



CAMBRIDGESHIRE GARDENS TRUST

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CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

One of the good things about not getting into the garden this winter is the time I have had to read more books over the Christmas period. I've come across a publication following a symposium about 'Sir John Vanbrugh, Landscape Architecture in Baroque England 1690-1730' which includes a series of articles about fortified gardens, estate management, exotic plants and a fascinating chapter on early road maps, describing how designers managed to get around the country from commission to commission. To my surprise a further chapter is given over to the period when Vanbrugh worked in India for fifteen months for the East India Company, this was before he turned his hand to landscape gardening. Had India inspired him? He worked for the Duke of Manchester at Kimbolton and on Wednesday 15th August this year members of the Trust are invited to come along and see the grounds around the Castle. Beth Davies has arranged that John Stratford will bring copies of estate maps and she will bring her dowsing rods and show us how to use them to find the canal and other features now lost in the grounds.

Lady Adrian suggested I should read 'The Dons, Mentors, Eccentrics and Geniuses' the book written by Lord Annan. Jane Brown kindly produced her copy for me. The final chapter is called 'The Intellectual Aristocracy' and provides family trees of famous families connected with the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge'. Noel Annan begins his final chapter:- 'Family connections are part of the poetry of history. They call to mind the generations of men and women who were born, married and died, and perhaps bequeathed to their descendants some trait of their personality, some tradition of behaviour which did not perish with the passing of years ...' He continues :- 'Rose Macaulay (see the Cambridgeshire Gardens Trust Gazetteer for the description of her garden in Great Shelford) descended from the famous Macaulays in the Hebrides. Rose was a novelist and satirist of her times and a well-known figure in London literary society. She is also descended from the Conybeares and Babingtons. J Conybeare married the daughter of Lydia Babington, he was Rose's grandfather. Her first cousin, Beetles Babington, was Professor of Botany at Cambridge . . .' and so the chapter proceeds. (See photo on back page.)

At the last AGM it was proposed that the next area the Trust should investigate the western expansion of Cambridge after 1882 when Dons were permitted to marry and reside outside their College. A start has been made on this research by members who are finding the date and architects of these new houses, the first owners and what they achieved, who they married and the gardens they laid out around their premises. Some plots have been developed with further

buildings, and the garden has been lost. But many still survive. If you would like to help with this research or know anything about the private gardens in this area please can you contact the Trust. This will be greatly appreciated and assist out research. We are very excited in our work so far, some of us looked through over 3,000 sale particulars in 26 boxes in the University Library. This was the first time anyone had looked at these un-catalogued documents. We have discovered on one of our regular walks the only remaining example of a garden building dating back to the time when many Pleasure Gardens existed in the west of Cambridge before 1882.

I would like to take this opportunity of thanking Daphne Astor who recently decided to stand down as a member of the Management Council. Her support was invaluable when setting up the Trust and Daphne had a marvellous way of making molehills out of mountains. Daphne still continues her support as a Patron of the Trust.

At our AGM last November Christopher Taylor handed me an article about the rediscovery of a vanished garden in Bassingbourn which he had written about with Sue Oosthuizen. I understand that another vanished garden has been found in Bassingbourn. With this in mind I have asked both Sue and Christopher to come and talk at our AGM in November about these two gardens.

You may belong to another charity, and you may have already been asked to sign a declaration so that your charity may benefit from a new rule the Government introduced recently regarding Grant Aid. The Cambridgeshire Gardens Trust intends to send all members a form in the next newsletter for them to sign a declaration stating that you wish to treat your subscription as a Gift Aid donation to the Trust. For every £10 membership we can make a claim to the Inland Revenue for the tax you have paid on your subscription. Your subscription could be worth an extra 28% thanks to the Taxman. There appears to be no catch. You simply must have paid or expect to pay tax at least equal to the amount we will be reclaiming. More about this in the next Newsletter.

One of our members has kindly pointed out that in Jane Brown's last article that it was Arthur Heffer's grandfather William Heffer who founded Heffer's bookshop in Cambridge in 1876.

I apologise if the whole of this Newsletter is given over to reports of the lectures which were held early this spring. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who gave these lectures. The lecture series we arrange could be a lot better supported as the subjects which are covered are extensive and given by those who are experts in their own field. Could members please try harder next year to support them.

John Drake Chairman.

ILLUSTRATING FLORA

A lecture by **DAVID SCRACE**, Keeper of Paintings, Drawings and Prints at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

David Scrace's talk, on a cold winter's morning in February, was a heart-warming experience with the promise of things to come by referring to the past. It was based on an important collection of flower pictures from the Broughton Bequest at the Fitzwilliam Museum, which are not normally on permanent display and cover a period from the 15th to the 20th century.

The earliest depictions of Flora were used as a mode of decoration in the borders of Medieval Manuscripts, and so were of secondary importance to the whole. They were quite beautiful and recognisable. Later, the flower became the main subject, all art mediums and styles being utilised. Most of the pictures we were shown were 'botanical drawings' executed in great detail for a variety of reasons. Some were a method of recording newly discovered plants (before the advent of photography); some were purely decorative to be mounted and hung; but mostly, they were used to introduce prospective customers to new plant varieties, colours and forms achieved by the early 'Nurseymen'.

It is interesting to note that the latter were the equivalent of our present day seed catalogues and magazines. Although draughtsmanship and exactitude were the main consideration, the style of the artist's treatment of the subject is apparent, and we can recognise the personalities behind the drawings in much the same way as we know the difference between a Monet and a Manet impressionist painting.

Apart from the single species drawings, we were shown a few rather 'heavy' oil paintings of vases of flowers. These were odd as they contained flowers that could not possibly have bloomed together without the aid of modern refrigeration methods. Apparently the artist made collections of drawings at the appropriate times and used them later in his final compositions – in exactly the same way as Degas used his ballet dancer drawings and Constable his tree sketches.

Flower drawing was also an acceptable subject for female artists on a commercial basis, and the work of several were included in the lecture. This was unusual in the male dominated world of Art when many subjects were considered 'improper' for ladies.

