

# The Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust Newsletter

## Welcome:

We hope this July Extra Newsletter issue will encourage all our members to take an active interest in their local parks and green spaces, some of which come under the protection umbrella of the Fields in Trust. 2020 marks the 95<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Fields in Trust and the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the National Trust, both focusing on the value of green spaces and parks.

For those of us living in Buckinghamshire we would find it difficult to imagine a world without parks and green spaces and for many they have been a lifeline. They have provided places to exercise, relax, reflect and a safe place to meet loved ones and connect with our friends and neighbours.



Campbell Park towards the city

Parks Trust

The pandemic has increased our awareness of how valuable parks and green spaces are to our health and wellbeing, yet across the UK only 6% of parks are protected and access to them is not equitable, as the recent release of the Fields in Trust research 2020 *Green Space Index* illustrates.

<https://www.fieldsintrust.org/green-space-index>

Fields in Trust now protects 2,852 green spaces, guaranteeing that they will always be available for local communities - yet still 2.7m people live more than a ten-minute walk from their nearest park.

The President of Fields in Trust, HRH The Duke of Cambridge KG KT reminds us that: *Few resources hold the potential to impact so positively on a wide range of social issues as parks and green spaces. By protecting these spaces in perpetuity, Fields in Trust works to ensure that our children and grandchildren will have places to run, move, breathe and play.*

In this Newsletter edition our contributors cover a wide range of parks and green spaces. Health and welfare of the rail company's employees was the foundation for Wolverton Park which opened in 1885 with the London and North West Railway Company gifting the seven acres of land.

Milton Keynes is an example of a modern approach to parks. Neil Higson, Chief Landscape Architect for Milton Keynes Corporation from 1977, outlines his role in developing the city as a "landscape City of Trees" seeing it as *a large scale beautiful and healthy environment for quality of life for all*.

The concrete cows came to depict Milton Keynes but the MK Development Corporation wanted to combine town parks and open countryside by using animals as part of the land management. Gill Grocott and Jill Stansfield illustrate this in *Milton Keynes - The animated landscape*.

In the June edition the role of *The National Playing Fields Association* (Fields in Trust) was explored and Jo Mirzoeff was particularly intrigued by the history of her local park in Princes Risborough. In this edition a full list of Fields in Trust parks in Bucks is given and Jo has uncovered new evidence that shows the Princes Risborough King George V Park was the first in the country.

The Lyde Water Garden in Bledlow is not a park but it is a very beautiful and magical green space given by the Carringtons in the 1980's for the enjoyment of the local population.

During the summer months do take the opportunity to explore local parks and enjoy the green space. It is good for you!

**Editor :Gwen Miles**

**Sub Editor: Clare Butler**

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### Notes from the Chair

Just to thank Gwen Miles, compiler and editor of this the second of our Extra Newsletters; her aim is to keep members and friends in touch with the Bucks Gardens Trust whilst we are not able to meet.

A couple of notes, first from the Bucks County Museum, venue for our Winter/Spring talks. Sue Shave, the Director, hopes to open the Museum's indoor spaces in September and to go ahead with the Bucks Arts Show. Sue suggests checking the Museum's website for summer openings:

<https://www.buckscountymuseum.org/museum/>

The second note concerns the Surrey Gardens Trust [www.surreygardenstrust.org.uk](http://www.surreygardenstrust.org.uk) who have launched a project with the Environmental Design Archive at the University of California, Berkley, to arrange for the digital copying, in high colour resolution, of all the plans, drawing and papers relating to



Gertrude Jekyll and her work; these presently form a part of the Reef Point collection. Eighteen of Jekyll's commissions were in Bucks and our valiant volunteer researchers have already recorded five of these: Barton Hartshorn Manor,

Buckingham; Lillingstone House, Lillingstone Dayrell; Little Haylings (Tile House Farm), Denham; Pednor House, Chesham and Rignalls, Great Missenden. For the full reports please see:

[www.bucksgardenstrust.org.uk/research-and-recording/locally-important-sites/](http://www.bucksgardenstrust.org.uk/research-and-recording/locally-important-sites/)

Finally, our events: we are planning to continue with our visit to the Warden Abbey Vineyard, Biggleswade, Bedfordshire, on Tuesday 22 September, and will be sending details and a booking form in due course, also possibly in September, to reinstate the evening visit to Stowe Landscape Gardens to see the recently replaced statues.

With great thanks for your interest and continued support of the Bucks Gardens Trust.

*Rosemary Jury*

### The Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust Council Honorary Life Membership Award

On behalf of the Council and the members of The Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust we are delighted to award Rosemary Jury Honorary Life Membership of the Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust. This award is in recognition of the hard work and dedication, over twenty years, she has given to the Trust as membership and events secretary, vice and chairperson and course administrator of the Research & Recording Project.

