

CAMBRIDGESHIRE GARDENS TRUST EVENTS 2000

1. Thursday 4th May at 3.00pm **Walk at Kirtling Towers led by Lord Fairhaven**, who is President of The Trust. Kirtling Towers was built by Lord North in 1530 and is situated within a moated site once owned by King Harold. The moat is the largest surviving one in the county. Lord North's son Roger accompanied Queen Elisabeth I in 1578 on her progression from Greenwich to Norfolk, and the Queen stayed at Kirtling on her return journey. He spent £762 4s 2d entertaining her on her one day's visit. This is a unique opportunity to visit this important site.
Members £3, Non-members £5.
2. Thursday 1st June at 7.00pm **Exhibition of Sculpture, Hardwicke House, Fen Ditton.** This exhibition has been arranged to show a range of modern sculpture which is suitable for displaying in a garden setting. The works are by local sculptors and from Zimbabwe artists.
Members £2, Non-members £2.50.
3. Thursday 22th June at 2.30pm **Garden Walk at Walcot Hall** led by the owners. Walcot Hall is situated to the south of the village of Barnack. The Hall was built in 1678 by Lord Cholmondeley. The large garden contains canals and overlooks the landscape towards Ufford. To the west are formal avenues through large plantings of conifers. Teas.
Members £3, Non-members £5.
4. Thursday 20th July at 6.00pm **"Bloomsbury in Cambridge"** A walk led by Jane Brown . The walk will concentrate on gardens associated with the Bloomsbury Group in Cambridge. The area Jane has chosen lies to the west of the city.
Members £2, Non-members £3.
5. Sunday 23rd July at 2.00pm - 5.00pm **Abbots Ripton Hall Gardens** open in aid of the Cambridgeshire Gardens Trust, by kind permission of Lady De Ramsey.
Members £2, Non-members £3.
6. Saturday 12th August at 10.30am Visit **Wothorpe Towers, the Dower House for Burghley House**, followed by visit in the afternoon to Washingley Hall. Both these properties have the remains of gardens layouts. Please bring a picnic lunch.
Members £2, Non-members £3.
7. Thursday 14th September at 6.00pm **Garden walk at Robinson College, Cambridge** by the Head Gardener. This garden extends around Thorney Creek House, the new College buildings and several houses which the College bought along Adams Road and Sylvester Road.
8. Tuesday 10th October at 10.30am Visit with **Hertfordshire Gardens Trust** to see two sites. **Youngsbury Park** designed by Capability Brown and a nearby historic garden which is now the site of a Golf Course.
Members £5, Non-members £8.
9. Saturday 18th November at 2.30pm **Annual General Meeting** Community Centre, Buckden, Huntingdon

Tickets and accompanying maps are available from Mrs Daphne Pearce, 6 Church Lane, Gamlingay, Sandy, Beds SG19 3EU.
Tel no 01767 650527.

Please include a cheque made payable to Cambridgeshire Gardens Trust and a SAE.

Cambridgeshire Gardens Trust
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RAMSEY ABBEY SCHOOL, WALLED KITCHEN GARDEN

During the last three months, a team of volunteers: David Cozens, Gavin Smith, Jean Chittim, David Chitten, Di Raishbrook, Roger Raisbrook, Maureen Brace, Ken Rawlinson, Stella Rawlinson and John Drake; have been meeting on alternate Saturdays and have almost cleared the north-west quadrant of the garden.



Members of the Trust may be interested to know that before this work commenced the brambles had encapsulated the 12 ft high fruit trees, and this had not been checked for the last 15 years. During the six sessions the team have discovered rows of gooseberry, blackcurrant and redcurrant bushes, and a row of cordon apple trees which had been smothered by the now famous brambles.

By carefully removing the brambles these trees and fruit bushes can be saved by the Trust. Elsewhere we have a different problem, where several years ago someone had the bright idea of leaning metal hurdles against the apple tree trunks in the cross-tunnel. The hurdles are now well embedded in the trunks, and as ivy had also been allowed to smother the same apple trees the only way forward will be to remove both the tree and the hurdle, although an example of this may be left to remind future generations of what can happen to fruit trees if they do not receive regular maintenance.

As you can imagine our progress has been slow because of the time it takes to remove the brambles. At first we thought that this would be an easy job, but now we realise that it is a delicate operation. For the

first hour we seem to have made little progress, but after a further two hours good progress has been made. Having almost cleared one area the height of the box hedges becomes apparent. Those that were never clipped are now between 6ft and 8ft high and some 4ft wide, and you've guessed it, the brambles have established themselves in the box hedges. What has happened, is that over the years the brambles have been supporting these high hedges, and as soon as we removed the brambles, they started to blow about in the wind. This presents a surrealist picture of swaying hedges, as one always regards box hedges as firm, straight clipped structures in a garden. Last autumn we took some 400 box cuttings and made a frame in a secluded part of the garden and protected them with wire and polythene. These were checked every fortnight and in February they were just beginning to take root. Sadly I have to report that a month ago, to our dismay, vandals got into the garden and destroyed them all by attacking the cold frame with a spade that they had found in the garden.