This talk by David Scrace was really interesting and informative as I have a long-standing admiration of botanical drawings – and they make up some 50% of my mounted wall-pictures at home. For this reason I am extremely pleased that a private viewing has been arranged for us at the Fitzwilliam Museum in September, when we shall be able to see much more of this important collection.

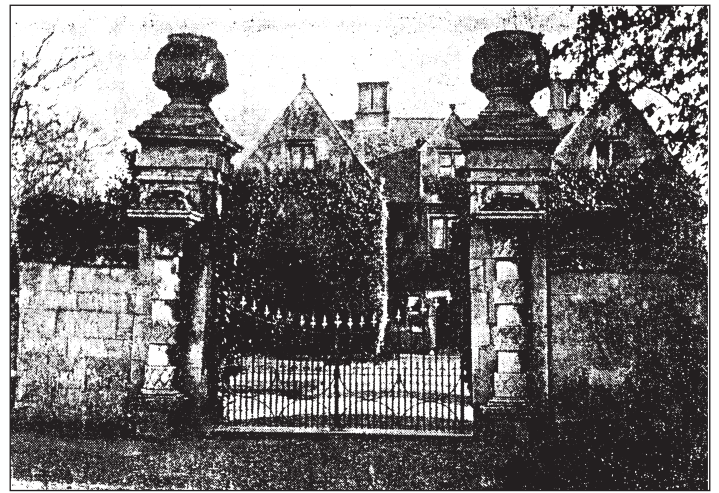
V. Emmerson

THE DUKES AND EARLS OF PORTLAND

Last October I attended a Regional Research Study day organised by the Association of Gardens Trusts at Welbeck Abbey in Nottinghamshire. Welbeck Abbey, the home of the Dukes of Portland, is in that part of Nottinghamshire known from the 18th century as the Dukeries when the Dukes of Portland had for near neighbours the Dukes of Leeds, Norfolk, Newcastle and Kingston, all descendants of Bess of Hardwicke.

We were shown archive material of the Welbeck Estate, including a plan of 1629 of a water garden relating to the old house and also plans and pictures from Repton's Red Books. Repton made improvements by raising the level of the ground around the house and created a large serpentine lake some three miles long.

Welbeck Abbey has a fascinating history. The 5th Duke of Portland in particular was an ardent builder. From 1854 until his death in 1879 everything he built was on a massive scale – the Riding School, the Walled Garden, the underground library, hot houses 800ft in length,



Portland House, Whittlesey – showing gate piers with eagles.

fruit arcades 700 ft long, 35 lodges in the grounds with 6 more under construction at his death, follies and miles of underground passages lit by gas. The Harley Gallery, where our workshop was held was converted to gas works for lighting the underground buildings.

Today Welbeck Abbey House and grounds are in the care of an army



Pre 2nd World War photo of rear garden at Portland House shows then-owner Harry Pilsbury, an antiques dealer and Miss Blunt, daughter of the previous owners.

college, but the Dowager Anne still lives in the grounds, and her nephew and his family live in part of the house. The gardens consist of a sunken garden, a rose garden, a mulberry grove, long drives lined with trees, vast herbaceous borders and Repton's Lake.

Here in Cambridgeshire the county has links with the Portland dynasty. At Whittlesey, in the 1600s, Portland House, a large imposing mansion, stood close by the church. This was one of the homes of Jerome (Weston), 2nd Earl of Portland and his wife Frances. Frances' mother was Katherine, Baroness Clifton of Leighton Bromswold. In 1632 when Frances was 15 years of age she married Lord Jerome Weston, son of Richard Weston, Baron Weston of Neyland and the 1st Earl of Portland. Jerome and Frances had only been married for three years when his father died and Jerome inherited his father's titles. Their son, Charles, 3rd Earl of Portland, was killed in the successful action against the Dutch Fleet on the Royal James on 3rd June 1665, an event recorded by Pepys in his diary.

Portland House Whittlesey, was demolished in 1950, and has been replaced by a small housing estate. However documents and maps remain showing the layout of the house and garden, and a pair of massive gate piers still stand at what would have been the entrance to the house. These support eagles. Another set of stone gate piers remain and are at the new road entrance to the development. These support bowls of fruit. Luckily neither have yet been removed.

Audrey Osborne

KIMBOLTON CASTLE

Lecture by JOHN STRATFORD

It was a great pleasure to introduce John Stratford who recently retired as a teacher at Kimbolton Castle School and is preparing a history of the town.

With the aid of handouts, an overhead projector and slides he explained the history of the site with special attention to significant Lords of the Manor, and referred often to what he described as references for garden detectives. Throughout, as you would imagine, he referred to several maps. Those who were able to attend mentioned how simple it was to follow his historical progress of events.

I will attempt to recall some of the important events and dates related to the site:—

To begin with John spoke at length about the site of the town in relation to the corners of three county boundaries and the route from the north avoiding the Great North Road. From 1066-1088 William de Warenne was Lord of the Manor and during this period Kimbolton doubled in size. By 1197 Geoffrey Fitzpiers, who was Lord Chief Justice to King John, planned the town as we know it today and built the first castle on the present site. At this time King John came to hunt whilst visiting Kimbolton, so the first park probably dates from this period.

‘1205 King John granted lands in Brampton and Alconbury to be held by the service of providing fish, wine and hay once yearly when the King should wish to visit Kimbolton.’

In 1213 his son Geoffrey succeeded and assumed the title ‘De Mandeville’. His son William died in 1227 and the estate was inherited by his daughter, Maud, who previously married Henry de Bohun. As the family owned land all over the country it is not thought they stayed long at Kimbolton, only visiting to collect rents. Little changed for the next two hundred years. In 1420 Lady Joan De Bohun’s granddaughter succeeds on her death. She had married the Earl of Stafford, and the estate remains in the Stafford family for the next century.

Her son succeeds and is created Duke of Buckingham. On his death in 1480, the Dowager Duchess Anne resides at Kimbolton and it is conceivable that she had some kind of garden here.