### Planning Co-ordinator Report

As it is only a month since the last update and we are still in the grip of a pandemic, you might expect that the number of planning applications might have diminished but that is not the case. In the last month, we have been consulted on a number of different applications and we carefully review and respond to each one individually.

Our response to two of the applications (Tyringham and Gayhurst) was to recommend refusal of the application unless the applicants were able to provide additional historic impact and/or visual impact assessments. We made no comment to a further two applications (Waddesdon and Stoke Court) where we feel the proposals have no real impact on the registered park and garden. We were notified that a planning appeal for a property at Wootton Underwood has been refused.

A revised retrospective application from a property at Stowe proposed planting native species to mitigate a new garden building – the structure had previously secured planning consent but had been constructed to a different design. We acknowledged that the proposed planting does help to reduce the impact of the structure in the landscape but we are still seeking fundamental changes to the structure itself.

And, finally, substantial proposals to redevelop the centre of Maidenhead were drawn to our attention by colleagues from another heritage charity – whilst Maidenhead is out of county, the impact of the proposed tower blocks on registered parks and gardens within Buckinghamshire may be very serious and we are currently ploughing through the 240+ application documents to prepare our comments. As you can imagine, this proves very time-consuming for our two-person volunteer planning team!

As planning volunteers, we need to be able to assess the impact of almost anything from small alterations to a residential property (such as substantial glazing which might result in excessive light emittance or reflection) through to new agricultural or industrial buildings or farm diversification projects. Seemingly well-intentioned projects to conserve, restore, repair or adapt historic structures or designed landscapes need careful consideration to ensure that the appropriate materials are used or to protect equally significant earlier or later works on the same site. And, obviously, major infrastructure projects such as housing developments, urban redevelopment, road maintenance, improvement and construction as well as works associated with the utility services still need consideration in the light of their impact on our registered parks and gardens. We mostly comment on proposals for works which are actually taking place on registered land but we can also comment on applications which have a visual impact on views from registered parks and gardens.



Both of our planning volunteers have extensive experience of working with buildings and landscapes and are very familiar with the statutory planning process. Our main focus will always be the impact of any application on the registered park and garden and we do still object to applications even where the design itself is high quality or where the need for change seems valid if the impact on the park or garden is nonetheless detrimental. Finally, whilst we are always happy to provide advice and guidance to our supporters, we are sorry to say that your membership of the Bucks Gardens Trust does not guarantee that we will support your planning application!

For more information on the threats to parks and gardens, this presentation from the Gardens Trust is really helpful and contains fascinating case histories. <http://thegardenstrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/1-GT-Presentation-Threats-to-Historic-Parks-Gardens.pdf>

*Joanne Mirzoeff and Dr Sarah Rutherford*

### Gardens reopen after lockdown



Parterre Waddesdon Manor July 2020

*Claire de Carle*

It is great news that the National Trust and National Gardens Scheme are starting to reopen gardens to the public.

However, it is important to book in advance for all gardens as numbers are limited by social distancing rules. Waddesdon Manor grounds have been open for a few weeks now and they have plenty of room to put a one way system in place. Their courtesy buses are not running so it is a 20 minute walk up the hill, alternatively you can pay £15 for premium parking at the top of the hill.

Unfortunately, the usually immaculate parterres and displays have not been planted for the summer. Due to Covid 19 it would have been impossible to bring in all the necessary people, so they are managing with just three gardeners. The wallflowers and muscari

from the spring planting remain in situ and they have planted phacelia seed as a green manure, it is probably time it had a fallow year anyway!

The amazing work of British photographer Nick Knight is certainly worth visiting: the exhibition 'Roses from my Garden' is now open in the stable block. The photographs are inspired by his fascination for nature and C16 and C17 Dutch still life paintings.

*Claire de Carle*

### ✍ Parks through the Letterbox

*Postcard 9 October 2019*

*Jardines del Turia Valencia Espana*



*Dear BGT*

*It was 55 years since I last visited the beautiful city of Valencia and what a transformation awaited me. In 1965 the River Turia was a boring, dry riverbed and today it is the green artery of the city. Following the devastating floods of October 1957, the river was diverted through fields south of the city to the Mediterranean. It was not until the 1980s that the 9km park was landscaped. It is much more than a public park: as well as sports fields, playgrounds, flower gardens and fountains, it is a home to cultural venues, and a science park. It is broken up by the 20 bridges that cross its length, some of which are contemporary, including one by Norman Foster, and others dating back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century which are decorated with statues. By far the most impressive trees in the park are the *Ceiba speciosa* (the silk floss tree) with its beautiful pink and yellow lily-like flowers and swollen trunk. Regards Claire*



### Milton Keynes - The animated landscape

Milton Keynes is known for its concrete cows, but if you take a walk in its parks – among the largest and most imaginative designed in the later C20 – you will come across real cows and sheep as well as Konik



ponies – a hardy primitive Eastern European breed.