On a brighter note, we have been lucky with the weather when meeting in the garden – it has been so mild this early spring and we have not been delayed by rain. The mild weather has encouraged plants to flower and small clumps of what we have found have been moved to safer areas, so that they are not lost. Gavin, the most athletic member of our team, is often seen moving enormous bundles of brambles above his head, and he climbs into the fruit trees to remove all the dead wood. Sometimes he appears to be walking on top of the tall box hedges to reach dead branches. Please don't worry, he's actually using the metal hurdles that have become



embedded in the tree trunks and box hedges!

or was it to show that the flight of steps was edged with fine balustrades with carved piers?. By just pausing to think about what you are trying to record, your patience would be rewarded.

How often have we photographed gardens and plants and been disappointed that our results include underwear on clothes lines, rubbish bins, signs, dead leaves and flowers, and our shadows across the subject.

Howard advised photographing in soft daylight conditions when the sun has not bleached the colours. His photographs of Clare Fellows' Garden at different times of the day illustrated this admirably, especially when showing the red borders with the College in the background distance. A photograph of a plant in its setting may often help to give more information to the reader. A close-up can show the leaf texture, the formation of the flower or the berries on a branch, both views are necessary to convey the whole story.

Many questions were asked and everyone appreciated the time Howard gave explaining how he had approached his work.

John Drake

WRITING ABOUT GARDENS

It was a pleasure to hear Jane Brown talk once again to the Trust. Her recent book 'In Pursuit of Paradise' is well worth reading. This time she brought a hamper of books which she arranged on a table, which really could have been larger to accommodate them. With the help of these books, slides and overhead projector, Jane took us on a journey through her collection of favourite garden writers illustrating the style and influences each author is remembered by. It would be rather boring to list the volumes Jane referred to, but suffice to mention William Robinson who first realised that there was a large audience in England wanting to know more about gardens, Patrick Syngé who wrote about the luxuriant plants in the glasshouses of the Cambridge Botanic Garden, those who contributed to the Gardeners' Chronicle, seldom with help from drawings or pictures, when it was just words, words, words. Jane compared Vita Sackville-West's poems 'The Garden' and 'The Land', and excerpts from an illustrated gardening book where war victims of the regiment had memorial gardens made for them. The popularising of gardening was illustrated by the soft-back books of 'Adam the Gardener'.

The real gems of her talk were when Jane spoke about

fascinating gardening connections and how amazing they turn out to be, the Astor family at Folly Farm and the house in Conduit Head Road in Cambridge where she had climbed over early museum piece computers to take a photograph of a certain painted portrait on a far wall. The thrill of discovering that the earliest written garden manuscript in England was in Cambridge, and had been written about in one of her early copies of the Gardeners' Chronicle. All this will need recording somewhere and hopefully we shall be able to read about it in her next book. So we thank her and keep our fingers crossed.

John Drake

BABRAHAM HALL AND ITS GROUNDS

Jill Cremer and John Drake rounded off the winter lecture series at the Gilmore Building with a most interesting account of the history of Babraham Hall and its grounds from the earliest times to the present day. Aided by an early terrier, D.W. Butcher's 'History of Babraham Hall' and the VCH, Jill related how the various owners, including the Taylors, the Palavicinos, the Bennets and the Adeane family, had rebuilt and improved the house over the years. Early maps showed how the course of the river had been altered and canalised, and then the direction of flow of streams reversed by the use of weirs to maintain the lushness of the water meadows surrounding the house.

Each family had their own story to tell. Lord Godolphin, a near neighbour from Wandlebury, grazed his horses on part of the estate. Cromwell had links with the family through marriage. Horatio Palavicino sounded a most enterprising fellow, coming from Italy in the 1550s where he had earned a fortune from alum, which is used in the manufacture of cloth. Within a short while he had worked his way into court circles, lending money to Queen Elizabeth I, travelling abroad on court business, probably spying, and mixing with the nobility, including Lord Cecil and Lord North. The Bennets in 1660 had employed Hugh May, a contemporary of Wren, to improve the grounds and the Adeanes, who from 1774 until recently were equerries to the Royal Family, had enhanced the estate, breeding shorthorn cattle and introducing pheasant shooting.

John explained that the parch marks in the grass to the east and south of the Hall were Victorian scrolled parterres and an account in the Gardeners' Chronicle gave the numbers of

the park in Wisbech which show in detail the boundary planting and railings, and the original planting around the memorial fountain to Richard Young, Mayor of Wisbech 1858-1862, who once owned 43 boats operating from the port.