‘a right goodly lodging contained in a little room, within a moat well and compendiously trussed together in due and convenient proportion, one thing with another, with an inner court, for the most part builded with sixty years by Duchess Anne, wife of Duke Humphrey, slain at Northampton field. There are lodgings and offices for keeping a duke’s house in stately manner...but by occasion of the old maintill wall, the hall there well builded is likely to perish; and though the said castle is and will be great decay by occasion there is no reparations done. (Outside the moat was) a convenient room for a base court, now used as a greese close. (In it were) a fair barn and goodly houses fit for stables’

In 1521 Sir Richard Wingfield was granted the manor by Henry VIII and embarked on a considerable building programme.

From Leland’s Itinerary 1525 : The Castelle is double diked and the building of it is metely strong... Syr Richard Wingfield builded new fair lodgyns and galleries upon the olde foundations of the castelle’

Between 1534 and 1536 Catherine of Aragon spent the last two years of her life here. Thomas Wingfield owned the property from 1540–1592.

An estate map of 1582 refers to the Castle, an enclosure and a garden of 10 acres.

Unruly doings lead to the sale of the property and the estate was purchased in 1603 by the Montague family. Sir Henry Montague, 1st Earl of Manchester, carried out further building and established the Great Park.

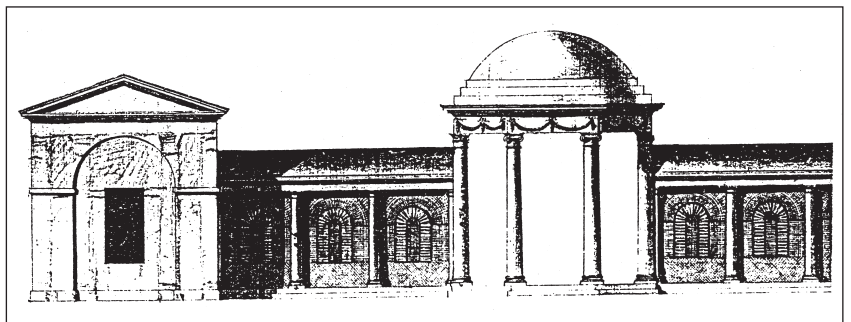
Inventories of 1642 and 1687 refer to: ‘a gatehouse, stables, the Castle Court; the Dyall Court; the Great garden; the Little Fountain Garden’.

In 1707 Vanbrugh and Hawksmoor were engaged by Charles Montague, 4th Earl (created 1st Duke in 1719), to rebuild the south side of the castle, and garden alterations can be inferred from Vanbrugh’s correspondence with the Earl.

It may be of interest to mention at this point that by 1675 John Ogilby had published his cartographic achievement *Interarium Angliae*. This comprised 100 whole-sheet copper plates, delineating 85 roads or routes across England and Wales. Ogilby’s folio established ‘a new standard for map making in England’. He was assisted by Robert Hooke, who championed high standards of scientific mensuration and verification, and these strip maps provided a wealth of information for travellers and country landowners, many of whom cut out the strips of their local areas, or of the places to which they were travelling. Vanbrugh’s account book is filled with references to the number of nights he spent away from home. Did he by any chance follow Ogilby’s strip maps? Travelling north from London, Vanbrugh would have noted the Earl of Manchester’s Kimbolton Castle a short distance from the highway.

In 1707 Vanbrugh wrote to the Duke of Manchester when persuading the Duke to accept his gauche scheme for adding a battlement frill to the otherwise classical elevations of Kimbolton Castle:

‘As to the outside, I thought ‘twas absolutely best, to give it Something of the Castle Air, tho’ at the Same time to make it regular. This method was practic’d at Windsor in Charles’s time, And has been universally Approv’d, So I hope your Ldship won’t be discourag’d, if any Italians you may Shew it to, shou’d find fault that’tis not Roamn, for to have built a Front with Pillasters, and what the Orders require cou’d never have been born with the Rest of the Castle; I’m sure this will make a very Noble and Masculine ShewWe consider’d how to dispose the Stairs down into the Garden, so as not to break too much into the Terrace; and all that matter will be very well’



Elevation of a Menagerie etc. for The Duchess of Manchester

In 1708 Vanbrugh writes:

‘ the saloon beyond it is almost as big as the hall and looks mighty pleasantly up the middle of the garden and the canal, which is now brimful of water and looks mighty well. The Espalier Hedges will be in great perfection this year and the fruit trees are now strong enough to produce abundance, so that I hope yr Lordship will find it much improved and to your satisfaction’

The 6th Duke’s description of the garden: ‘There was a great Garden with a fountain, with stone figures and flower pots on all the walls. Also a little fountain garden with brass (bronze) figures and stone flower pots.

Recently a member of the London Historic Parks and Garden Trust produced a plan showing the canal at Kimbolton which was drawn by a contemporary French visitor to England in 1728. His commentary is in the Victoria and Albert Museum London.

He states: 'The following day, by even worse roads, we reached the house of the Duke of Manchester, in the village of Kimbolton. . . . It is a large square building with a courtyard in the middle, and a terraced (en perron) staircase of a very ingenious design. On the garden side a great peristyle with columns can be seen.The garden is very elegant. At the end of the flower beds can be found a canal, reinforced by banks, and groves on both sides with grassey walks around them, Running down from the terrace at the sides of the flower beds (parterre) there are avenues of little lime trees with the tops cut in the Italian style, like the ones you can see at Chantilly in front of the Chateau. There are some bad figures in stone, copied from the styles of antiquity and placed at the focal points (in the stars) of the groves.

So at last the owners now know where the canal was located.

In 1757 Joseph Spence (friend of Alexander Pope and a landscape enthusiast of the period) spent two months at Robert, 3rd Duke's invitation and later wrote to the Duke with his suggestions for improving the ground.