Milton Keynes Development Corporation (MKDC) aimed to combine the advantages of

conventional town parks with those of the open countryside. This included a role for agriculture, as a means of land management and food production but also as a way of animating the landscape. These ideas echo C18 thinking on the animated prospect. After all, Stowe has sheep, and cows returned to Syon and Osterley as part of the Thames Landscape Strategy. (Wilkie, Kim; *Led by the Land*, Frances Lincoln 2012 & Wilkie, Kim; *Eating the Landscape*; V&A Lecture 11 April 2002)

Milton Keynes Parks, designed and largely implemented by the Development Corporation, are now the responsibility of the Parks Trust, who work with a farmer partner on stock management. At the height of summer there are about 350-500 cows and 400 sheep, as well as the Konik ponies, to enjoy. There are far fewer in winter because the grazing areas include the flood plains of the Ouse and Ouzel and the animals return to their barns.

These animals help maintain habitats for wildlife and are cheaper than machines. They create better conditions for many wild flowers, which attract pollinating insects such as butterflies, bees and hoverflies, as well as larger animals and birds. Their grazing also helps to reveal and protect archaeological features that show how the land has been used in the past.

Campbell Park, just east of the shopping centre, links urban CMK with the rolling naturalistic open spaces of the wider parks system. Grazing sheep on the slopes of the Belvedere play an important role in shifting experience of the landscape. Further east, sheep and cattle are also to be seen in the Ouzel Valley Park with its moated sites, medieval fishponds and abandoned medieval village. On the northern boundary of Milton Keynes, along the Ouse, cattle and the Konik ponies graze the Floodplain Forest Nature Reserve, one of the best sites for bird watching and natural history in Buckinghamshire.

Within the Ouse Valley Park nearby you will often see sheep and cattle grazing the earthworks and buried remains surrounding Manor Farm Court and Holy Trinity Church. To the east is Stanton Low, one

of the newer parks in Milton Keynes, with the below ground remains of the former Stantonbury Manor and the above ground remains of St Peter's Church. The area was used for livestock grazing for many centuries. After farming ceased in 2007 much of the pastureland became rough meadowland, providing a valuable habitat for birds, insects and small mammals. The Parks Trust manages these fields through a combination of carefully controlled cutting and livestock grazing.



Cows grazing in the Ouzel Valley Park on ridge and furrow land

The concrete cows were created by Liz Leyh, an artist who worked with MKDC as part of their commitment to public art, both in urban and landscape settings. They are now in MK Museum as they are too fragile for the open air. Their successors in Bancroft Park are replicas by Bill Billings, another Milton Keynes artist. As art in the landscape they point towards the real animals animating the scene and playing their part in wildlife conservation and preservation of our heritage

*Jill Stansfield & Gill Grocott*

### Wolverton Park

Wolverton is a traditional railway town lying mid-way between Euston and Birmingham. In the early days of the railway it served as a staging post where passengers could take refreshment half-way through their journey and in 1838 the London and Birmingham Railway Company established its works in the town. By 1886 it employed 2,000 people which doubled over the following 20 years.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century many large companies felt they had a moral obligation to look after the health and welfare of their employees and in 1885 the London and North-West Railway Company provided seven acres of land on the north-eastern edge of the town for a permanent sports ground. The land was bounded by the railway line, huge works sheds and the Grand Union Canal and named Wolverton Park.



The Park was opened on the 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1885 in front of a crowd of 15,000 people and the ceremony included marching bands, sports demonstrations, fireworks and an evening ball. At the entrance to the Park was the Park Keeper's Lodge, in old English style with black and white timber-framed first storey.

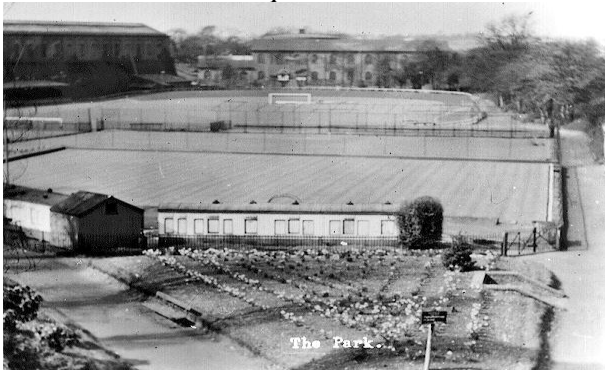


Park Keeper's Lodge

Ann Birch

The facilities at the Park included a football ground, running and cycle tracks, bowling green and a grandstand. The football ground was at the centre of an oval which formed the majority of the site and in 1899 a wooden, three-gabled grandstand was built which could accommodate 100 spectators. The oval was a cycle racing track with banking at the north end and was renowned throughout the country for being an excellent track. It attracted top riders from all around the country, including Olympic cyclists.

