harvested apples being stored there (*this refers to the Apple Store*)

Most of all, I loved the potting shed and, in the winter, the warmth from the coke-fuelled stove. There was evidence of the lunch break, when the gardening team of **Wilf Ward (Head Gardener)**, **Jack Creasey** and my father, **Jack Hyman**, could spend some time chatting and relaxing,



Jack Hyman, hoeing lettuces on the left, **Jack Creasey**, putting drain pipes over the leeks to blanch them and **Wilf Ward** standing in front of what look like some very healthy onions.

drinking tea from the random, tannin-stained mugs that mingled with the clay pots and raffia strands on the potting shed bench.

In addition to the regular team of three gardeners, some of the patients also helped in the garden.

Occasionally, the gardens were called upon to supply floral decorations for various events, including the Granby Halls, and for the Mansion House (*the Victorian building which formed part of the hospital*). The Abbey Park Flower Show was another occasion when they would be called upon to display their produce.

My sister, June, remembers chickens in the gardens too, but when it was decided to relocate these, one of them escaped capture. When it did reappear, it was too late to join the others and spent the rest of its life living with my family and being known as Dulcie.

Sadly my last memories of seeing the Glenfrith garden were not such happy ones. In 1995, my mother was taken ill. We took my father to visit her in the new hospital at Glenfrith. Whilst Jack sat with her, we took a drive around the back of the walled garden. Through the peepholes in the wall, we were dismayed to see that the area had become a builder's yard. There were tears in my father's eyes hearing this news.

My mother died in January 1996 and Jack in 1997 after over 60 years of happily married life.

It is such good news to hear that, like the Phoenix, the garden has once again sprung to life and has become the happy place that it used to be. Jack would be so thrilled.

There is more information about Jack online in the Thurmaston Military Indexes website.

31st August 2019

Education

This autumn the Education group gave over 100 bulbs to each of the schools listed below:-

Oaklands School, Whitehall, Leicester
St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Loughborough
Cobden Primary School, Loughborough
Braunstone Frith Primary School, Leicester
Shenton Primary School, Leicester
Northfield House Junior School, Leicester
Merrydale Junior School, Leicester
New Parks Primary School, Leicester

Judith Hibbert

Membership

By November 3rd, this year, our 22nd year, 136 members had rejoined us for our events and lectures from 1st October 2019 - 30th September 2020. Many Friends are now using standing orders. For those not doing so, for the first time, I emailed my reminder letter, to those willing or able to use this system. This worked very well. It makes a good saving on postage for us too. A similar number were reminded by post.

Last year we were very successful with 169 members by the end of the year of which 13 were new. Most members actually join between April and September. As usual our new members came from an introduction by Friends of the Trust and a good number from our event in April at Hoby Village Hall. I hope we will be able to do as well in the coming year. Many thanks to all of you, for your continued support and remarkable promptness in replying and rejoining.

Irene Jones

Peter on Pattern

Peter Rawson was always seen with his camera on Trust visits and we are familiar with the beautiful photographs he took. However, there were times when I wondered just what he was photographing. The following, written by his wife, Simone, explains a lot to me. Deborah

Like most photographers, Peter had been taking and printing photographs, of a wide range of subjects all his life. After he retired, he specialized just in tree silhouettes, in black and white, gradually evolving to semi-abstracts of trees, in colour. He then widened his range of subject matter ending up with full abstracts, which he pretty well concentrated on in the last few years of his life.

Having read the very many pages of notes he left on his own photography, I have realized that there is a very strong thread that runs through his artistic evolution: his love of and fascination with pattern. Since he wrote clearly and fully, I have decided simply to quote him and let him tell his own story.

“I have been taking photographs sporadically for over 60 years whilst pursuing a career in engineering design; I am particularly interested in patterns and textures, in trees, plants, buildings and structures; I have welcomed the advent of digital manipulation as a means of allowing greater control of the source image e.g. by combining and modifying the source images to produce a personal interpretation of the subject.”

“I love trees, the sharp outlines of a tree in winter, silhouetted against a clear sky at dusk – or the shimmer

of fresh green leaves in Spring, not yet hiding the structure.... Part of



the attraction of tree skeletons is the pattern made by the twigs and branches, particularly with pollarded trees.”

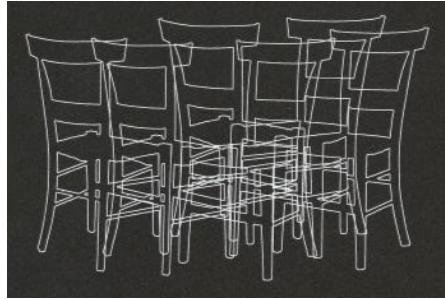
“In the tree photographs, the aim is to show a single tree, or a group of trees, separated from their surroundings, with a comfortable space around the image within the frame; every visible twig is sharp; in most cases, the sharpness is achieved by taking several overlapping digital photos and combining these in the computer so the joints cannot be seen...”