Slowly but surely our records are increasing and the Fulbourn Hospital Grounds have revealed extensive formal landscaping of 1870 to the south of the building overlooking petal shaped layouts to be gardened by the residents.

DAMAGE AND DESIGN IN HISTORIC GARDENS

Two talks were given on 25th January 2000. The 1st was by Anthea Taigel who is the Garden History Society representative in East Anglia looking at Planning Applications affecting Listed Gardens. Actually she covers an area from Yorkshire to the south coast so one has to see East Anglia in a rather loose context.

Every application is considered under 3 headings, What?, Why? and How?. Research and survey work is essential before she can begin to answer them. Although English Heritage has a list for the whole country it is never final; so that the work at county level by individual Garden Trusts is of vital importance.

Conservation of the landscape is more problematic than the restoration and preservation of a building. As yet, in England there is no statutory protection of a landscape. However, there is now more awareness that the setting of a building or structure is also of historic importance. If the site is within a Conservation Area, protection is somewhat easier (eg: an application has to be made and consent obtained to remove a tree).

Within the vast, current document for planning and development, Local Authorities have a statutory obligation to consult various organisations, such as the Garden History Society, the Georgian Society, the Victorian Society and suchlike. In consultation to save a site a key phrase to use is that "it is in an historic landscape". The more evidence that can be provided from the 'in depth research' of a site the better. Early maps, drawings, photographs etc to build up a case history can be persuasive.

Anthea showed examples, from different counties, of successes, horrors and losses. The horrors were due mostly to a poor understanding of the creation of an historic landscape. The concept and importance of vistas, the inappropriateness of planting small trees like flowering cherries, in an 18th park. Successes include the restoration and replanting of a spectacular rose garden at Ashridge Management College in Hertfordshire, to the original design by Humphry Repton.

Golf courses can be problematic - blending in the Golf Club House and hiding the car park! Anthea and her colleagues are trying to introduce a new form of golf that can be played on a course with few alterations to a typical historic park. Neglected structures in gardens such as crumbling terrace balustrades, mausoleums or summerhouses are a nightmarish cost to restore and sensitive solutions need to be found.

Gunton Park in Norfolk was taken as an example of a large, decaying mansion developed for multiple residency. Some very good work had been already carried out on the house by Kit Martin, but an application to site a swimming pool in the grounds caused much concern. A field study by the Garden History Society has shown there were still some original trees of 'A Grove' depicted in a plan by Bridgeman, and you have guessed, they were exactly where the new swimming pool was to be sited. Sadly the swimming pool, such as it is, was built in the 'Grove'.

The landscape could be restored to enhance this fine property, and hopefully restoration will be undertaken and commercialism and uniformed attitudes will not always dictate or destroy our Garden Heritage.

Diana Boston spoke about her personal experience of 'Conserving the Historic Manor and Garden at Hemingford Grey'. Diana spoke to an audience familiar with the delights and charms of the house and gardens at Hemingford Grey and the fame brought to them in the books written by her mother-in-law Lucy Boston.

Lucy Boston died in 1990 aged 98 and until the last years of her life was actively involved in looking after the property, but a considerable debt had occurred. On inheriting the Manor, Diana and her late husband, Peter Boston, opted for the 'Capital Transfer Tax Exemption Scheme'. This piece of legislation has encouraged owners of historic houses to open to the public. In fact, owners are obliged to open for 28 days annually, and this must not

Gavin is pleased to report there are signs of re-growth on the Mulberry tree, which split and was blown over early last year. So there is hope that we will be able to nurse it back to a healthy specimen in the future, as only the dead

coming to see her garden that day.

All members of the Trust are welcome to visit the garden in Ramsey, all you need to do is either contact the Trust at The Grange, Easton, Huntingdon PE18 0TU or ring my Tel. no. 01487-814383 and you are welcome to come when the team is on site.

Jean Chittim

RECORDING GARDENS IN CAMBRIDGESHIRE

The first of our series of lectures in January was given by John Drake and Audrey Osborne. They brought some 17 different maps of Cambridge which had been generously given to the Trust by Cambridge City Council Planners and Landscaping Departments. The maps were laid out in chronological order to enable members to compare the information shown on the various plans. Logan's plan of 1688 shows Tennis Courts and Bowling Greens which no longer occur on Custance's plan of 1798. Baker's map of 1830 shows Mr Humphry's garden along Emmanuel Road to be larger in area than the grounds of King's College. The detailed OS maps of 1880 of the city show further improvements and changes; in the University Library these are coloured to indicate stone, brick, timber and glass. So one is able to understand what a summerhouse of the time might have been made from.

branches will have to be removed. Some kind person has already agreed to do this for the Trust.

We are pleased to hear from the County Council that a peppercorn lease is to be prepared for the Trust.