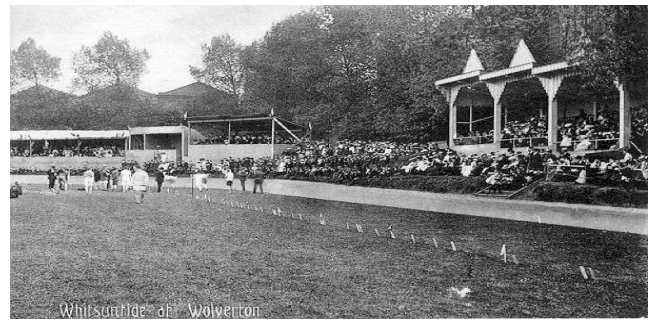
In the summer the ground was also used for athletics. At the southern end was a bowls club and tennis courts. Originally both a bowling rink and quoits beds were laid out and an old railway carriage used as a clubhouse. In later years the bowling rink was extended and the quoits beds reduced.



Wolverton Park

BA

The heyday of Wolverton Park was in the period up to the Second World War with the bowling, athletics and cycling clubs regularly winning local leagues and cup trophies. The annual Whitsunside festival drew runners and cyclists from all around the country with large crowds of spectators. In 1913 a Grand Military Tournament was held in the Park with an audience of 6,000.



Whitsunside Festival c1905

BA

After the Second World War the Park declined and was mainly used by the bowls club and Wolverton Town FC. The bowls club moved to a new location in 2006 and the wooden grandstand, one of the oldest in the country, was used until 1987 after which it fell into disrepair and was dismantled in 2008.

Following a campaign to save the stand, in 2009 a grandstand feature was built in the style of the original with its distinctive three gables and placed on the footprint of the old stand.



Grandstand feature

Ann Birch

In recent years the old industrial areas of Wolverton have been regenerated and the old railway works around Wolverton Park have been converted into flats. The site of the Park itself is laid to grass and trees and the path around the park partly follows the line of the cycle track with a small section of banking as a reminder of its glory days.



Wolverton Park today

Ann Birch

#### References:

*History of Milton Keynes & District, Vol 2*, Sir Frank Markham

Historic England listing:

[www.wolvertonparkbc.com](http://www.wolvertonparkbc.com)

Information plaque in Wolverton Park

*Because we're worth it*, Simon Inglis, Sept 2003, The Guardian

**Ann Birch**



## Parks in Milton Keynes



Campbell Park towards Willen Lake

Parks Trust

In 1975 when I first worked on MK projects its widely publicised image as the City of Trees was not being achieved. It seemed that the ambition was lost between being a designer's paradise and creating a place for people. After working on several Milton Keynes projects in private practice with my Finnish wife Pirkko, I was persuaded in 1977 to join the Development Corporation and form the Central Landscape unit. The aim of the unit was to make the landscape infrastructure of this ambitious new city one of its most significant features.



Light pyramid from high point in City Gardens

Parks Trust

My inspiration for this daunting task was primarily the Garden City movement based on Ebenezer Howard's book "Garden Cities of Tomorrow". Other inspirations were the great "people's parks" Birkenhead park and Sefton park Liverpool, and the wooded setting of Helsinki including Tapiola new town. In MK some landscape projects had been started but the overall city image was of major engineering works and several architectural master pieces unrelated to one another. The original landscape of MK seemed too weak to stand up to the assault, so the great need was to establish a bold

successful landscape infrastructure and a new landscape image quickly.

Dutch Elm disease destroyed all MK's majestic Elm trees which had strengthened this landscape and the severe droughts of 1975/76 weakened it further. The master plan by Llewelyn-Davis, Weeks, Forester and Bor "set the creation of an attractive city" as one of its main objectives and established a number of important landscape opportunities for its achievement.



Teardrop Lake

Parks Trust

The park system, based on the three main water courses within the city area and including the associated low lying flood land formed one key element of infrastructure. The other of great significance to perceived city form was the landscape of the system of grid roads. Peter Youngman, as landscape consultant had modified the rigid grid of roads to curve in response to land form. The grid was originally conceived as a network of parkways but to function as an expression of city structure bold woodland was desired.



Furzton Lake

Parks Trust

The city centre site on heavy clay was to be characterised by plane tree lined boulevards and formal avenues of other species defining streets. Some planting had been carried out before CLU was formed but inadequate techniques had resulted in poor establishment of some tree species.

For a period the focus of the central landscape unit was on practical matters. Species choice was assessed



and semi mature trees used to increase landscape impact. Ground preparation and topsoil conservation were essential to achieve good tree establishment and growth rates and were applied rigorously. A massive programme of acquisition and handling of plant material was developed with the recreation unit. Above all a coherent landscape master plan had to be confirmed. There was strong support from recreation unit and critically from the general manager, Fred Roche.



