

LEICESTERSHIRE
AND RUTLAND
GARDENS
TRUST



www.lrgt.org

Newsletter

No 23 Autumn 2009

Registered Charity no. 1063075

FAREWELL TO THE OCTAGON ROOM



The Octagon Room, Clarendon Park Road, Leicester

We have had many happy meetings at the Octagon Room, but our increased membership has meant we have now out-grown it as a venue. Starting with the Spring Lecture 2010 we will be moving to the Friends' Meeting House, Queens Road, Leicester.

Inside this issue

Celebrity Lecture:		Hill Close Gardens	page 13
Anna Pavord	page 3	Sudborough	page 14
Broughton Grange	page 5	Boughton House	page 15
Goadby Marwood	page 7	Reasearch Group	page 16
Sezincote	page 8	Garendon Park	page 17
Uppingham Walk	page 11	AGT Conference	page 20
Kenilworth Castle	page 11	2010 Programme	page 24

Chairman's Notes

There are times when I think the hardest part of being Chairman of the Trust is when Debbie says "Can I have the Chairman's Notes for the Newsletter?" I then have to try and think of something original to say without duplicating the entries of other contributors even though I have not seen what they have written. I have resisted the suggestion of recycling a former column and merely changing the date. Fortunately, in my time as Chairman, beyond the odd minor hiccup, I have not had any bad news to report.

The Friend's Evening in November will be the last meeting to be held in the Octagon Room; next year we will be meeting in the Friends' Meeting House in Queen's Road, which is not far away. We are moving to a new location to accommodate our increased membership and to provide more comfortable seating. You will be pleased to hear that we will be continuing the tea, coffee and cakes after the lectures.

The work of the Research and Recording Group in entering material on to the Parks and Gardens Database and developing guidance notes was acknowledged at the AGT AGM in Lincoln this year. I am pleased to say that the LRGT is in the forefront of work on the database. Work has started on developing an education policy for the Trust, which I hope we will be able to report to members next year at the AGM.

It merely remains for me to say thank you to everyone who has contributed to the successful running of the Trust's activities and to all the members for their support. I look forward to seeing you all in the New Year.

Stephen Barker

Events

Events to date

The increased membership this year has meant more coach trips which have been well supported and enjoyable. Broughton Grange, which we visited in May, was just stunning and drew our attention to another possibility, that of seeing gardens at different seasons. Another trip will be arranged to Broughton in a couple of years, at a different time of year. It added slightly to our interest to learn that the owner had been appointed to run The Royal Bank of Scotland. When I heard about his salary on the Today programme, I just thought, "Well, that will mean a lot more trees in Oxfordshire".

I had visited Sezincote several years ago when I knew little of Garden History and certainly nothing of the Indian influences on the architecture of the house; it was just a rather nice place set in attractive grounds. Returning several years later, with the memory of Kate's lecture and some knowledge of garden history, a whole new dimension was opened up, so that the house and garden could be considered on a number of levels, making for a much more satisfying visit. Batsford Arboretum is



Admiring the Coral Bark Maple at Batsford Arboretum

directly opposite Sezincote and although I was a little concerned, July not really the best month to visit trees (Spring and Autumn being more appropriate) it was splendid and obviously another place to re visit at a different time of year.

There will be many differing opinions with regard to English Heritage's recreation of the Elizabethan Garden at Kenilworth Castle. I was pleased to see it and admired English Heritage for having the courage to take on such a project with not a lot of evidence. I just think there needs to be more information for the general public to understand the symbolism of the garden which would increase the general enjoyment of their visit. Hill Close Gardens in Warwick were a great contrast. I don't think I



Hill Close Gardens

I have ever seen so many Friends walking round with smiles on their faces as there were in that garden. Do try and make an effort to go if you have not already been there.

Our village walk this year was a town walk in Uppingham lead by a Blue Badge Guide, Jill Collinge, who was excellent. The afternoon was particularly enjoyable as we were invited to tea at South Luffenham Hall after the walk. Kathryn and Andrew Jukes, who have been loyal Friends of the Trust since the very early days, went to a lot of trouble to make us welcome and we were able to enjoy their lovely garden. Many thanks to them.

When I decided that it might be a good idea to visit The Old Rectory garden at Sudborough in early Autumn to see the fruit and vegetables in the potager at their maturity, I could not have imagined that this visit would turn into such a magical day. The contrasting sites of Sudborough and Boughton were both stunning and the weather made it just perfect.

I just hope that after such a successful series of visits, next year will be equally enjoyable.

We try to price our trips as fairly as possible, but this is no easy task when we do not know final numbers. As it is necessary to commit to things like the size of the coach required at least 2 weeks in advance, the Committee has decided that, starting next year, we will only be able to refund recoverable expenses in cases of cancellation. We hope you will understand our dilemma.

Elizabeth Bacon

Celebrity Lecture Thursday 7th May 2009

Anna Pavord 'Why Garden?'

What a delight! Anna Pavord by her intelligent and enthusiastic approach to the reasons why we garden entranced us all. Her reasons were wide reaching, philosophical and practical. While having clear views, she was well aware of the different approaches of gardeners. She was sympathetic to all, except perhaps the tidy gardener. How I agree with her!

She drew widely upon her own experience and showed us some excellent photographs of gardens and plants that illustrated the points she was making. Her experience is considerable. Having spent thirty years restoring the garden of an old rectory, she is now starting a new garden. She is a widely read author, journalist and broadcaster.

She described the healing, soothing power of working in a garden. We receive refreshment and retreat from a difficult world. This has kept us out of the hands of the psychologists- which may be why neither Jung or Freud ever refers to gardens or gardeners.

Gardening delights us. There is always something to look forward to. We learn by observation and taking care of plants. Our success can sweep us off our feet. We are rooted in the garden, and its full appeal often arrives later in life. A garden is a sensual place: bird song, bubbling water, and sculptured shapes. If our garden pleases us we do not need to please anyone else. We do not need to be fashionable, with blue Moroccan pots or grasses. Gardening is close to

Why Garden?

All things bright and beautiful,
All creatures great and small,
But the Pests and the Diseases,
Whoever made *them* all?

The greenfly on the roses,
The blackfly on the bean,
The vine weevil in adult form
With munched leaf-edges seen.