Then he progressed from tree silhouettes to semi-abstracts of trees: *“In a series of prints, I have selected part of a tree with an interesting pattern left a black outline to the thicker branches and filled the centre with colour.”* And *“The square semi-abstract coloured prints concentrate on details of trees selected for their strong and interesting pattern; colours and textures of the trunks and the background are chosen according to my feeling at the moment of final decision.”*

The next step was, of course, moving on to full abstracts. In one “Artist’s Statement” he wrote *“Although patterns have been around for millennia, to decorate buildings, clothes and pots, abstract images, as entities in themselves, have been around for only about a century. I like abstracts as they can be appreciated for their shapes, colour and arrangement alone, without any association with history, religion, ethics, politics etc., which inevitably intrude when viewing representational or figurative art. Abstracts can be likened to instrumental music where the tune, harmonization and quality of sound can be appreciated for themselves. I see equivalence between prints and chamber music, on the one hand and oil painting and orchestral music on the other.”* And *“My images are intended to give pleasure similar to a Haydn Quartet”*

But pattern is still essential with abstracts. Peter writes *“Patterns could be based, in abstracts, on original or well-known patterns e.g. Greek Key patterns, or a trade symbol, or be derived from nature and be recognizable or not.”*

And there follows a list of suitable patterns: *“Patterns: Trees (superimposed, reflected) hedges, net, leaf skeletons, reflections (in water, glass), seeds, water droplets, ice, bark, cracked mud/glass. Also steps, stairs and chairs (he has a whole page of how to use chairs in different patterns).”*



He also writes:

*“Some artists make abstracts from geometrical shapes e.g. circles, triangles or squares (**Malevich, Mondrian**) others by dribbling paint. I construct shapes in the computer, based on real objects, for example a broken Afghan pot or the curve of a river, or textures, such as cracked mud. I then colour, move around, arrange or provide borders, until I am satisfied with the result. I like smooth curves, precise alignment, bits that hang out, gaps and slightly imperfect juxtapositions to avoid too mechanical a look (Wabi Sabi)”*

*“Influences are many, in particular **Morandi** for careful arrangements of objects, **Henry Moore**, from whom I just realized the power of gaps and **Bridget Riley** for her steadfast adherence to the abstract.”*

Thus Peter wrote at length about his newly-found artistic genre, abstracts, nevertheless conscious to the end of the continued role played by pattern as a crucial source of artistic inspiration.

Some pattern obviously plays an essential part in garden design. I hope the readers of this Newsletter, gardeners, garden visitors and especially designers, will find some interest in these extracts from Peter's notes.

Simone Rawson

Useful Contact Numbers

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Events	Elizabeth Bacon	0116 2705711
Newsletter	Deborah Martin	0116 2707525
Research/ Secretary	Sue Blaxland	0116 2609748

Welsh Limericks from Paul Knight- memories of the after dinner entertainment on our last night on holiday in Wales

There was a young man from Penarth
Who grew prize-winning leeks in his bath
But he moved to the Gower
Where he's only a shower
Now their size is reduced by a half.

There was a young chef from Caerphilly
Who served cheese with chopped chives and red chilli.
He grilled it on toast
'It's Welsh Rarebit' he'd boast.
Though I think the name's really quite silly.

Programme for 2020

Sunday 19th January	Winter Lunch at Hoby Village Hall
Thursday 13th February	Chippenham Park Gardens, Newmarket (By coach)
Thursday 19th March Leicester Bowling Club	AGM (7.00pm) and Spring Lecture (7.30pm) <i>'Triumph, crisis and conflict: the uncomfortable history of Britain's public Parks'</i> Speaker: Katy Layton- Jones
Saturday 25th April	Afternoon Lecture and tea at Hoby, 2.00pm Speaker: Marcus Chilton-Jones, Curator of RHS Bridgewater Gardens
Thursday 14th May	Caughton Court and Morton Hall Gardens, Worcs (By coach)
Sun. 14th-Thurs. 18th June	5 day holiday to Somerset
Thursday 25th June	Rutland Water Study Day
Thursday 9th July	Westbrooke House, Market Harborough and Cottesbrooke Hall (By coach)
Saturday 9th August	Walk round Thrussington
September (to be confirmed)	Annual Lecture Speaker: Janina Ramirez <i>'In Search of Arcadia'</i>
Sunday 20th September (date to be confirmed)	RHS Bridgewater Gardens (By coach)
Thursday 15th October Leicester Bowling Club	Autumn Lecture Speaker: Judith Hibbert <i>'Victorian Gardens'</i> 7.30pm
Thursday 19th November Leicester Bowling Club	Friends Evening 7.30pm