Joseph Spence's papers are in the Osborn Collection at Yale University Library – he wrote about the view from the State Apartments:-

'The Field beyond the great Centre View should be procur'd and the Park Pales there and thereabout to be remov'd far enough down the hill to be quite out of sight, from any window in the house. The hedge-row there to be broken; and only some of the best Trees left, here and there; and a few scatter'd about the Plain. The Castle-Riding, to the right, shou'd certainly be wilder and the sides of it unembared with underwood. My thoughts are just now so enlarg'd on looking for some time on the Capital View that I could wish that 100 feet was allowed for the absolute Opening in the middle of it; and as much for each of the open Woods, on the sides. This falls in with the diagonal line of the old Grove-work, on the right hand. It is much wanted, and much to be desired, that there was an opening made thro' Spring Wood not formally like the other, but of a sufficient largeness to balance it and compleat so noble a view'.

Between 1762 and 1788 it would seem that George, 4th Duke carried out many of Spence's ideas. Two important estate maps were drawn up for the Duke by Como Wallace: they show an intriguing 'before and after' picture of the castle grounds. The Adam Gatehouse, the estate wall and the new Kitchen Gardens to the north date from this time. The 4th Duke also built Manchester House in London (the home of the Wallace Collection). After early Victorian neglect William Drogo, 7th Duke entertained the Prince and Princess of Wales in 1870. The grounds were improved, the avenue of Wellingtonias was planted c1880. In 1892 William Angus, 9th Duke inherited the title at the age of 15, with 27,000 acres and a reputed income of £1,000 a week. He left 4,000 acres. Between 1920 and 1930 his uncle occupied the castle on the request of the family to protect the family heirlooms. Between 1947 and 1977 the family sold the Castle for Kimbolton School for £12,500. What was left of the estate (3,250 acres) was sold to Boots Pension Fund in the mid-70s for about £1 million. In 1996 Boots Pension Fund sold the estate to a consortium of local farmers.

Our Treasurer Mr Terry Hayward then described the role of the school when laying out the 1st XI cricket pitch which had to be drained as it was always soggy. Now he knows where the canal was! The Wellingtonia Avenue gaps have already been replanted as no-one knows when all the trees may just give up. The Walled Garden is now part of a new housing estate and again there had been repetitive problems over drainage. But one always has to remember that the

garden was beneath the sports grounds.

The Trust will arrange a date in August to visit the grounds and it is hoped that Beth Davis, a member of the management committee, will be present to teach us all how to dowse for water and other lost features below the ground. So do come and see this fine site.

An unknown Reverend wrote the following poem :-

**Thy Park, Kimbolton! And surrounding shade,
For rural love and contemplation made,
Invite my song. Ye Sylvans! Haunt your bowers!
Waft round your sweets! And open all your flowers!**

**And thou who shut'st not to the suppliant's prayer,
Nor to the aid-imploring voice thine ear,
Do thou, O MANCHESTER! protect the song;
The Muse's care does to the learne'd belong:
Grateful alike Muse, Subject, Author, bow,
And hail the source whence all their pleasures flow.
These plains that annual pour their sweets for thee,
(Thanks to thy bounty) yield a part to me:
The Ease, fair Virtue's, and the Poet's friend,
Thro' your indulgence on my steps attends.**

**Impervious to the sun's most potent ray
Yon lofty elms their arched heads display;
From far the traveller sees their summit rise,
Scarce half distinguish'd from the neighbouring skies;
But oft surveying as he onward goes,
Greener and fairer still the object grows;
Till underneath their shade, at ease reclin'd,
He leaves the labour of the day behind;
Soft breezes cool him from surrounding bowers,
And Nature bland her gay profusion pours.**

(I wonder if the unknown Reverend had just heard a certain work by Handel)

John Drake

TREES SUITABLE FOR CAMBRIDGESHIRE GARDENS

Lecture by NORMAN VILLIS

Norman Villis recently retired as Superintendent of the Cambridge University Botanic Garden, and was responsible for many of the recent tree plantings in that garden.

Norman began by warning members about impulse plantings of trees. They grow fast to begin with and then rise taller at a slower rate. He advised using a cane when choosing a position for a new tree in your garden, place the cane, walk round it and look at it from several directions. Think how large the tree may grow to in the future. Avoid boundary plantings in small gardens and a location where overhanging branches when removed may unbalance the tree. A good rule of thumb was always plant 16 feet or 5 metres from a building. Choose trees that have good foliage and autumn colour, good bark and have good berries.

Cambridgeshire is one of the most treeless counties in England, and we should all do what we can to redress the balance. Members please note!

The following were considered to be suitable for smaller gardens in the county:-

*Acer griseum** a paperbark maple, the snake bark maples:- *Acer capillipes**, *Acer pensylvanicum**, *Acer davidii* 'Serpentine'* and also look out for *Acer davidii* 'Silver vein'. *Acer palmatum* 'Senkaki' sometimes also named *Acer palmatum* 'Sango-kaku'* has brilliant red stems which are useful for flower arranging, *Acer palmatum* will need dappled shade, and finally in this group two stunners *Acer x conspicuum* 'Felix' with large leaves and *Acer grosseri var. hersii** with fine markings on the trunk.

Horse chestnuts are usually considered too large for most gardens, but *Aesculus x neglectus* 'Erythroblastos'* has shrimp-pink fresh leaves in spring which turn green later during the year. Although slow growing and not reaching a great height, the sunrise colours of the leaves are exceptional. *Aesculus flava** has yellow flowers and early outstanding autumn foliage.

*Amelanchier lamarkii**, the scented snowy mespilus from North America, is laden with white star-like flowers in the spring and then the leaves turn in autumn to a brilliant red. If your garden is sheltered you could try an *Albizia julibrissin* or *A. rosea**. These trees have finely-cut foliage and pink flowers. They were introduced from China by Wilson. From America comes the rugged barked river birch *Betula nigra** which likes damp soil but not waterlogged.