The cats they squash nepeta,
The pigeons trash the kale,
The slugs they munch the tenderest leaves
Matched only by the snail.

Bacteria, fungus, virus:
They show on many things,
Canker, mildew and mosaic,
And even fairy rings.

With all these garden enemies
Well, just what can I say,
When you ask 'Why Garden?'
It's To Keep the Beasts at Bay!

Joyce Farnese

poetry and art - the last of the three sisters as Horace Walpole observed. For her the lake at Blenheim is a work of art, while Rousham is a perfect eighteenth century garden.

The practical aspects of a garden include our ability to grow food. The revival of interest in allotments is to be welcomed, for we love the taste of home grown food, and we socialize on our allotments. The garden is also an outdoor room, a botanical holding pen, and a wildlife habitat.

Without being designers we know when we get it right. We visit gardens for ideas and to understand the past. Historic gardens are a tool for us. Gertrude Jekyll in 'A *Gardeners Testament*' saw the garden as "a source of repose and refreshment to the mind". So when we garden with enthusiasm, passion and honesty, we gardeners will get it right.

Irene Jones

Further thoughts on 'Why garden?'

Virtual Gardening - A Hidden Joy

Anna Pavord's delightful lecture identified so many reasons for gardening that it's difficult to identify others. However, in an age of instant garden design I would like to emphasise the joy of slow gestation or the long term creative mental processes that gardening offers to those of us who have insufficient money and little time for gardening proper. For some this may be frustrating but for me virtual gardening is a joy in itself.

The garden I have acquired was first laid out in the Edwardian period and retains its original, unremarkable structure. I do have to admit to occasional desires for an instant perfect garden, a Buddhist stone garden or perhaps a

drought garden – but I would miss the extensive periods of meandering and pleasurable evaluation of what exists and what might be that obsessively holds my interest during daily life.

Although my garden will never qualify for the *'Yellow Book'*, I constantly observe and notice; analyse and re-evaluate and sometimes a change occurs. Some alterations are immediate, like speedily removing, before it hybridises with orange ones, that yellow meconopsis flower that should not be there. But most often any implementation occurs long after the idea is first conceived helped along by tips in books or 'Gardeners' Question Time', or ideas from friends and gardens that incrementally offer alternatives, modifications and even complete changes of direction. There are some ideas that never materialise...for example that secret garden remembered from childhood hidden behind a high hedge and filled with oversize topiary set within a lawn.

Can I make the garden more interesting? Ought I to break the boring formality of the central lawn and straight side path? Should I replace the path with one that curves through the middle of the grass? It would improve views from the house. It would stop the eye just rushing down to the end. When I finally build the new path satisfaction is not the end of the story. Enjoyment comes from trying to work out exactly what impact the new path makes. How it actually improves the view and, from this another project emerges. Should I screen the surviving far end of the side path which twists away into the spinney?

Then there is the desire for box hedging. I often recall a wonderful garden belonging to a neighbour. It had a potager subdivided by neatly clipped box hedges. But would it really work on my patch? Will it harbour pests? How often would I have to cut it? How do I go about it? I could take cuttings this summer and do a trial hedge along one side of the vegetable plot. But what about the other side where there are raised beds? Perhaps I could build a dry stone wall there instead? Would that look odd? For days, months and perhaps even a couple of years I play with the idea.

Frequently, I also consider whether to pack in more roses; but which ones and is there really room? Climbers or ramblers would take up little ground space and add height and drama? How many times in a year do I go through the rose catalogues, look at books on roses, draw up lists of varieties and seek out those which have perfume, the right colour, flower longest and grow healthily? There must be a fantasy garden in my mind that one day will benefit from all this thinking and dreaming because my garden truly hasn't the space.

Another constant theme turns on the Spanish bluebells! I must get rid of them and replant with proper English ones. But have I the courage and know-how? How do I efficiently kill them off without destroying the neighbouring wild plants in the process? How many years will it take to achieve this? Anyway shouldn't I start the process this year and stop them seeding. What a treat it would be to just have a sea of those deep blue, bowed heads!

Maybe I am lazy and should get up at the crack of dawn or garden into the late summer evenings, then all these thoughts would materialise quickly. Maybe that is what everyone else does. But for me this constant gestation of ideas and ongoing critique and re-evaluation is an unsung and hidden joy of gardening – and if anything does get done it's an added bonus!

Rowan Roenisch

Broughton Grange, Oxfordshire, 14th May 2009

As is the case with so many such sites, access to the Grange is down narrow country lanes where an isolated dwelling is reached down an avenue of aged trees under-planted with woodland flowers. Bluebells, some white, spaced well apart to allow them to multiply, are

planted in discrete areas. A curiously placed conifer of equal maturity upsets the regularity of the other trees, a portent perhaps of the skewed symmetry of what follows. It was towards the end of this drive that the tour started. But, for the purposes of these notes, I hope I may be forgiven for turning the itinerary on its head leaving the best, as I suspect most of us would so describe it, till last.

The Grange is a largely Victorian house, of sufficient merit to avoid mention by Pevsner, and



built of brick with a Welsh slate roof and an ironstone frontage. It is this to which the aforementioned drive leads with a neat box hedge knot garden fronting the porch and its adjacent large bay window and planted with topiary, shrubs and the like. The turning area that the drive becomes is edged with trees and shrubs and the rather unlikely box horse in a mundane plastic tub, reflecting perhaps, the owners' love of horses. The garden frontage has its ubiquitous lawn and, about a metre or so below that another box hedge parterre planted with Tulips and having timber obelisks patiently waiting for the Clematis to flower.

As the ground falls away, the Long Border, an attractive walk with herbaceous borders on either side, reminiscent of those at Hidcote, Holme Lacey and elsewhere, leads to pastureland wherein the occasional mature tree stands isolated perhaps sitting on the line of a long since gone hedge. This in turn leads to a

heavily shaded area, the Sunken Garden, whose features include what appears to be an old circular pool, more formal box hedging in a neat square geometric pattern and planting that includes azaleas, primulas, hostas, heucheras and tiarella. Less usual plantings for such an area include palms and a Chilean pine. Leaving the shade, a "stumpery" is followed by a boggy pool and marginal planting, perhaps the relic of the land being farmed. All of this is on the edge of the young arboretum covering an extensive area of former farmland, some 80 acres, and likely to be extremely impressive in a few years time as the trees grow in stature. A tree lined path winds its way uphill again, with planting along its edge of tulips and wild garlic, leading eventually to the outstanding feature of the estate.



