



# The Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust Newsletter



## Wotton House, Wotton Underwood, Buckinghamshire



Home of Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust's patron  
David Gladstone

In 1989 I was fortunate to meet Christopher Lamb, an architect who had worked with Donald Insall's practice on the restoration of Wotton House under the guidance of the indefatigable Mrs Elaine Brunner who, in 1957, had purchased the main house and the adjoining Clock Pavilion, thus saving the house from demolition. At that time the house was empty, decaying, its fate in the hands of developers who planned to replace it with a housing estate.

The parish of Wotton Underwood had been home of the Grenville family for several centuries, but all the documentary evidence relating to the building of the original Wotton House, by Richard Grenville in 1704 – with the documentary evidence relating to the following 120 years - was destroyed when fire broke out in 1820.

On a late October night a fire started in a maid's room on the top floor and spread so fast that by dawn there was nothing left but the charred walls, Lady William Wynne (née Grenville) wrote to a friend the following week:

*The poor people at Wotton after having worked like horses as long as there was anything to be done sat themselves down in front of the poor old walls and cried.*

The Marquis of Buckingham (who confusingly became the Duke of Buckingham during the course of the rebuilding) was the ultimate owner of Wotton. At the time living in Stowe, he hurried to Wotton dispatching a message to his friend the then plain Mr Soane in London:

'I beg to see you immediately without a moment's loss of time – poor Wotton is burned down – get one of your foremen ready to set off immediately...'

But his son, at first Earl of Temple but subsequently Marquis of Chandos, who was living at Wotton had his own ideas. However, on one point they were agreed, that the architect's more extravagant schemes should be rejected in favour of plainer alternatives; that the work should be carried out as quickly as possible and 'wages of all workmen to be reduced'. It would have been scant comfort to the Wotton workforce to know that tradesmen at Stowe were suffering similar deprivations.

*Sir John Soane, National Portrait Gallery*

In the event the work was completed by the stipulated date 1 January 1823, the cost not exceeding £20,000 as stipulated by the Marquis. (*Wotton House, 1740: A brief history and guide*)

Subsequently, and following the death of the 3rd Duke of Buckingham in 1839, the last direct Grenville male heir, the house was let to a succession of tenants eventually to be sold by the family in 1957. The house had become derelict and the grounds sold off in small parcels.

At this critical moment in Wotton's history, enter Mrs Elaine Brunner: She arrived in 1957, chauffeured by an antique dealer friend in search of 'spare' columns to go by her swimming pool. It must have been a grim sight. The copper roof stripped for salvage, the fireplaces all removed, a pond of water on the drawing-room floor. The bulldozers were standing by to clear the lot in a fortnight. The situation was intolerable.



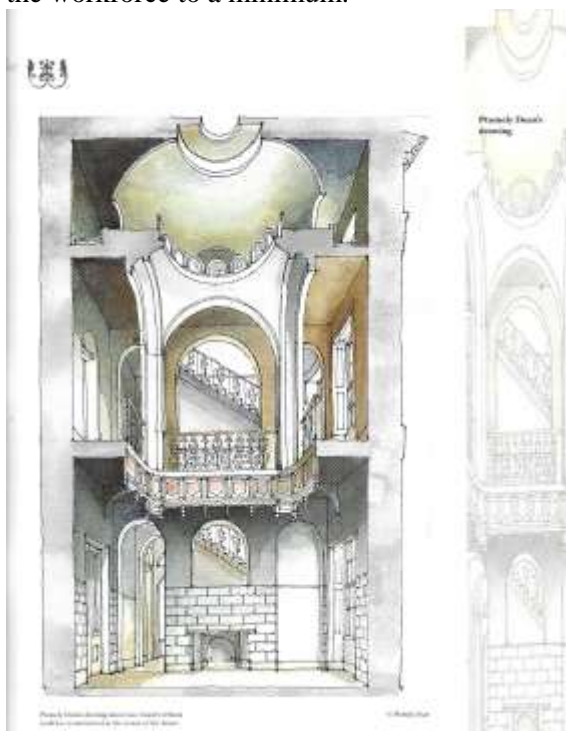
*National Portrait Gallery*

She arranged for Wotton to be bought for £6,000, to be paid in six annual instalments to the Buckinghamshire County Council. She telephoned her husband, Wing Commander Patrick Brunner, and apparently told him: 'Darling, I have bought a house, and I just know you are going to love it.' (*Obituary: Elaine Brunner 1907-1998.*)

Referring back to Christopher Lamb, the architect who had worked on the restoration work: Christopher had come to Stowe as a volunteer in 1989 and asked if I would like to visit Wotton and meet Mrs Brunner. What a privilege ... she was charming. Following the visit Michael Harrison, who was her right-hand man in the restoration of the landscape, becoming Wotton's Estate Manager, made a number of visits to Stowe to see the National Trust's work on the garden buildings. Quite apart from the house, Mrs Brunner was intent on restoring the landscape and its features.