Amongst the Crataegus group Norman singled out *C. persimilis* 'Prunifolia'* which produced good Autumn colour, *C. laciniata* for its orange fruit, and *C. tanacetifolia* for its yellow fruit. Then came a surprise to me; *Glabrastis lutea/sinensis* which is in Leguminosae. Requiring a sheltered position it will grow to 20 feet and produces white flowers similar to the flowers on wisterias. Then another tree which may be suitable for Newmarket High Street, the tall, narrow Kentucky Coffee tree which gives good autumn colour – *Gymnocladus dioica*.

Slightly taller with a lot of character – the golden rain tree – *Kolreuteria paniculatum**. I planted one several years ago from a seed obtained from the Chelsea Physic Garden whose specimen was the largest in London. If you wanted a 'Lunatic asylum tree' as Bowles might have called them you could choose *Laburnocytisus 'Adamii'*.

Crab apples are always worth considering, *Malus trilobata* is hard to come by but is covered in late spring with masses of white flowers but for some reason it doesn't always have fruit that ripens, whereas *M. 'Red Sentinel'** is much more reliable and holds its fruit on until well into the winter. But if you are looking for a really elegant small tree which is covered by yellow berries you should obtain *M. 'Transitoria'**.

You often see gardens in Cambridge with Magnolias growing well, and how frustrating for us that often is, as most of us garden on clay or chalk. *Magnolia x loebneri* 'Leonard Messel'* and some *M. stellata** will cope with the chalk. It may be worth looking out for some which have been hybridised in New Zealand and California – *Magnolia Gresham 'Vulcan'*. But if a late flowering magnolia is planted to avoid the frosts you should obtain *M. soulangeana* 'Brozzoni'* as it is pollinated by beetles before the flowers open. The most scented flowering one is *M. virginiana*, which was introduced by Bishop Compton in 1680.

Prunus trees sometimes have a short life, but in this group the following are well worth trying. *Prunus subhirtella* 'Fukubana'* is a good autumn/winter flowering tree but it needs a south facing position giving it some protection. *Prunus davidiana* is better than *rubra* and it needs a dark background to show off the flowers. *Prunus serrula** has good bark. If you are looking for a small tree why not plant *Platycarya strobilacea* which is a member of the walnut family with male catkins and cone-like seeds.

Although Robinias tend to lose branches, there is one with an elegant outline which from a distance looks like a silver birch; this is *Robinia pseudoacacia* 'Rozynskiana'. *Ptelea trifoliata** has yellow flowers in June and July which smell of honeysuckle. *Ptelea 'Aurea'** is the North American Hop Tree. *Tetradium danellii* produces flowers in August and September and is a member of the Rutaceae family. There are some planted around the playground in Burwell.

Limes have been used as avenue trees but *Tilia mongolica** and *Tilia henryana* are both small limes not reaching giant proportions. The latter has early pink flowers and leaves like eye lashes. *Sequoiadendron giganteum* 'Pendulum'. You either hate this or love

it – there is one growing in the garden at Robinson College. They are often seen in front gardens on the west coast of North America.

However, if you do have the space for larger specimens, Norman recommended the following:- *Quercus frainetto*, the Hungarian Oak which produces butter yellow leaves in autumn; *Ostrya carpinifolia*, the hop hornbeam which has long catkins in the spring and *Zelkova serrata* or *Z. carpinifolia* which, although members of the elm family, make marvellous specimens on a large lawn.

I've typed this out in some detail to encourage those who have the space to plant more trees. Cambridgeshire is virtually treeless and anyone with any space at all should get busy this autumn and plant at least one hundred trees. There is a good tree nursery – The Place for Plants at East Bergholt. They have an extensive list. They are at East Bergolt Place, East Bergholt, Suffolk CO7 6UP, tel no 01206 299224.

PS the sign * means the tree has been awarded an Award of Garden merit by the Royal Horticultural Society.

John Drake

LAVENDERS

A lecture by DR TIM UPSON

On a cold but bright March morning Tim Upson, who is the Superintendent of the Botanic Garden, had gathered a number of pots of Lavenders from one of the Botanic Garden's Greenhouses. At first sight one would never have guessed that any one of them were lavenders, except some of them were flowering. Specie lavenders from afar places are not like those we use in our gardens.

When Baron Gingins de la Samaz wrote the Natural History of Lavenders in 1826 he mentioned 16 species. Now there are over 40 species growing mainly around the Mediterranean from the Atlas Mountains in North Africa. Others grow in the coastal areas of Arabia and also in India.

Tim explained with the help of slides that there were several groups which the species could be divided into. Group 1 is called Pterostochas and includes several plants which come from the Canary Islands – *L. canariensis* has long spikes and needs a frost free glasshouse to survive through the winter, *L. buchii* is also a tall plant with cut grey leaves with ornamental grey/white flowers, *L. pinnata* is a much more compact plant with grey silver leaves and *L. minutiolii* has very elegant grey/green leaves above which appear spikes with violet and grey flowers.

Group 2 includes lavenders which are only found on the African mainland in Morocco, at the edge of the Sahara, the Arabian peninsula and Iran. *L. mairei* has aromatic pink flowers and is used for flavouring tea. *L. coronopifolia* is one of the lavenders that occurs at the edge of the Sahara and has leafless stems with white flowers. In Arabia you find *L. subnuda* growing in the desert with leafless stems and is recognisable from the spiralling flowers at the tip of the stem. In India grows *L. bipinnata* with marked dissected leaves, pithy stems and small white heads of flowers. This one is an annual or biennial. All these are tender in this country and should be kept in a frost free glasshouse during our winters.

Another group contains lavenders which are distributed across southern Spain, north Africa and are also to be found in tropical north east Africa and the Yemen.

L. dentata, the main plant in this group, is unreliably hardy in this country, but worth growing for its bird-like leaves and flat flower spikes supporting colourful bracts at the top of the stems which attract the pollinators.

Some might know *L. stoechas*, French lavender, which likes a more acid soil. It is often referred to as 'Bunny ears' because of the two

darker florets above the flower. Its oils are now used in aromatherapy. Recently a new cultivar has appeared with dark pink florets *L. stoechas* 'Kew Red'.