At the Bothy, the trappings of the affluent become apparent - swimming pool, tennis court and, surprisingly, a small orchard with some rather mature apple trees. A small walled area hides this, and the refreshment area and loos, with Wisteria and climbing roses covering the brickwork.

What then greets the visitor is the so-called walled garden, something of a misnomer open as it is at the bottom and with hedging on the arboretum boundary.

The whole effect is remarkable. The ground falls away fairly steeply providing wonderful views over the countryside beyond, reminiscent of, for example, similar views at

Knights Hayes near Tavistock in Devon. There the resemblance ends. The slope is terraced into four contrasting levels. The highest is of herbaceous planting within a rigid framework of paths, most of which are hidden by the exuberance of plant growth. Euphorbias are much in evidence with inflorescences ranging from rich orange above deep bronze leaves, to acid yellow on bright green foliage. The weed, *E. mysinites* winds its invasive way amongst the plantings as a golden-yellow silken thread. Purple pincushion heads of alliums and lilac geraniums contrast with the greens and yellows. The whole is punctuated with columnar firs that might be found in Mediterranean climes, with beech topiary that would not have looked amiss as part of the landscape in one of the more esoteric television programmes aimed at the very young, and pleached limes formed in squares rather than the more usual avenues.



A large rill (or canal) runs to the next level, ending in a waterfall or cascade feeding the large pool. Dutifully stocked with ornamental carp, it has stepping-stones from front to back placed very off-centre – hence the skewed symmetry. Irises make their appearance here as do examples of *Rodgersii*. The third terrace is best viewed from here as the pattern of the box hedged “parterre” is clear, based on the cellular structure of leaves and planted, presently,

with tulips shortly to be replaced with summer planting of less usual bedding. Below this is the Yew Terrace, a parade of clipped yews, more orderly than those at Packwood, and rather unimaginative.



The final punctuation mark is the Wollemi pine grown from a cutting at Kew, a hermaphrodite having flowers of both sexes with the female ones on top.

All in all a successful outing and yet for me the overall effect was a little disjointed. It is really two gardens, or three with the arboretum, and perhaps it should so be judged rather than comparing it with the likes of such places as Hidcote.

Broughton Grange, open as it is on a few NGS Sundays and otherwise to group visits by prior appointment, illustrates a significant benefit of membership of an organisation such as ours where a guided tour is offered for a group of like minded members. Should the opportunity arise I can heartily recommend visiting it later in the year when much of the planting will have changed.

John Oakley

Goadby Marwood Hall Gardens 24th June 2009

I had read an account of a visit to Goadby Hall by Nottinghamshire Garden Trust and was rather intrigued by it so I looked it up in the ‘*Good Garden Guide*’ which gave it one star. It was a Leicestershire garden which I thought we should visit one evening in the summer. This

was duly arranged but I got cold feet, so Sue and I visited it in May just to make sure it was worth your while: we felt it was. This is not a plantsman's (or plantswoman's) garden but its attraction lies mainly in the setting. The approach to this garden is at the head of a string of five lakes created by the Duke of Buckingham in the 18th century and extending for about a mile. Surrounding the rather handsome Hall there are a series of small gardens including a rose garden and a small orchard. Behind the house, just across the lawn is the village church.



So, as you can imagine on a lovely June evening this garden looked its most romantic and atmospheric, with light being reflected off the water and sunlit fields seen through the trees. Fifty or so Friends assembled outside the house before exploring the lakes, smaller gardens and church. It was difficult to believe that until five years ago this garden was overgrown and the lakes silted up. The owners, Mr and The Hon Mrs Westropp, with hard work and

imagination have obviously been very successful in bringing the garden back to life in a relatively short space of time. After a walk round the lakes, Friends visited the small gardens around the house and were particularly impressed by the Rose Garden and the planting in the newly created Stables Garden. We had brought sandwiches and cake which Mrs Westropp hoped we could serve in the village hall but it was already booked so instead she arranged for us to use the church. Debbie is to be admired for the way she managed to make tea and coffee in rather difficult circumstances in the vestry. It all worked very well, and our thanks are due to Mrs Westropp for her help and cooperation in arranging this visit. I was sorry that she was unable to be there that evening as she is a very attractive personality whom the Friends would have enjoyed meeting. In her absence Diney Sewell was on hand to help us, for which we were very grateful.



The idea of using the village hall made me realise that, on future occasions, village halls could be a useful facility for us.

Elizabeth Bacon

Sezincote, near Moreton in the Marsh 1st July 2009

Sezincote was built for Charles Cockerell in 1805-7 by his brother, Samuel Pepys Cockerell, with the aid of Thomas Daniell. At the time the British government, having lost its American colonies, was seeking to entrench its position in India. However, most westerners imbued

with classical education were loath to admit that Indian civilisation was far older than classical antiquity and even rarer were those that rated the culture great. I suspect that most people at the time had views not much different from those of Edwin Lutyens when competing to design New Delhi in the Edwardian period, 'Personally I do not believe that there is any real Indian architecture at all, or any great tradition. There are just spurts by various mushroom dynasties with as much intellect in them as any other art nouveau'! On this visit, we forgot the corruption and ruthless avarice of the East India Company, Victorian imperial arrogance and post-9/11 Islamophobic prejudice. Instead we entered a magical world created by an extremely unusual and privileged westerner who had fallen under the spell of Indian architecture.



Appropriately, the day of our visit was blisteringly hot and sunny. Combined with the lime-blossom scented air, we were able to appreciate more fully this extraordinarily exotic and maverick house in the Gloucestershire countryside with its Hindu columns and lotus flowers as well as hood moulds in the form of Bengal roofs. We also glimpsed the classic beauty of Mughal tombs and palaces with their engrailed arches, chattris and onion domes. On reaching the walls of the house we were immediately relieved to stand in the dense shade thrown to the ground by the deeply projecting Mughal bracket and chaja cornices.