BBQ area near to canal Campbell Park

Parks Trust

In the early 1980s an exhibition titled Your Parks was held in the MK shopping building. It explained the principles of park development and demonstrated the amenity and recreational opportunities the park presented. It was a great success and the landscape image of the City of Trees was confirmed.



Peace Pagoda with Willen Lake beyond

Parks Trust



City Gardens Footpath towards Park Trust

Parks Trust

The projects I hope will last and have impact on MK life are Campbell Park, the “labyrinth of freedom” for MK citizens in the city parks network, and key features e.g. the Tree Cathedral, the Peace park and the recreation lakes.

I believe the most significant influence of our work on the world of public landscape is in the importance of landscape infrastructure in large scale beautiful and healthy environments for quality life for all. I am proud of our team’s contribution to the making of “an attractive city”.

**Neil Higson**

*Chief Landscape Architect of Milton Keynes  
Development Corporation from 1977*

### ✍ Parks through the Letterbox

Postcard 2

17 May 2017

The Rhododendron Park, Kromlau, Germany



Dear BGT,

We are on the third day of the Bucks Gardens Trust visit, led by Brian Dix, to the parks of Prince Pückler in and around Muskau. We are taken by mini-bus courtesy of our hosts to Kromlau and following a quick recce of the Herrenhaus we have a tour of the garden. I have never been anywhere quite like it – there are many rock features which have been created using basalt, including a chair, an altar and grottoes (Himmel und Holle). The most spectacular of all is a moon bridge (1863) across the Rakottzsee Lake; it is forbidden to walk over the bridge although some people have tried! The bridge creates beautiful reflections in the lake. There are also two English gardens (old and new) and many rhododendrons in flower. Wish you were here. Claire



## The Lyde – the secret garden



Gates to The Lyde

Gwen Miles

The 0.7 ha. Lyde Garden is situated 70m north west of the Manor House on the north side of Church End and next to Holy Trinity Church, Bledlow, Bucks. It is 160m long and varies in width from 24m to 55m. It was created in a dramatic ravine as a hidden water garden in 1988 out of abandoned watercress beds, for the enjoyment of the local population.



Weirs and channel to control water

Gwen Miles

The springs and pool of the Lyde fed into the Cuttle Brook which ran the paper mills, to the north, North Mill and Bledlow Mill (Sheahan & VCH) with the watercress beds fed by springs on the western side, which kept the area waterlogged for most of the year. It had become virtually inaccessible due to fallen trees and undergrowth. Sheahan noted that, "The curious and romantic dell of the Lyde is very irregular, very precipitous in parts, and somewhat gloomy in aspect. The declivity is covered in trees, some of considerable size, chiefly with witch elm, under whose drooping branches, arise from a rock of chalk many springs of pure water. These springs

appearing to undermine the cliff seem to have given rise to the following proverbial lines:

*'They who live and do abide,  
Shall see Bledlow Church fall into the Lyde.'*

The chancel of the Church is but 27 feet from the edge of the glen." 14 springs from below the churchyard feed into the valley.



Raised decking by Robert Adams

Gwen Miles

In 1986 the Carringtons began clearing the area to let in the light (Sunday Times 1989), and plans for the development and planting of the garden were drawn up by Robert Adams in 1987 (held by the owner). "A pool was created at the head of the corrie, by directing into it all the water from surrounding springs. A channel was dug to carry water from below the pool towards the mouth of the corrie, the level being maintained by a pair of weirs. The springs along the side of the corrie were also channelled into the stream. In steeper parts, where the water has tended to cause landslips, the soil has been held in place by palisades of stakes and by a surface cladding of plastic netting, through which moisture-loving plants like willows have been planted.

Robert Adams also designed an ingenious pathway over the marshier areas on duck-boarding and raised decking" (ibid). A network of stepped, gravel footpaths and bridges along the steep-sided valley takes visitors along the sides of the corrie and down to the waterside. The stream flows north to join the river Thames. Many bog plants surround the central water course and pond to the north that it feeds

The Lyde Garden was awarded the 'Millennium Award for environmental excellence' and is now open all year for the enjoyment of all. In 1979 the Carringtons set up a Charitable Trust, "The Lyde Water Garden," and conveyed the garden to the village for its use (Carington Estate Archives).