Lavendula stoechas sub sp *pendunculata* is a much hardier French lavender as it appreciates calcareous soils. Also in this group is *L. viridis* which comes from Portugal. I've grown it for several years for its white flowers, but have never noticed the lemon scent from the flowers. It makes a compact plant and requires full sun and good drainage.

The final group are lavenders from the Mediterranean and are used as commercial crops for oil production. *L. latifolia* has lavender spikes with silver grey foliage, but is not a profuse flowerer. *L. angustifolia* (English lavender) grows high in the mountains and is therefore a very tough plant. It is shorter than *L. latifolia* but has lovely scented flowers. Many cultivars are available of this plant – during the 1930s *L. angustifolia* 'Hidcote' was grown in every garden. Now we can obtain *L. angustifolia* 'Munstead' which has lighter blue flowers, and *L. angustifolia* 'Miss Katherine' which has pink flowers. Growing half way up the mountains, between the previous lavenders is *L. x intermedia* (*L. latifolia* grows at lower altitudes). This lavender *L. x intermedia* 'Grosso' is the robust plant forming pin cushions which produces 80% of the oil in the South of France. Another cultivar which is often grown in our gardens is *L. x intermedia* 'Old English' which is recognisable from its grey foliage.

The Romans used lavender oils for scenting their bathing water and today lavender is harvested for preparing perfumes as the oil contains anti-fungal and anti-bacterial properties. Although many of us associate Lavender commercial growing with Norfolk Lavenders and the South of France, Tim pointed out that Australia, South Africa and the United States are farming lavender on a much larger scale, where combine harvesters en masse fill bag after bag.

The long stemmed lavenders are best for drying if tied and held upside down in a dry place. Lavenders repel insects; flavour teas, licquors, meat and honey. Today you can obtain a sachet from your local garden centre which contains lavender to control algae on ponds.

Pruning should be carried out once a year after flowering. But do not miss a year.

Finally Tim recommended that you contact Downton Nursery for obtaining lavenders via mail order, their address is 649 London Road, Ditton, Aylesford, Kent ME20 6DJ tel no 01732 840710.

John Drake

HISTORIC GARDENS OF CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Audrey Osborne and John Drake started off this year's lecture series at Buckden Village Hall. This new building suits the Trust well as one can park next to the building and apart from the flooding at Offord it is easy to get to. Those who drive from Cambridge should follow the road to Croxton and then go north towards Toseland and then to the Offords and then across the railway line and the mill bridge to Buckden. It is a much quieter road than attempting the A14.

The garden at Walcot Hall is interesting as the 1st O.S. map reveals double cross avenues similar to the layout of avenues at Hampton Court. Members in the audience offered suggestions of embankments and views out to the landscape, with rough ground suggesting the site of a deserted village. The canal was noted in 1720 as being particularly fine and the 20th century stone buildings possibly arranged to suggest that the garden was older than it appeared. Some of the stone gateways were thought to have come from Kirby Hall, and a similar Jacobean gateway appears at Stibbington Hall. There must be more to find out about Walcot and it is good to hear the Trust is knuckling down on this site. (Thanks to Christopher Taylor, we have traced the designer of the garden at Walcot before the property

was obtained by the Nichol family. Ed.)

We didn't come to the weekend trip to Wothorp and Washingley. It's difficult to get some idea of scale from slides but both looked extensive and I wished we had made the effort to come along. I've never seen a cock fighting pit, although there was cock fighting in the film 'Far from the Madding Crowd'.

I didn't know that there were several abandoned gardens around Huntingdon and I would like to get inside Pepys House in Brampton. What really surprised me was the garden that remained of Beverly Nichols at Glatton. I've often wondered what was at Glatton when we drive on the A1 to the north. Audrey amused me with her story of the aconites and John made me chuckle about his account of meeting the two sisters who owned the thatched cottage, who chattered non-stop like excited sparrows.

Latecomer but keen supporter of the Trust.

IRIS A LECTURE by GEOFF STEBBINGS

Geoff Stebbings was trained at The Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew and then became Head Gardener at Myddleton House, the home of E. A. Bowles at Gerards Cross, north London. Within 5 years he had replaced over 5,000 different plants the Bowles grew and had been lost. The garden was completely overgrown but is now cleared and along the bank of the River Lea is the National Collection of Award Winning Irises, which were collected and planted by Geoff. The garden is now part of the Lea Valley Authority offering a varied range of recreational pursuits for local residents.

He is now a freelance journalist, writing articles for several garden magazines. Recently he received an award for the Best Garden Writer by the Professional Garden Writers Guild. His recent book on the Genus Iris was a sell-out.

His well illustrated talk started with an explanation of the Iris genus: you need to look for flowers that have 3 outer petals, 3 inner petals and only 3 stamens. You will realise that crocus, gladiola, tigridia and freesias are all in the Iris family. The outer petals should be called 'falls', the inners 'standards' and the centre 'style'.

Most breeding of Iris now occurs in Australia and along the West Coast of North America, where new introductions are available at \$100 each.

But forget modern hybrids with outlandish names. Species Iris will provide you with flowers between November through to the following August. *Iris reticulata* is a small iris flowering early but in order not to lose the plant, they should be planted 8"-10" deep. This prevents the bulb breaking up into smaller bulbs and then never flowering. *Iris unguicularis* (the Algerian Iris) flowers from November to March but it needs a baked situation at the base of a dry wall. Its leaves often dry up and then need removing and it is good practice to lift and divide the plant when it has become too tight. *Iris foetidissima* (stinking iris) will grow under the shade of trees in dry conditions and produces orange seeds in pods during the winter. There is a form '*citrina*' with lemon flowers and a variegated form which does not produce seed pods.

Iris tuberosa (the mourning iris) flowers in April with dark green and almost black flowers. It is now called *Hermodactylus tuberosa*. It gets on well in a cool sheltered place and flowers if it likes you! From the Middle East come the Juno Irises – these have fleshy roots and leaves formed like leeks. There was a display of these at the March RHS SHOW at Vincent Square mounted by the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.