When April and David Gladstone (Mrs Brunner's daughter and son-in-law) inherited the house in 1998, they continued the restoration work, taking on a major room a year using a small team of trusted local craftsmen under the supervision of the incomparable Estate Manager, Michael Harrison.

At the centre of Soane's re-planned interior was a majestic top-lit staircase hall, or 'tribune'. No complete record of its original appearance remained so any chance of its reinstatement was slight. However, in 2004 the architect Ptolemy Dean produced a watercolour drawing (see below), from the few surviving Soane plans and elevations, showing how the tribune could be reconstructed. Mr Dean then produced more detailed designs, but the cost of implementation seemed prohibitively high, so a phased approach to the work was devised, keeping the workforce to a minimum.



Work began in 2013 under the supervision of Michael Harrison, who used 'an intuitive understanding of Soane's work, developed over the years spent working on Soane's Wotton interiors' whenever an impasse was reached.



*A view of the tribune showing the dome and its oculus. The heraldic shields painted on canvas, survived, stored in an attic by Mrs Brunner. Country Life, 18 November 2015*

Completed in 2015, Wotton's restored tribune is a triumph achieved with skill, care and patience by Michael Harrison and his team. It is also a heroic gesture on the part of David Gladstone whose determination and vision have brought this project to completion. Soane surely would have approved.

**Rosemary Jury**

**Welcome** to our Christmas Newsletter. This is a truly 'bumper' issue with a wide variety of articles to round off 2020 and in a printed version posted to all our members, contributors and supporters.

Please do continue to send in your interesting and informative contributions. Smaller articles in the form of 'Postcards from...' are always welcome as well as the research and campaign articles. Tell us how Covid has changed your experience and what has become the 'new normal':

[socialmedia@bucksgardenstrust.org.uk](mailto:socialmedia@bucksgardenstrust.org.uk)

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### Planning Co-ordinator's Report

Summer kept us busy with planning applications which had been in development before the pandemic arrived but, by late summer, our planning team noted a brief period of quiet reflecting the impact of lockdown. However, it didn't last long and, in the past six weeks, we have considered and responded to over a dozen applications across Buckinghamshire.

We have been particularly pleased that the formation of the Buckinghamshire Council unitary authority back in April has resulted in the Bucks Gardens Trust being more widely consulted across the county. In particular, the South Bucks area has been remarkably busy with seven planning applications some of which were relatively straightforward matters such as roof repairs at Bulstrode which did not impact on the Grade II\* registered park or alterations to a conservatory roof on a private property which was a positive improvement as it would reduce light emission which potentially can impact on a registered park or garden.

At The Lambourne Club near Dropmore Park (Grade II), we offered some recommendations for mitigating the impact of a proposed new pumping house to irrigate the golf course and, at Stoke Park (Grade II\*) we warmly welcomed revised proposals for a new security hut at the entrance drive. However, we objected strongly to proposals for the demolition and replacement of an existing house near Langley Park (Grade II).

This year's 'Award for the Most Glamorous Planning Application' would surely be won by the early stage application relating to land adjacent to Pinewood Studios. This truly enormous application is for a 'screen industries global growth hub of up to 750,000 sq ft' to include new film production buildings along with a visitor attraction, education hub, business growth hub and associated parking. The accompanying Design and Access Statement is well worth a read as it is impressively illustrated with action scenes and film stars from an array of blockbuster movies which were filmed at Pinewood. Despite being distracted by these cinematic highlights, the BGT noted the proximity of the application site to Langley Park, Black Park and Heatherden Hall and so have requested further information as to the potential impact.

The north of the region has also been busy with two recent applications at Waddesdon (Grade I) – one seeking to relocate some contemporary sculptures to a new position by the former Dairy and the other to realign and improve the footpath from the visitor car park to the house. The BGT supported both of these applications while offering recommendations.

In recent newsletter updates, we have noted the encouraging extent to which planning authorities appear to be taking our comments into consideration as part of their decision-making. At Hughenden

Manor (Grade II) we were pleased to see that a retrospective planning application for a utilitarian, albeit necessary, parking barrier was given only a temporary approval to allow the applicant time to find a more suitable solution – an approach that we had recommended.