*Gwen Miles & June Timms*



**Fields in Trust sites in Buckinghamshire and  
adjacent counties Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire 2020**

<b>Stoke Mandeville Community Centre &amp; Playing Field</b> Eskdale Road, Stoke Mandeville, HP22 5UJ Queen Elizabeth II Field Protected February 2013	<b>Edinburgh Playing Field Park</b> Churchill Avenue, HP21 8NE Covenanted Field Protected 1956	<b>War Memorial Recreation Ground Stone</b> Bishopstone Road, Stone, Aylesbury, HP17 8QX Centenary Field Protected October 2015
<b>St John's Playing Field</b> Oxford Road, Stone Village, HP17 8PT Queen Elizabeth II Field July 2014	<b>Wingrave Recreation Ground</b> Church Street, Wingrave, HP22 4PE Queen Elizabeth II Field November 2013	<b>The Green (Twelve Leys)</b> Twelve Leys, Wingrave, HP22 4QL Fields in Trust Protected August 2014
<b>Princes Risborough King George V Recreation Ground</b> Aylesbury Road, HP27 0JP King George V Field – June 1937 (not May 1938)	<b>The Lawn</b> High Street, Ivinghoe, LU7 9EW Covenanted Field – September 1967	<b>Mentmore Park &amp; Memorial Gardens</b> Mentmore Road, Leighton Buzzard, LU7 2NZ Centenary Field – March 2016
<b>The Meadow, Northchurch</b> High Street, Northchurch, Berkhamsted, HP4 3S Queen Elizabeth II Field November 1993	<b>Winslow Recreation Ground Play Area</b> Elmfields Gate, MK18 3JA Covenanted Field February 1968	<b>The Lee Allotments Football Pitch</b> Oxford Street, Lee Common, HP16 9JY Queen Elizabeth II Field March 2012
<b>Pages Field</b> Weston Avenue, Leighton Buzzard, LU7 4QY Queen Elizabeth II Field December 2012	<b>King George Playing Field (Hughenden Valley)</b> Whitfield Road, Hughenden Valley, High Wycombe, HP14 4NZ King George V Field – December 1950	<b>Studley Green Park</b> Wycombe Road, Beacons Bottom, HP14 3UY Covenanted Field – June 1965
<b>Stoke Hammond Sports Field</b> Stoke Hammond, MK17 9DB Fields in Trust Protected November 1976	<b>Widmer End Village Hall &amp; Recreation Ground</b> Grange Road, Widmer Way, HP15 6AD Queen Elizabeth II Field April 2013	<b>Stanbridge and Tilsworth Recreation Ground</b> Stanbridge Road, Tilsworth, LU7 9PN Fields in Trust protected October 2005
<b>Penn Street School Field</b> Penn Street, Amersham, HP7 0QL Queen Elizabeth II Field May 2012	<b>Tom Burt's Hill</b> Shelley Road, High Wycombe, HP11 2UP Fields in Trust protected November 2017	<b>Twyford Recreation Ground</b> School Lane, Twyford, MK18 4EY Queen Elizabeth II Field April 2013
<b>Shelley Road Recreation Ground</b> Shelley Road, High Wycombe, HP11 2UW Queen Elizabeth II Field July 2013	<b>Amersham Gardens of Remembrance</b> Broadway, Amersham, HP7 0HL Centenary Field November 2018	<b>King George V Recreation Ground, Amersham</b> Woodside Road, Amersham, HP6 5ST King George V Field- December 1939
<b>Bovingdon King George V Playing Field</b> High Street, Bovingdon, HP3 0HJ King George V Field September 1954	<b>Orchard Close Recreation Ground</b> Orchard Close, Houghton Regis, LU5 5DG Active Spaces September 2018	<b>Watson's Field</b> Watson's Field, Watling Street, Little Brickhill, MK17 9NB Covenanted Field Protected – November 1954
<b>Bovingdon Green</b> Green Lane, Bovingdon, HP3 0LB Queen Elizabeth II Field January 2013	<b>Gadebridge Park</b> Leighton Buzzard Road, Hemel Hempstead, HP1 3AE Queen Elizabeth II Field January 2013	<b>Bow Brickhill Pavilion</b> Rushmere Close, Bow Brickhill, MK17 9JB Queen Elizabeth II Field February 2013
<b>Blackbird's Moor Play Area</b> St John's Road, Hemel Hempstead, HP1 1NR Covenanted Field November 1955	<b>Gadebridge Park Play Area</b> Queensway, HP1 1HR King George V Field – October 1938	<p align="center">See Notes at the end of the King George V Park, Princes Risborough article by Jo Mirzoeff</p>



## King George V Park, Wellington Avenue, Princes Risborough



In a previous article, we discussed the establishment of the King George's Fields Foundation to promote playing fields for 'the use and enjoyment of the people' throughout the UK. (1)

According to the Fields in Trust website, the 'first field' was in Sonning, Berkshire

which received formal protection on July 16<sup>th</sup> 1938.(2) However recent research has discovered contemporary newspaper articles which reveal that the King George V Memorial Playing Field in Princes Risborough, a town between High Wycombe and Aylesbury, was the first. (3)

In 1936, Mr Ernest Turner purchased 5 acres of land for £1,000 and presented it to the Princes Risborough Parish Council as a gift for use as a recreation ground (4). Some residents from outlying villages objected to contributing to the park if they were not local enough to use the facilities. However, once the King George's Foundation launched their national campaign, Turner offered the land again and this time it was accepted.