The yellow flower of *Iris bucharica* is probably the most common one known, its emerging leaves looking like leeks. Perhaps new to some members are the Pacific Coast Irises of which there are 12 species. They require a neutral soil with lots of humus and are

happiest at the edge of woods and will grow to 12" tall and flower in May. *Iris innominata* has woody roots and is best represented by *I. 'Pinewood Amethyst'*. If you happen to be near Broadleigh's stand at the Chelsea Flower Show look out for the 'Broadleigh Group'.

Now for some unusual forms – *Iris cristata* has a row of sharp teeth on the beards and these require an acid peaty soil. *Iris confusa* is often likened to bamboos and is found in Asia. The Japanese Roof Iris – *Iris tectorum album* has flowers 4" across and grows 15" high on a roof (presumably thatched) in the Far East. *Iris setosa* only grows to 6" and has a wide distribution as far as the Arctic Circle. *Iris graminea* is a low flowering purple iris with the scent of Plum Tarts.

For those living in Cambridge *Iris siberica 'Cambridge'* with its light blue flowers gives no problem, just divide it in spring and it will repay you handsomely. Other forms of *Iris siberica* – '*Shaker's Prayer*' and '*Summer Skies*' are both worth obtaining. *Iris sibirica 'Helicopter'* is mainly chosen for its unusual flat flowers. There is also a Chinese group – one is called '*Lemon Pepper*'. The spuria group includes the tall 5' high ones you often see in cottage gardens. They have very strong roots, but do not need any staking. *Iris pseudocorus* is a British Native, but a better form has leaves with yellow variegation and yellow flowers. But the leaves will turn green after flowering. Apologies for the name but I have nothing to do with it, but another good form is *I. pseudocorus var. bastardii*. Perhaps the best water Iris is *Iris kaempferi* which has now been changed to *Iris ensata*.

Iris fulva is a Louisiana Iris with rusty brown flowers and grows 18" high. It is not totally hardy, but there are taller irises in this group which will grow up to 6'; they prefer marshland conditions and will need dividing every ten years.

One would expect that Iris flowers would provide the gardener with all the colours of the rainbow. Unfortunately a good pink or red is hard to come by, but *Iris pallida variegata* produces primrose flowers in late May. Shriner's Trial Grounds in Oregon are developing Iris with more flowers on one stem. Geoff showed an amazing photograph of Shriner's Trial Grounds Open Day with Iris enthusiasts peering at Iris and lupins.

One's personal taste was questioned as Geoff showed slides of the following iris, which were greeted with murmurs of approval or gasps of amazement. So here is a short list, not all of these will appear in the Plant Finder but you should obtain a copy of his book for fuller descriptions. *Iris 'Traitor'* had black evil beards, *Iris 'Ostentaceous'*, *Iris 'Black Swan'* (obviously Geoff has a penchant for black), *Iris 'Midnight Oil'*, *Iris 'Crown Heads'* with ruffled standards, *Iris 'Pagan Pink'*, *Iris 'Space Age'*, *Iris Reincarnation'* and *Iris 'Giraffe'*. One wondered if these new hybrids are the result of unimaginative naming or has the Iris directory run out of straightforward names?

The following nurseries were recommended for obtaining Iris:

Croftway Nursery, Yapton Road, Barnham, Bognor Regis, West Sussex PO22 0BH

Zephyrwude Irises, 48 Blacker Lane, Crigglestone, Wakefield, West Yorkshire WF24 3EW

Mrs P J Brown, V H Humphrey – The Iris Specialist, Westlees Farm, Logmore Lane, Westcott, Dorking, Surrey RH4 3JN

Kelways Ltd, Langport, Somerset TA10 9EZ

The Iris Garden, 47 Station Road, New Barnett, Herts EN5 1PR

David Austin Roses Ltd, Bowling Green Lane, Albrighton, Wolverhampton, West Midlands WV7 3HB

John Drake

CAMPANULAS A LECTURE by MARGARET LYNCH

Margaret Lynch is a member of the Cambridgeshire Gardens Trust and gardens in Meldreth. Together with Peter Lewis (who owns the National Collection of Campanulas at West Wrattling) she was co-author of the book *Campanulas – A Gardener's Guide* published in 1992 and recently re-printed by Batsford in 1998.

Margaret commenced her lecture by quoting a well known line "Roses are red – Campanulas are blue, violets are blue and delphiniums are blue . . ." . But if you wait just a moment and think – delphiniums can be red, remember the RHS Chelsea Show when those red delphiniums appeared. *Campanula punctata 'Rubra'* is not the result of plant breeding, but the selection of a coloured form of a plant which occurs in the wild in Japan. It certainly isn't blue, because the colour is formed by the red spotting within the cup.

Many of you will have forgotten that until recently Canterbury Bells – *C. medium* came in all shades of blue, pink, white, grey and mauve. So don't go away thinking that all Campanulas are blue.

Graham Stuart Thomas who used to garden in Cambridge thought that *C. lactiflora* was the finest of hardy perennials. It grows to 5 feet and seldom needs staking. *C. lactiflora 'Loddon Anna'* bred by Carlyles Nursery is probably the best of all, but it's pink! There are two good short forms worth growing *C. lactiflora 'Pouffe'* and *C. lactiflora 'White Pouffe'*.

There is also another tall campanula *C. latiloba* but is rather out of fashion now, it flowers for a long time and again doesn't need staking. A good form is *C. latiloba 'Hidcote Amythyst'* and you can still see it growing at Hidcote where Lawrence Johnson planted it. If you do have herbaceous borders you should include some plants of *C. persicifolia*. Margaret was given *C. persicifolia 'Alba Coronato'* by Joan Grout who lived in Nottinghamshire and this was the plant which started her interest in Campanulas. There is also a double variety called. *C. persicifolia 'Boule de Neige'* and it really does look like a snowball and was first mentioned in 1902.

Some of these old varieties are not strong and tend like Edwardian beauties to fade away. They are very demanding feeders and to grow well need regular division and replanting.