An application for a new house at Dropmore was refused and we welcome an approach from the applicant's representatives to discuss our concerns with them as they develop revised proposals. We also note that an application for alterations to a house at Gayhurst Park (Grade II) was refused planning permission after the BGT's response was one of a number of objections. We now prepare ourselves to review a revised planning application for a new Design and Technology Building at Stowe School.

Unfortunately, due to Covid restrictions, we have been unable to make site visits to any of the application sites which means that every response we make follows a desk-based assessment of the proposals. While we feel confident in all of our responses, the opportunity to visit a site in person always adds to our understanding of the significance of these special places.

*Joanne Mirzoeff*

### Research and Recording

#### In search of artists' gardens – a road trip through the Chilterns

Recently, I have started to write up more of our research on artists' gardens in readiness for uploading it to the Bucks Gardens Trust website. However, as I had not actually made any site visits, I had no idea of the localities of their gardens, and how much they had changed since the artists had lived there. Securing site visits was not practical, due to the ephemeral nature of these gardens and most of them being relatively small, 0.4 hectares or less, so little evidence was likely to remain. These rural retreats have undergone modernisation and become bijoux residences for London commuters, with current owners often unaware of the artists who had previously lived there. My colleague Clare Butler agreed to accompany me to help with spotting the properties, as one cannot always rely on satnav!

We set off from Aylesbury on a Tuesday morning at the end of September. Our first port of call was the Firs in Potter Row, near South Heath, Great Missenden, which was the home of the watercolourists William and Harriet Callow for over 50 years (1855–1908). The existing cottage had been pulled down in 1858 and a more substantial Victorian house had been built for the couple by local architect Augustus Frere. Harriet and William made sketches of both houses and these form part of an album now held by the County Museum. Apart from increased traffic the lane is little changed from the Callows' time: there are several large houses and rows of cottages set among mature trees and hidden from the



road by mature hedges. We located The Firs relatively easily as there are still a few of the fir trees standing, and we were able to catch glimpses of the garden, but sadly most of the front was given over to car parking. The house is recognisable as the one featured in Harriet's watercolours although it has undergone significant refurbishment. We also managed to see the charmingly named Hedgesparrow Cottage nearby, which Harriet had used as a schoolhouse where she had taught women and girls to read and write.



*Hedgesparrow Cottage, where Harriet Callow had her schoolhouse (Claire de Carle)*

Next stop was Amersham where we hoped to locate the homes of three women artists who had lived and worked there during the first half of the C20. Louise Jopling had first become acquainted with the area when she rented a weekend home in a row of cottages known as Woodlands (off Long Park), Chesham Bois. We managed to find these tucked away in a corner of the village; unfortunately more properties have been squeezed into the close in recent years, but the cottages and gardens still maintain their picturesque arts and crafts character.



*Woodlands, where Louise Jopling spent her holidays before she bought Manor Farm, Chesham Bois (Claire de Carle)*

In 1919 Louise and her husband moved to Manor Farm (now The Manor) in North Road. She commissioned the architects Forbes & Tate to convert an adjacent barn into a studio, now in separate ownership. Unfortunately, I had not done sufficient research on the site of this property and we were unable to locate it on the day. With hindsight, I

should have consulted Alison Bailey, the archivist at Amersham Museum, before our trip. I have since done so and hope to return to Amersham to find the house. We had similar problems with the Tythe Barn in Bois Lane, where Car and Josephine Richardson lived from 1915 until Car's death in 1959. The house is well hidden behind a row of cottages and accessed from an alleyway; there is also a building known as The Old Schoolhouse which they used as a studio.

Our final stop in Amersham was the home of Louise Von Motesiczky in Chestnut Lane. This we found quite easily: it had been a large corner plot and the house was probably built in the 1930s. Much of the garden has been sold off for housing development. Louise had fled with her mother from Germany to London in 1938 and shortly after moved to Amersham where she spent the war years.

Following a well-deserved vegan lunch we set off for Gerrards Cross, to find the childhood home of John Nash's wife Christine (nee Kuthental) in the first years of the C20. I knew the name of the house was 'Forestholme' in Woodlands so we drove along the road several times but could not find it as many of the houses appear to be from the mid-C20 onwards. We did however find a large house on the corner with Mill Lane which I got excited about although it was grander and more substantial than my photograph of Forestholme. This property had an estate agent's board outside and on checking the website I found it was Grade II listed, probably the reason it survived, but sadly this was not the one I was looking for, which had probably been a victim of redevelopment many years ago.

Staying with the Nash family, the next one on the list was the family home of John and Paul Nash in Wood Lane, Iver.