The Greek revival interior with some Indian furnishings did not appear odd. Perhaps because both styles were imbued with picturesque sensibility: eclectic, intricate, varied and full of romantic associations. Both suggest a lost 'Arcadian' or simple, pastoral world. The landscape views of India bathed in a warm veil of early morning, misty sunshine by Thomas Daniell and his nephew William, that so influenced Sezincote, charm us with their fragile, almost innocent beauty.

The main reception rooms at first floor level were reached by a very early, cast-iron bifurcated staircase with anthemion mouldings, which was a joy to ascend. At the top we were just gobsmacked by the yellow drawing room restored by John Fowler and formerly the ballroom. One whole side was bowed and faced onto the garden with three tall, round-arched windows draped in the most stunning, yellow silk curtains. Replicas of the original curtains, they were hung to frame views of the more recent formal garden where tall, dark, fastigate yews line the paths and a central canal with pink and white water lilies. Beyond, at the summit of a steep slope, we caught sight of the Indianised farmhouse half hidden behind trees. Back down stairs, beneath the ballroom we entered a dining room, formerly the billiard room, where we were enchanted by modern murals by George Oakes that evocatively conjured up Thomas Daniell's pastel scenes of India.

The garden too was a delight with intriguing seating areas to contemplate the views: the Indian-style conservatory where, on visiting-afternoons, one can sit and enjoy tea along with the intense perfume of *Trachelospermum* and jasmine; the steep steps of the tiny Surya temple, dedicated to the Hindu sun god, overlooking a lingam fountain set in the centre of a circular pool with a series of grottoes and, to one side, a mountainous yew draped in *Rosa filipes* Kiftsgate and Paul's Himalayan Musk; the philosopher's stone bench hidden in deep shade under a Hindu bridge and reached by stepping stones.



The Brahmin bulls decorating the bridge were among various alterations. They had been recast in bronze from the originals in Coade stone. No longer were the domes on the house painted white to resemble marble and the finials gilded. And the original estate lodges had been remodelled. They had been in the form of Bengal huts with curved thatched roofs – the name of our modern bungalow derives from such original, Indian single-storey vernacular buildings.

Telling of broader attitudes to Indian architecture, S.P. Cockerell's son, the extremely distinguished neoclassical architect C. R. Cockerell, who must have known his father's design for Sezincote, failed to mention the house when he prepared a list of his father's works. Charles Robert was an establishment figure who not only won the RIBA gold medal but became the very first president of the RIBA.



Rowan Roenisch

Afternoon Walk around Uppingham Sunday 26th July 2009

This year the annual afternoon walk took us into Rutland with a walk around Uppingham, led by the Blue Badge Guide, Jill Collinge. This is a change from previous years, where the walks had been conducted around villages led by a member of the Trust. Despite the afternoon being overcast with occasional light showers, the walk was a great success. Jill was an excellent communicator with a wide range of knowledge of the buildings and history of the town. Even to those who know Uppingham quite well, Jill had interesting insights to the town and the school.



After the walk, we enjoyed the hospitality of Kathryn and Andrew Jukes at South Luffenham Hall, who made a room available for tea and cake. This was followed by the opportunity to walk around the gardens, which was appreciated by all those who attended.

Stephen Barker

Elizabethan Garden, Kenilworth Castle and Hill Close Gardens, Warwick 20th August

A full coach left Leicester in bright sunshine, but by the time we reached Kenilworth, low cloud and a brisk wind threatened. We took shelter in the magnificent stable café and then split into two groups for the guided tour of the recreation of Dudley's love token of a garden to woo the Queen during her visit in 1575. She had been a frequent visitor to Kenilworth; each time, her fault-finding of the accommodation resulting in palatial and enormously expensive and luxurious additions. The Castle was gifted by Elizabeth I to her long-term favourite, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester.

The re-creation of the garden, by English Heritage, is based on a detailed account in a letter by Robert Langham, one of Dudley's entourage, and extensive research and excavation by EH in 2004.

The garden was walled and hedged to form a very private enclosure, viewed and approached from a high and broad balustraded terrace walk, stretching the whole length of the southern aspect of the Keep, with specially constructed access direct from the new Royal apartments.

At each end of the terrace are Renaissance-style arbours reconstructed in painted green oak, based on a drawing of 1560, entwined with old roses. Each arbour has a broad oak balustraded staircase, painted to simulate stone, descending to a sanded rectangular walk which circuits the 4-sectioned 'knot garden'. The four sections are framed with waist-high oak trellis fences, planted with privet, hawthorn and Eglantine. Each quarter is centred with a 15ft. obelisk painted to look like porphyry – an expensive form of Egyptian marble that would have been too costly and unobtainable. Pear trees have been planted in each corner, and the flower-beds are edged with thrift and wild strawberry, forming a geometric pattern. An attempt has been made to restrict the planting to subjects, or their nearest counterparts, that would have been available in 1575.



The planting was designed to give a visual and sensory impact from the terrace, descending from the arbours into the garden, and traversing its perfumed walks. At the junction of the paths in the centre of the garden, a fragment of Carrera marble from the original fountain was discovered and new 18 ft high fountain has been constructed in the same material, inspired by illustrations of the work of Cornelius Cure. Two giant male figures stand back-to-back on a plinth in the octagonal 4 foot high basin, carved with classical scenes. They support a sphere of 'spouts' surmounted by a ragged staff, Dudley's emblem. Unfortunately, it was too windy to turn on the jets, which have, as was fashionable and noted by Langham "water jokes to provide laughter and sport and to moisten the guests as they draw near".

Opposite the terrace on the far side of the 'knot garden' is the 30ft high Aviary described by Langham as a "square cage, beautified with great jewels and garnished with gold". This has been recreated with an oak two-storey Renaissance style structure painted to look like stone, and gilded and richly ornamented with large jewel-coloured cabouchons. The Aviary houses guinea fowl, canaries and Chinese ring-necked pheasants, against a backdrop of topiary and holly trees.

The garden was designed to be at its best in June, for Elizabeth's stay of 15 days; however, to sustain its visitor attraction year long, E.H has skilfully augmented the planting.

Is it successful? Sir Roy Strong's opinion "it is a bold and ambitious attempt; but misinterpretation of Langham's description suggests that the details contain inaccuracies that are not beyond redemption". As in Elizabeth's day, no expense has been spared and history repeats itself. EH's Kenilworth now competes with Madame Tussauds' somewhat Disney-like pastiche at neighbouring Warwick.