There are 5 British native Campanulas. *C. trachelium* is a woodland species and is a prolific seeder. There is a double form which is not so rampant called *C. trachelium 'Bernice'*. Both this and a white form are recorded in Gerard's Herbal. The other British natives should be kept in a wild garden – *C. latifolia*, and *C. rotundifolia* (our harebell). But *C. glomerata* is a short sturdy plant and flowers in late summer, and at Hidcote Manor they grow a stronger form, *C. glomerata 'Surperba'*.

But try some of these really reliable plants – *C. carpatica ssp turbinata*, often dismissed by the cognescenti but what a flowerer. *C. porscharskyana* can be seen climbing up trees in Dowcra's Manor garden in Shepreth or you could plant it to run over a rocky bank. Not to confuse you is *C. portenschlagiana* also a low spreader with not such starry flowers as the previous one, but a good cottage garden plant. *C. vidalii* is the only shrubby campanula from the Azores and has waxy flowers. It is now correctly called *Azorina vidalii* and will enjoy a warmer climate than East Anglia.

Some of the best campanulas are white and highly desirable for flowering in late summer. Margaret concluded her fascinating talk by showing slides of *C. porscharskyana 'E H Frost'*, *C. latiloba 'Alba'*, *C. rapunculus 'Alba'*, *C. allairifolia* (loved by Miss Jeykell) and one of the cup and saucer group.

I would suggest that you rush to Peter Lewis in West Wrattling to see if he still has some of these plants for sale.

John Drake

EVENTS FOR LATE SUMMER AND AUTUMN 2001

1 Thursday 12th July at 2.30pm Visit to Drayton House, Kettering, Northants including the garden and the church. £6.00 for members £8.00 for non-members. Home made teas £2.50 per person.

Drayton House was described by Jenny Burt at our last AGM. The Archivist will show members around the House which has been a family home for 1000 years. John Germaine, who was related to William of Orange, completed a refurbishment of this magnificent house and attracted craftsmen to Drayton who were working for the King at Hampton Court. We will see ironwork by Jean Tijou, furniture by Gerrit Jensen and, above all, the magnificent architecture by William Talman. In 1770 the house passed to the Sackville family, but only two rooms were changed, being redecorated in the Adam style. The house retains its medieval origins and the taste of the Baroque period. The walled enclosures around the house still survive and the vista to the church through a great avenue can be admired.

Tickets are limited for this event.

2. Wednesday 25th July at 11.00am. Tour of The Gardens of Harvey Court, Finella, and the Fellows' Garden, all owned by Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge. £2 for members and £3 for non-members. Tickets are limited for this visit.

Meet at Harvey Court along West Road where the Head Gardener will show us round the three gardens that the College owns. This visit has been made possible by the kind permission of the Master and Fellows of Gonville and Caius College. I don't know anyone who has seen inside this Fellows' Garden. This should be a real treat. Please note that this is a morning event as the Head Gardener does not want to stay late after work, and July is chosen when the gardens should be looking good.

3. Wednesday 15th August at 2.00pm. Exploring the grounds of Kimbolton Castle to find the site of earlier garden features by dowsing. Beth Davies and John Stratford will be teaching members how to survey gardens with the aid of dowsing rods. £4 for members and £6 for non-members.

Earlier this year John Stratford gave a detailed lecture of the various stages of the garden changes at Kimbolton Castle – see the report of his lecture in this newsletter.

This afternoon has been arranged to teach members how features below ground can be located. This an excellent opportunity to come along and see this magnificent setting and to check if you can be successful at dowsing. Perhaps the canal will be located this afternoon. When booking, do state if you would like to eat at a local pub – the Trust can reserve places for you if required.



Photo shows 'Southernwood', Gt. Shefford, home to Rose Macaulay. Postcard by Margaret K. Ward, Cambridgeshire Collection.

4. Thursday 20th September at 11.30 am. Drawings in the Fitzwilliam Museum Collection, Trumpington Road, Cambridge. David Scrace, Keeper of Paintings, Drawings and Prints, will show members some of the early flower drawings the museum holds. Members £5. Limited tickets for this event.

For those who attended David's lecture earlier this year this is a unique opportunity to visit the museum and see the originals of those priceless drawings which were seen on slides. Many were painted by ladies with incredible talent. Meet in the main entrance foyer of the Museum.

5. Thursday 20th September at 6.00pm. Visit to Christ's College – Master's and Fellows' Garden. Members £2. Limited tickets for this event which is planned to take place on the same day as the morning event.

Mrs Munro, the Master's wife, has helped arrange this evening visit so that members can see both the Fellows' Garden and the Master's garden which has a canal incorporated into the layout which is an innovative solution to the end of Hobson's Conduit before it disappears below ground into Hobson Street. Meet at the first vehicle access gate after turning into Hobson Street. This Gate is marked 'Master's Lodge'. There is room for a few cars for disabled drivers only. Please let us know how many cars are to be parked.

6. Saturday 6th October at 2.30pm. Visit to the Walled Garden Vineyard, Ickworth House. The National Trust. A joint visit with the Suffolk Gardens Trust to see the vast walled garden, now partly planted with a vineyard by tenants, Jillian Simms and Charles Macready, both formerly involved at Wyken Hall vineyard. £10 per person (no extra concession for NT members).

This is the first commercial vineyard on National Trust land and shows exciting promise. Here the red Pinot Noir is trained on the walls and white Bacchus and a new hybrid Rondo from Russia are also grown. There will be a guided tour of the vineyard and we will hear some of the history of the walled garden.

7. Saturday 24th November at 2.30pm. Annual General Meeting at the Village Hall Buckden to be followed by a lecture on "Two recently discovered late Medieval Gardens in Bassingbourn" by Sue Oosthuizen and Christopher Taylor.

To book for events 1 – 6 please contact Mrs Daphne Pearce, 6 Church Lane, Gamlingay, Sandy, Beds SG10 3EU Tel no 01767 650 527

Please send a cheque made out to Cambridgeshire Gardens Trust and a SAE. Thank you.

Cambridgeshire Gardens Trust
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