In addition to donating the land, Mr Turner engaged architect George Langley Taylor (5) to design a pavilion with elm boarded walls under a thatched roof which Turner described as a "suitable resting place for the elderly folk whose playing days are over" (6). Internally it featured a large central room, two dressing rooms, kitchen and store room, with a separate shed for a mower. The pavilion was set in front of a shelter plantation of over 400 trees and shrubs selected following advice from Arthur Le Sueur (7). One of the local papers speculated whether the use of timber on the pavilion was very effective and might 'greatly improve the appearance of small houses if more timber was used.'(8)



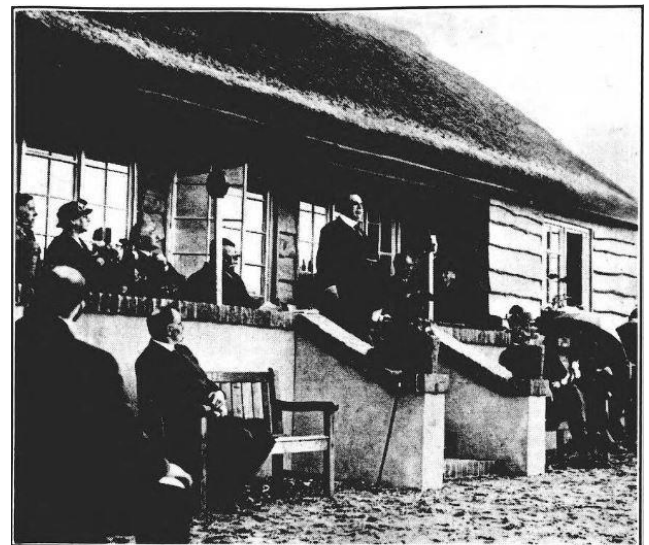
Play area in the late 1930s

Bucks Free Press 1937

In one corner of the field, a "broad smooth concrete pavement sandpit surrounds a paddling pool and a sandpit where those children who do not go to the seaside can at least make sandcastles and splash about bare-footed to their heart's content. In another part of the field there are mechanical amusements such as a chute and swings". (9)

There was a timbered gateway fronted by a semi-circular sweep of pavement. The KGV Foundation had approved the entrance gates and the heraldic panels were to be mounted on the gates once they were ready.

The county branch of the National Playing Fields Association contributed £30 and the CPRE and an anonymous donor also contributed funds which helped towards the equipment. Mr Langley-Taylor's wife had also been instrumental in raising funds through her flag days.



Lord Derby addressing the gathering from the verandah of the Pavilion. Supporting him, reading from left to right, are Mr. G. Langley Taylor, Mrs. Turner, Mr. Turner, Mr. James Pearce, Sir Nigel Campbell and Mrs. Viner Allen.

George V Playing Field Opening Ceremony Bucks Free Press, June 25<sup>th</sup> 1937 edition

So on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> June 1937, hundreds of people from all over the county gathered in the rain at to see the Rt Hon Earl of Derby announce "I declare this playing field, the first in the country, now open and I hope that all the donor could wish for it, in bringing health and happiness to the children may be fulfilled to the highest degree". He warned the town though "Don't let the playing of children be entirely unsupervised.. If you do that it will simply develop into what is called at school, a 'rag'". (2)

Unfortunately, by the mid-1950s the Pavilion was derelict due to vandalism so the remaining structure was demolished and sold off for £170. It was intended that these funds would create a new structure although it appears that this was nothing more than a rather depressing concrete bunker.



Contemporary photos show that much of the play equipment had also been lost by this point and it is back to being a field.



King George V Park June 2020

Jo Mirzoeff

Mid-20<sup>th</sup> century development has since wrapped around the park so that it now sits at the heart of the community and makes for a pleasant thoroughfare for people walking in to town. The 21<sup>st</sup> century has finally seen a revival in the park's condition. Over the last 20 years, the children's play area which has been upgraded, a zip wire and skateboard area for the teenagers have been created and the park is now regularly used by both the local primary school and weekend running groups as well as being a pleasant there is no sign of the heraldic plaques – I wonder what happened to them?