After a short ride, and an improvement in the weather, we arrived at **Hill Close Victorian Gardens in Warwick**, where a wholesome buffet lunch had been prepared for us in the newly-built Ecological Visitor Centre. One of the volunteers then outlined the origin of the gardens, laid out in the 1840's between the Town and the Racecourse and sold off into private hedged plots to the tradespeople of the town who lived 'over the shop', for family exercise, relaxation and recreation in the fresh air. All the plots had 'bijou' brick-built summerhouse shelters, some with facilities for cooking, a few with pig sties, chicken coops and wells. Each plot is individually planted with fruit trees, many original, vegetable patches, lawns and play areas, but not a garden designer to be seen!

The plots are separated by high privet hedges and wall, with locked gates and accessed by narrow ash paths.

The restoration of 2000/2007 added the Visitor Centre Café, nursery beds with plant sales area, conservatory and reception and communal areas to cater for modern needs. The garden plots lost their popularity in the fifties, when suburbs were developed beyond the narrow confines of the old town, and many plots became neglected, abandoned and vandalised. A golden opportunity for the Council with a need for land for social housing to compulsorily purchase and develop. Local conservation groups campaigned to have the 'garden houses' listed, were successful and prevented the wholesale clearance and development of the site. A Trust was set up 1998 and the site cleaned up by teams



of volunteers. A Lottery grant was won, and professional help employed to restore the plots and buildings, and construct the new facilities. The Trust has leased the site from the Council, and the gardens are now managed and staffed by volunteers, apart from one full-time paid gardener. The restoration has cleverly maintained each plot's individuality and privacy, whilst discreetly improving access between the gardens, for viewing. The site is a gently south-facing slope, overlooking the Visitor Centre and Racecourse and the ambience is very tranquil and relaxed, even a little untidy, as all the best gardens are, places for escape, recreation and reflection – little Shangri la's.

Regrettably, Leicester lost a very similar, but more extensive garden in the Freeman's Common Estate in the early 1960's. I have a mid-1890's photograph of my grandparents with their first six children outside their "cottage" on their neatly arranged plot.

Warwick is unique in retaining this historic type of garden, but it does require continuing support and enthusiastic volunteers – and plenty of visitors to sustain its viability.

Our grateful thanks once again to Elizabeth and the Committee for arrangement such an enjoyable and inspiring visits to two wonderful and very contrasting gardens.

The O'Briens

Visit to the Old Rectory, Sudborough and Boughton House 11th September 2009

We were extremely lucky to have perfect late summer weather for the trip to Northamptonshire. The cloudless sky and bright sunshine showed both gardens off to their very best.

The three acre garden behind the late-Georgian rectory at Sudborough was a total delight. Surrounding a large informally shaped lawn are mixed borders of white and then pink and a large sunken rose garden planted with pale pink varieties of David Austin English roses with a central peacefully bubbling fountain. Near the house at the top of the lawn is a magnificent *Robinia pseudoacacia* of awe-inspiring girth.



Thoughtful massing of colour and the use of lots of huge pots with standard *Solanum rantonnetii*, white and blue plumbago and heliotrope combined to stunning effect, even in the middle of September (afterwards, we couldn't remember seeing any yellow flowers at all). At the bottom of the garden is a stream with a bridge leading to a woodland walk frequented that morning by speckled wood butterflies.



The Old Rectory is best known

however for its kitchen garden. This, now well-established, was designed as an extensive potager by Rosemary Verey. It consists of many small, geometrically precise beds separated by narrow brick paths. Apples are trained to cover arches and roses and clematis cover a tunnel augmented in season by ornamental gourds.

Further exploration uncovered a large bubble-wrap polytunnel containing a sack-barrow - essential for removing and protecting all those giant pots through the winter. The whole is looked after by three part-time gardeners. We were a little surprised that the roses in the rose garden were somewhat eclipsed by prolific *Verbena bonariensis*, tall salvias and more pots of standard solanums. We felt that, in a dedicated rose garden of repeat-flowering roses, the roses should be allowed to be the stars. Otherwise, the garden was wonderful.

By contrast, flowers played no part in **the 350 acre Grade I listed landscape surrounding Boughton House**. This is about three-dimensional shape, water and reflections on a grand scale.

The park is a rare survival. Created by the 1st and 2nd Dukes of Montagu between 1680 and 1740, it was a Versailles-inspired showpiece of canals, lakes, fountains, statuary and tree-lined avenues stretching for 70 miles. It escaped the Landscape Movement and gradually disappeared through neglect under 250 years of natural succession.



Thirty years ago the owners, the Dukes of Buccleuch, embarked on a restoration programme to reclaim the Park. So far, 12,000 cubic metres of silt have been dredged from the canals and lakes, 1,500 metres of oak boarding used to edge them and one mile of lime avenues replanted with saplings cloned from the original trees.





Our tour, ably and entertainingly conducted by the House Manager, took us round the highlights. From the top of the 8 metre high flat-topped Mount, recently cleared of sycamores we looked down into the 21st century addition to the Park: a square-shaped pyramidal excavation with a path spiralling downwards to a lake in the

bottom and beyond. This feature, 'Orpheus', designed by Kim Wilkie, complements the original Mount perfectly. Less certain is the contribution of a cubic metal frame from which spirals out a concrete rill based on the Fibonacci sequence.



The next big step is to restore the river Ise to its original width which will involve demolishing the only footbridge in the Park. Difficult decisions remain concerning yew hedges and beech trees planted last century which disrupt the original design. Apparently 2028, the 500th anniversary of the arrival at Boughton of the Dukes of Montagu, is the target completion date - so put that in your diaries!

Kathryn and Andrew Jukes

Research Group



The Research Group has spent an interesting summer getting out and about to visit parks and gardens in our area.

We spent an informative morning with local historian, Richard Gill, learning about the history of

Castle Gardens and the Newarke area.

This will



be one of our future research project.

Elizabeth used her networking skills to get us the entrée into Garendon Park, Loughborough. This remnant of an Arcadian landscape is rarely open to the public and it was a real privilege to be able to walk round the estate on a rare sunny day in August. (See Stephen Barker's separate article about Garendon).