To many people, the fact that we are clearing rather boring overgrowth appears to be a mundane task. This becomes insignificant when one considers that we are working to restore an historic garden established 160 years ago and as we progress we are learning quite a lot about how it was managed when producing fruit, vegetables and flowers for the table in its heyday.

We are delighted that Lady De Ramsey has consented to be the Patron of the Ramsey Abbey School, Walled Kitchen Garden and has kindly arranged to open her garden at Abbots Ripton on Sunday 23rd July 2000 from 2.00pm - 5.00pm to help us raise funds for the restoration of this garden. We hope that you will give us your support by

John and Audrey concentrated their talk on Victorian gardens, parks and cemeteries in the county. Discussing sources ie sale particulars (Bidwells keep a library of the sale particulars dating from the last century which the Trust has been privileged to inspect), the research team has been able to delve further into the grounds at Holm, Sutton House and Egerton House.

Showing the changes to the area to the west of Queen's Road in Cambridge, referring to the 1880 date when Dons were permitted to marry and were able to reside out of College. Madingley Road was a good hunting ground for Dons and the librarian and archivist of St John's College had helped to untangle what was going on at 12 Madingley Road when a Trinity Hall don wished to buy land occupied by pleasure gardens and Mount Pleasant Nursery.

The Trust has been kindly donated some old postcards of

include the winter months.

Protection of the public is entirely the owner's responsibility as are problems of access, parking, provision or not of toilets etc. Advertising the open days is also up to the owners. It is a long-term commitment and has to be very carefully managed to be cost effective.

Diana also described how a young man arrived from the Countryside Commission to assess the historic importance of the gardens – seemingly, as with policeman, too young for the job and blissfully ignorant of Lucy Boston. It was not a propitious start, but he became enthusiastic and recommended in his report that the garden must be preserved. This required a 'Management Plan for the land' and a follow-up quinquennial inspection. This has recently taken place and the outcome is not entirely happy. Owners may feel the strictures placed on them under these schemes are too burdensome and negate the benefits.

There was an interesting discussion following Diana's talk and we are most grateful to her for presenting so frankly the problems encountered by a private owner of such an historic site.

Jill Cremer

Ongoing restoration by the Friends of Mill Road Cemetery Cambridge is now underway. Members who would like to assist should contact either Andrew Hewitt 01223 368708 or Shayne Mitchell 01223 313541.

John Raven's book, '**A Botanist's Garden**' about many of the plants in the gardens of Docwra's Manor is available from Faith Raven, Docwra's Manor, Shepreth, Royston, Herts SG8 6PS price £7.00 (incl. p.p.).

THE GROUNDS OF HICKLETON HALL, SOUTH YORKSHIRE

John Drake gave a lecture at short notice about the research that he and the head gardener at Hickleton Hall had undertaken earlier last year.

With the help of slides when John first visited the site, its history slowly unfurled with the help of maps, sketches and aerial photographs. The site was first recorded in 1740 when the Wentworths obtained the property and built a new

house designed by James Paine. The estate map shows the old garden and the new garden and the surrounding field boundaries which remained when the land to the south of the house was made into a park. Later it became the property of the Halifax family who during the C19th attempted to enlarge the park and layout areas of garden near the house. There are extensive records in the Bothwick Institute in York, with several letters describing the garden proposals. Evidence in the family's correspondence suggests that the geometry of the hall and its relationship to a scarpment in the grounds proved difficult to come to a satisfactory solution. The female members of the family had all come from great gardening estates and with the help of Inigo Thomas, who designed Atlehampton in Dorset, the garden was extended into the park with shrubberies and timber summerhouses. This was all photographed by the Halifax family who recently gave permission for the albums to be copied.

After the 1st World War the family decided to limit the garden to simple borders nearer the hall and the park was cleared and avenues planted. The family left after the 2nd World War and the Hall is now occupied by the Sue Ryder Foundation. Their task is to repair extensive retaining stone walls supporting the terraces and provide suitably located car parking in the grounds of a Grade 2 listed garden which is suffering from mining subsidence across the main lawns.

PHOTOGRAPHING GARDENS

Howard Rice is well known as a photographer of plants and for his views of the Botanic Gardens. He has worked with Ursula Buchan, Margaret Lynch and Peter Lewis, photographing plants to illustrate books which have recently been published.

With slides he explained 'depth of field' and advised the audience to look at what you saw through the camera's lens before you took a photograph.

Howard gave examples of views of Madingley Hall obtaining a panoramic view of the Hall from the south garden, and then homing in on the thatched summerhouse and a flight of stone steps. At each stage he questioned the reason for the photograph – was it to show the building in relation to its setting?, was it to show the climbers on the walls?, was it to give the scale to the summerhouse?, was it to show the construction of the summerhouse?, was it to show the whole flight of steps in relation to the building ?,