Jo Mirzoeff

References:

1. Bucks Gardens Trust newsletter, June 2020
2. As identified by the Final Report of King George's Foundation, 1965
3. The Bucks Advertiser & Aylesbury News/Bucks Examiner/Bucks Free Press, all dated Friday June 25<sup>th</sup> 1937
4. Previously in 1927, Ernest Turner JP had originally purchased 38 acres of the same land for £3,000 and appears to have resold much of it possibly for housing development.
5. Became Sir George Langley-Taylor, Chairman of the CPRE
6. Bucks Free Press, Friday June 25<sup>th</sup> 1937
7. A.D.C. Le Suer, author of 'Hedges, Shelterbelts and Screens' (1951) as well as a guide to Burnham Beeches.
8. The Bucks Advertiser and Aylesbury News, Friday June 25<sup>th</sup> 1937
9. Bucks Free Press, Friday June 25<sup>th</sup> 1937

**Note:**

A list of the Fields in Trust in Bucks area on page 10 is by courtesy of the Trust [www.fieldsintrust.org](http://www.fieldsintrust.org) If you have concerns about a park or green space near you then do contact them.

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**Parks through the Letterbox**

Postcard 3 18 May 2017

Rosengarten, Lausitz, Germany

*Dear BGT*

*It is our last day in Muskau and in the afternoon we visit the Rose Garden near Forst. It opened in 1913 and there is a distinctive art deco feel about many of the structures, which include a concrete bandstand. There are a number of statues, my favourite being the one with five bears playing in a jet of water. Unfortunately, we are a few weeks too early for the spectacular rose displays, however there is plenty else to see and we have the place to ourselves. Once the roses are in bloom it will be very crowded. In front of the café is a spectacular fountain (wasserspielen); the jets come on at different intervals. As we wander around the garden, we realise that we are being photographed and filmed by the local press – the news of our visit has spread and Brian Dix, our esteemed leader, makes a short speech (in English) for the local TV news. We are having a wonderful time. Claire*

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**Events Update:**

Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> September – visit to Warden Abbey Vineyard, Biggleswade, Bedfordshire.  
 Further details and a booking form in due course.

September/October - evening visit to Stowe Landscape Gardens to see the recently replaced statues. Date to be confirmed.

11 October – Bucks Trust AGM by kind permission of David Gladstone and Michael Harrison. It is proposed that we follow the example of The Gardens Trust who plan to hold their AGM as a closed meeting, members voting by proxy voting form only. The only business will be to vote on the resolutions.



## News Snippets

### Buckinghamshire in 100 Objects

Buckinghamshire Culture set up a lockdown initiative, Bucks in 100 Objects open to any person or organisation.

<https://buckinghamshireculture.wordpress.com/bucks-in-100-objects/>

The Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust submitted *Palladian Bridge*, lithographic print by John Piper from a watercolour, 1950s, as its choice. It is in the Bucks County Museum collections.



*Palladian Bridge* by John Piper

Bucks County Museum

*Palladian Bridge* seems to sum up the romantic appeal of the Stowe buildings and landscape as Piper painted them in the 1950s. In his *Murray Guide to Buckinghamshire*, written with John Betjeman in 1948, Piper described Stowe as 'that landscape delight unique in England' and later added 'I have loved Stowe ever since I went to see it when I was 20...I hope my happy days at Stowe will continue. There is no end to the things one can paint there and dream about.'

During WWII, Piper was asked to write *British Romantic Artists*, for the propaganda series *Britain in Pictures*. The idea of 'pleasing decay' was central to his art and to his paintings of British landscapes and buildings. We are familiar now with the Stowe landscape restored so well by the National Trust since the 1990s but in the 1950s, the gardens were part of the school established in the 1920s and picturesquely neglected.

Piper's many 'happy days' drawing at Stowe in the 1950s was because the headmaster, J F Roxborough, was an admirer and gave him a pass reading 'Mr Piper may go where he likes in the house and grounds and is not to be molested'. After the War John Piper and his family had moved to Bucks, to Fawley Bottom Farm and he came and went as he pleased. In his Foreword to the book Piper remembers 'there was much more untidiness, more dilapidation of buildings and more *'pleasing decay'* than I have ever seen there since'.

*Sarah Gray*

## Big Thank You - The Parks Trust, Milton Keynes



Campbell Park sheep keeping the grass short Parks Trust

A very big thank you to The Parks Trust, Milton Keynes for their help with the photographs for the Neil Higson article. In particular a special thank you to Philip Bowsher, Head of Environment & Volunteering, Emma Thompson, PR and Marketing Manager and James Cairncross, Landscape Infrastructure Manager



### Donate to Discover Bucks Galleries at the County Museum:

Bucks Museum needs your help now to raise £1 million pounds for our new Discover Bucks New Galleries Project which we hope to launch in the summer of 2021. The new galleries will display star objects from the collections, which have rarely or never been on permanent display before, and will include many objects owned by Bucks Archaeological Society.

To find out more about the new displays and to sponsor one of these exciting new galleries exploring life in Bucks follow the link:

<https://www.buckscountymuseum.org/museum/discover-bucks/>. Please give what you can and help us transform our Museum. Grateful thanks to you all and warm regards.

*Sue Shave, Director*

### Editor's Note: Please forward to friends if you have enjoyed this Newsletter.

Autumn Newsletter copy deadline 20th September.

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