Two of our other visits were to the Arboretum at Evington and to Staunton Harold. Sue and Sheila have now finished the database entry for Staunton Harold; Fliss and Barbara are currently working on Evington Park and the Arboretum. Rowan has completed her entry for Spinney Hill Park, which reflects the depth of her research.

Research Group
learn new skills
at Garendon

Our most recent visit was to Belgrave Hall, where Trust Friend and Head Gardener, Val Hartley, showed us round the gardens. There is a wealth of archive material and we plan to spend the winter looking at this more closely.

The funding for the Parks and Gardens UK Database (www.parksandgardens.ac.uk) has now come to an end, although the project is still 'live' and further funding is being sought. We took the opportunity to have a further training day at Brooksby and feel confident that we can continue to enter our research.

As one of our winter visits, we are still planning a workshop at the Record Office, which will be open to any Trust member who is interested. As always, we would be delighted to welcome new members to the Group – no particular expertise is needed; we get to go to interesting places and have a lot of fun!

Deborah Martin

Garendon Park 6th August 2009.

The Research Group had an opportunity in August to visit Garendon Park, and view the remains of the Arcadian landscape created in the 1730's by Ambrose Phillips.

Garendon Park lies to the west of Loughborough and is bounded to the west by the M1 and to the south by the A512. Garendon Hall was built on the site of a Cistercian Abbey. Ambrose Phillips inherited the estate as a young man in 1729 and immediately set out on a Grand Tour of France and Italy where he inspected and drew Roman remains. His good looks gained him the epithet 'The Handsome Englishman'. On his return in 1734, he was elected MP for the county and became an early member of the Society of Dilettanti, which was formed by young men who had made the Grand Tour. At Garendon, using the knowledge gained on his tour, he designed a new house to replace the existing 17th century building and remodelled the surrounding landscape, erecting a number of major structures based on classical precedents. After Ambrose Phillips died at the age of thirty in 1737, work on the house was continued by his brother Samuel. The house, which was altered in the 19th Century, was demolished in 1964.



The surviving features in the landscape are the Triumphal Arch (listed grade I), the Temple of Venus (listed grade II*) and Obelisk (listed Grade II). The park also contained a Doric Temple which was demolished in 1943.

The Triumphal Arch sits on a ridge to the south of the site of the house. It is based on the Arch of Titus in Rome; the structure is built of ashlar stonework and on

the east front there are four Corinthian columns and above, on the attic storey, is a carved relief of the Metamorphosis of Actalon. The arch is one of the first examples of an English building based on direct observation and understanding of Roman remains and reflects on the interest and skill of Phillips' archaeological studies. It is also generally regarded as the first freestanding triumphal arch to be erected in a landscape setting. The building contains small rooms - unfortunately all the windows and doors are now blocked up so there is no access.

On the same ridge standing 300 metres to the east is the Temple of Venus, which is based on the Temple of Vesta at Tivoli. The temple, which is approached along an avenue of trees, stands on a slight mound. The structure is raised on four steps and is a circular ashlar building with a peristyle of Ionic columns with an entablature carved in oak. The dome is covered in copper, replacing a lead covering stolen in the 1940's. The interior, which is windowless, contains fine architectural



details; until 1811 it contained a statue of Venus which was destroyed during the Luddite riots.



The obelisk stands to the east and was sited to be aligned on the centre of Phillip's unexecuted scheme for the east front of the hall. It stands 24 metres high; the obelisk is built of stuccoed brick built on an iron plate carried on four stone balls which are set on a stone pedestal. The stucco is coming off in places and the whole structure is increasingly being hidden by the trees that surround it.

In Nichols, it is suggested that Phillips had also planned a family mausoleum and another obelisk which would have been surmounted by a statue of Hercules. In the improvements to the park in the 1730's, there were canals, avenues, rides and plantings which would have had

buildings at key points, similar to those seen at Bramham Park in 2008. Unfortunately, the avenues and rides were felled in the late 18th century, with much of the other timber in the park. The existing mature trees are later plantings.

The visit to Garendon was blessed with fine weather which made an enjoyable morning viewing the listed structures and walking around the park. Our thanks go to Peter de Lisle for giving us access.

Stephen Barker

Membership

We currently have 155 members, and I hope all of them will be happy to renew their membership for the coming year which runs from 1st October 2009 - 30th September 2010.

Fifteen new members have joined us. I welcome them all and hope they will enjoy the coming programme of lectures and events. Our membership is widely dispersed through the two counties and I hope the policy of introducing likeminded friends will continue. A new member has cleverly given membership for one year as a gift to her brother, so there is a bright idea I hope some others might use.

As so many of our members have been with us for at least 10 years, some longer, it would be helpful to us if they paid their subscription by bankers order. The form is available both on the leaflet and on the website, and we would be grateful to those who use it. It reduces costs for us which we can use for visits, lectures or even educational grants as we expand our activities.

Most Friends have been very punctual in renewing their membership, but some are still awaited. I hope this is down to the postal back-log!

Irene Jones

Publicity

Following the success of our 'Friend get Friend' campaign, when we succeeded in doubling our membership, we have continued to raise the profile of the Trust during this year.

We have invested in new table-top display boards to showcase our activities. These were used at the Hardy Plant Fair at Ashwell in Rutland and at Foxton Village Open Gardens. They stimulated a lot of interest and a few new members have joined as a result. We shall continue to attend appropriate events in the future. We have advertised our lectures in the press and will continue to do so.



Sue and Elizabeth at Ashwell

We have been pleased to welcome guests on various trips this year and hope that they may become members. Please continue to tell your friends about the Trust so that we can continue with a steady growth in our membership.

Sue Blaxland

Education

In July and September the first meetings of this group took place. Irene Jones, Sue Blaxland, Sheila Burnage, Pam Ward and Jan Winskill have begun to look at ways the Gardens Trust can help schoolchildren to be involved with gardens, growing their food and flowers, and appreciating the parks and gardens around them.

Our first task was to find out what is being done already. We thought that the Trust could act as a facilitator, providing help and support and even some small grants but could not see us having the man or woman power to operate on a large scale.

So we invited some guests to inform us. Pru Copley provided us with the point of view of the contact person and organizer of a school garden club. She is based at Newbold Verdon Primary School.

Paul Howgill the City and County Secretary for NSALG, who is also involved with Groundwork which works with schools and allotments, came to give us county wide information and we realized how varied the situation is for each school. Some have extensive grounds, others no green space at all. Some are near allotments, many are not. Some good practical ideas came from Paul and we will inform you in more detail later.

At the next meeting on 17th November 2009 Gillian Forrester, the Education Manager of EMAS will help us find ways to discover some schools we can become involved with. Clearly one task is to make the schools aware of us - allowing for our limited resources!

If this is an area which interests you or one in which you can make a contribution, please contact me on 0116 270 9370.

Irene Jones

The Association of Gardens Trusts AGM & Weekend Conference

4th September-6th September 2009 in Lincoln, hosted by the Lincolnshire Gardens Trust.

Entitled “**Come into the Garden...**” Based on Tennyson’s well known words.

The Lincoln Hotel faced the cathedral, which looked even more splendid when floodlit at night.

Our Chairman Stephen Barker dutifully attended the Business Meeting on Friday 4th September 2009 on our behalf.

Elizabeth Bacon and Irene Jones attended the weekend conference, which began as follows.

Friday evening lecture by Shervie Price “**Tennyson’s Lincolnshire**”

Saturday lecture by Steffie Sheilds “**Impressions of Lincolnshire**” which included some wonderful photographs which made us keen to start out visits. She quoted John Betjeman who had said “This is the second largest county and the least appreciated...those who think of Lincolnshire as dull and flat are wrong” She also told us that the rowan tree is a tree of welcome, and that Tennyson, who was born and lived for many years in Somerby in Lincolnshire, had said “A known landscape is to me an old friend”.

She also informed us that there is a plantation of trees which will be left to grow for the next 300 years to provide wood for repairs to the cathedral when needed. What foresight!

This was followed by David Robinson OBE on “**Joseph Banks in Lincolnshire**”.

This remarkable man was responsible for England playing cricket against Australia! His wealthy grandfather owned Revesby Abbey which Banks later inherited. This gave Joseph Banks a good start in life but he made the most of it - resulting in the rubber industry in Malaya, Mungo Park going to Africa, the convict population and sheep going to Australia, and the building of the Horncastle canal. A naturalist, botanist and patron of the natural sciences, he introduced eucalyptus, acacia, mimosa and a genus named after him - Banksia, of which there are approximately 80 species. Largely through his efforts, Kew became arguably the pre-eminent botanical garden in the world. He led a most remarkable life and Lincoln City Council has built the Banks Conservatory in his memory.

We then left for **Doddington Hall**. We found a television crew on the front lawn, preparing to film the Hairy Bikers for a programme to be shown in 2010, and were welcomed by Claire Birch and her husband. They and their four children occupy the Hall, which has remained with the family from 1600-2009 by passing through the female line - so there have been changes of name, but not of ownership.

An embroidery exhibition had been kept a little longer for us to see on the top floor, which was very attractive. The Hall was most interesting and one was left wishing for more time to see everything. The Head Gardener took us next round the garden which had enormous sweet chestnut trees reaching to the ground as if wearing giant skirts. The dipping pool, the Head Gardener learnt from Jane Furse, of Yorkshire G.T., would be shallow, with a solid base so

that the water would warm and not shock tender new seedlings. The farm shop was well worth a visit and provided resources for a marvellous lunch.

In the afternoon we visited **Harrington Hall**. This was a garden visit but the Hall, in its setting with brown cattle beyond the ha-ha, was stunning. A disastrous fire started by workmen had severely damaged the Hall in 1991 before the new owners had occupied the house. They were moved by the reaction of local people who pressed photos, articles etc on them so that the restoration could be exact. They realized the Hall did not belong to them alone. Mr Price, the owner, told us that the insurance was generous and they had a more comfortable house than the previous one. This remark seemed related to plumbing.

The kitchen garden entranced us with its beech hedges, white seats, ripe mulberries and dahlias. Then the generous spread of tea and cakes in the hall and dining room made us feel even more welcome.

The Conference and keynote speaker was **John Harris**, architectural and garden historian, and author of "**No Voice from the Hall**"-which referred to his many visits to great houses lost in the 1950's when he would enter the deserted halls calling "Is there anybody there?" and usually receiving no answer. He had worked for Pevsner in 1959 as a young man and described how Pevsner did a county in 30 days, in a very systematic manner, based on maps. In later years while working for an antiques business he visited many churches, halls and gardens and found he would start with the family and wonder where else could they be found? From this point he moved outwards from the town or village. He was a delightful, cheery and fascinating speaker.

Irene Jones

Sunday morning of the conference was mainly devoted to **Harlaxton Manor**, not one of my favourite buildings. My memory of it is as being overpowering and surrounded by dank rhododendrons and unmanaged Yews. The day began with a talk by **Dr Beryl Lott**, County archaeologist and Buildings Conservation Officer for Lincolnshire, with an introduction to Harlaxton.

The house was built by Gregory Gregory, a fairly rich landowner who was determined to out-do his aristocratic neighbour, the Duke of Rutland at nearby Belvoir Castle. He remained a bachelor all his life, spending his time designing and building his palace. He began work with Salvin in 1832 on a purely Elizabethan House and then dispensed with him in favour of Burns becoming more Jacobean and then Baroque in style. Gregory died in 1854 with the house unfinished. The size of the house can be imagined when one knows it has more than 80 rooms. After passing through various descendents, the house is now owned by the University of Evansville in the U.S

Visitors are not really encouraged to see the interior but we were fortunate to be invited to have our picnic lunch in the conservatory which was Victorian in feeling and impressive in the way Victorian Conservatories are. I was pleasantly surprised to find that the recent work done on the gardens has improved the overall appearance, making for a much more welcoming effect. The stonework is being restored and lots of Rhododendrons have been cut down giving a much pleasanter, more open space. From the highest point in the garden there are excellent views of the Vale of Belvoir and Belvoir Castle. I still find the house overpowering and cannot warm to it. There is an estate village with cottages built in a variety of styles.

From Harlaxton we drove to **Easton Walled Gardens** which many of you will know. In spite of the noise from the A1, I have a soft spot for this garden and was pleased to see that some of the trees and shrubs have gone from the walled garden, giving an improved

perspective of the walled garden from the terrace. Tea and cake followed as it always does on these occasions and the conference was over for another year.

The main benefit to me of the annual conference is meeting other County Friends and getting ideas for future visits and lectures. My pickings were fairly rich this time: Steffie Shields and her team did a great job for which they must be congratulated. She was determined to prove that Lincolnshire is not the boring county it is perceived as being but a county rich in its architecture and landscape, well worth visiting.

Elizabeth Bacon

Stop Press – Some Exciting News about South Luffenham Hall Gardens!

Last month, we were contacted by Godalming Museum, asking for contact details for South Luffenham Hall, in connection with their Gertrude Jekyll garden. (The Museum has a collection of copies of Jekyll drawings, plant lists and correspondence.)

I checked some of my Jekyll reference material and found a commission listed for a Mrs. Nugent Allfrey in 1926. On speaking to Katherine Jukes, she confirmed that Mrs. Allfrey had been a former owner of the Hall and was very excited by this news. She had no idea that Miss Jekyll had any involvement with the garden. Those of you who visited the garden in July will remember the front garden with the long herbaceous border. Katherine wondered if this might have been a Jekyll design. Coincidentally, she was visiting Surrey the next day, so planned to call at the Museum.

She and Andrew were delighted to discover a Jekyll Outline plan. Unfortunately, it proved to be for the uneven and sloping back garden, which the Jukes have now terraced. It would appear that Miss Jekyll had been given inadequate information about the extent of the slope and the plan was never implemented.

Andrew and Katherine have copies of the plan and correspondence from Miss Jekyll, which they will bring to the Friends Evening.

While it would have been wonderful to have discovered an unknown Jekyll garden, it is still very satisfying for them to be able to add this information to the history of their garden.

Sue Blaxland

A Horticultural Note *Hydrangea arborescens* ‘Annabelle’

In a rather disappointing summer, this shrub, planted in a pot in my shady green front garden has given me a lot of pleasure, which is why I draw it to your attention. In late May, it began to show what I thought were green flowers; I was expecting white, perhaps I had been sold the wrong plant? However, in June, these turned to white and have continued to flower until last week [now mid September]. It is really quite beautiful with its white lax blossoms and soft mid green foliage I had seen it on a visit to Diane and Steve’s garden at Hoby and decided I must have it - more than well worth the money.

Elizabeth Bacon

E-mail Addresses

During the year we have been making use of the email addresses we have to contact Friends with reminders about events. If you haven’t already given us your email address and would like to be contacted in this way please go to the ‘Contact Us’ page on our website.

This, of course, will not replace our usual 'paper' communications.

You may be interested...

Gardens and People – the new publisher and website for garden writing edited by Bella D'Arcy www.gardensandpeople.co.uk will be up and running from 1st November

A new book by Bella D'Arcy *Gardens of Divine Imitation* A design timeline from the Renaissance to the Edwardian era via Ancient Rome is being published at the end of October ISBN 978-0-9563451-0-3 RRP £28.00

The Eco House is putting on a Gardening Course of 9 monthly sessions beginning in October and there is also a family event – Christmas Decorations from the Garden on Sunday 6th December, 2pm start. £2 per person

Details: telephone 0116 2545489

Jacobites and Tories, Whigs and True Whigs: Political Gardening in Britain, c. 1700 - c. 1760

6-8 August 2010, Wentworth Castle, Barnsley, South Yorkshire

The Wentworth Castle Heritage Trust (www.wentworthcastle.org) has restored the architectural and landscape fabric of the 500 acre estate that was created by the Tory/Jacobite Earl of Strafford, assisted by the Jacobite architect James Gibbs. Within the mansion's Georgian splendour we shall be fed and watered, and enjoy the 11 speakers discussing the ways that country estate symbolism distinguished the warring factions of British politics. Through site tours, we shall also explore the Jacobite features of the mansion, gardens and park.

For further information, including residential and non-residential options, contact Dr. Patrick Eyres: Email, patrickjeyres@googlemail.com; Tel. 0113 230 4608; Mail. Jacobite Conference, Wentworth Castle Heritage Trust, Lowe Lane, Stainborough, Barnsley, South Yorkshire S75 3ET.

Useful Contact Numbers

Chairman	Stephen Barker	01858 433545
Membership	Irene Jones	0116 2709370
Events	Elizabeth Bacon	0116 2705711
Research Group	Deborah Martin	0116 2707525

Or you can contact us at www.lrgt.org

Events Programme 2010

Sunday 17 th January	Winter Lunch: 'The Crown' Old Dalby
Thursday 18 th February	Winter Coach Trip to Hacconby, Lincs to see a cottage garden snowdrop collection and then to Easton Walled Garden
Thursday 18 th March	A.G.M. and Spring Lecture: <i>Walled Kitchen Gardens</i> Speaker: Susan Campbell A.G.M. 7.00pm Lecture 7.30pm Friends' Meeting House, 16 Queens Road, Leicester LE2 1WP
Saturday 10 th April	Lecture: <i>Sir Joseph Banks</i> (Subject to confirmation)
Tuesday 4 th May	Evening visit to Mr and Mrs Milward's garden: Pine House, Gaddesby
Thursday 6 th May	CELEBRITY LECTURE: Speaker: Bunny Guinness Frank and Katherine May Lecture Theatre, University of Leicester 7.30pm
Wednesday 2 nd June	5 Day Holiday, visiting gardens in Surrey
Thursday 17 th June	Coach visit to two gardens: Guarnock House on the Fens and Park House in Rutland, followed by tea at Barnsdale Lodge Hotel
Thursday 1 st July	Evening visit to Jim Bolton's garden in North Luffenham
Wednesday 21 st July	Evening visit to two Walled Gardens in Northamptonshire: Lamport Hall and Kelmarsh Hall
Sunday 8 th August	Afternoon Walk in Ashby de la Zouch, to include the Castle and Town, followed by tea
Sunday 5 th September	Coach visit to Doddington hall and Normanby Hall in Lincolnshire
Thursday 21 st October	Autumn Lecture: Speaker: Molly Connisbee, Director of Communications, The Soil Association 7.30pm Friends' Meeting House, Queens Road, Leicester LE2 1WP
Thursday 18 th November	Friends Evening: 7.30pm Friends' Meeting House, Queens Road, Leicester LE2 1WP