Wood Lane House is situated about 1.5 km north-east of the village of Iver. When it was built it probably commanded eastward views towards nearby Langley Park. Today (2020) it is a busy cut-through from the A412 (Uxbridge Road) to the B470 rather than the quiet country lane that the Nash family would have known. The revised edition of the 1932 6" OS map shows the house located about 400m south of the Five Points junction and immediately to the west of the road. We found it easily but parking was more of a problem. To the north and east of the house there were orchards and beyond this fields, and the property still backs on to open land. To the front of the house there is an in-out drive and a small building, a former coach house that may have been used as a studio. John and Paul painted both the garden and the surrounding countryside; they loved depicting trees, often elms which have all gone. I felt rather sad because of all the properties we had seen this felt the most lost, the carriage house now sold, a large garage constructed in front of the house and worst of all the constant heavy traffic speeding past.

Our final stop of the day was Weston Turville to see 'Burnside', the former home of Scottish impressionist Alexander Jamieson. He moved to the village before World War II, in which he served, and spent some time at nearby RAF Halton. Like Callow he loved to paint local scenes and worked in oils; a collection of his work is held by the County Museum.



*The Jamieson family outside Burnside, Weston Turville  
(Buckinghamshire Historic Photographs)*

This visit to Burnside did not disappoint. It is in the conservation area of Church End, a noticeably quiet area of the village that is little changed since the Jamiesons' time. Church Walk is a no through road leading to St Mary's Church, halfway along which a bridge crosses the stream that flows along the boundary of Burnside, hence the name. Once again, we were able to see the front garden which is maintained as a flower garden and was probably the setting for the painting 'Artist's Garden' (Bucks County Museum). We rounded off our trip with a



visit to the churchyard where Jamieson and his wife are buried and after a short search located their headstone.

*Grave of Alexander Jamieson, St Mary's Church, Weston Turville  
(Claire de Carle)*

*Claire de Carle, Project co-ordinator*



The project *Artists' Gardens* being undertaken by the Research and Recording Group is part of The Gardens Trust's *Unforgettable Gardens* campaign 2020–2023.

## Amersham Women Artists 1

*The Richardson Sisters at The Tithe Barn, Chesham Bois*

Josephine, Caroline (Car) and Mona were born into a military family stationed in South Africa and later, India. Their grandfather Sir John Richardson had been a notable naval surgeon, naturalist and Arctic explorer. The older girls' earliest memories were of an Indian garden in Charata, a hill station in the north-west Himalayas, and to this they attributed their lifelong interest in flowers. Their father Willingham served in the Royal Engineers and died in 1875, when their mother Elizabeth was pregnant with Mona, and the family then returned to London.

Willingham's brother, Major-General John Richardson, was a watercolourist and renowned wood engraver; he created a portfolio of over 80 watercolours on his travels. The girls undoubtedly inherited his sense of adventure and artistic talent: they were well travelled and educated to a high standard. Car studied art in Paris and qualified as a teacher at the Royal Drawing Society of Great Britain and Ireland. Josephine lived with a family in Japan for three years, her job being to teach them English manners and customs, and she also studied Japanese art while in the country. She returned to England with a valuable collection of prints, some of which are now held by the British Museum.



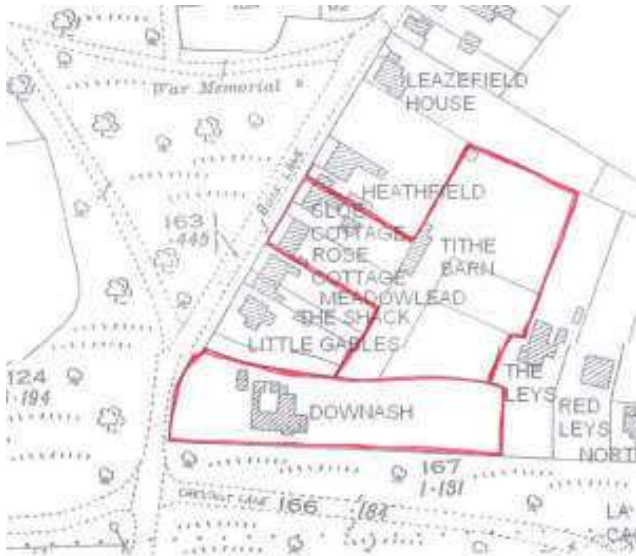
*The Well in Winter by Car Richardson (Family Collection)*

Josephine and Car first visited Amersham in 1906, where Jo, who was employed as a lecturer in literature, found the time to research and write. By 1910 Mona had married Edward Voss and they built Ridge House, in Quill Hall Lane. It was not long before all three sisters were living in the town, Jo and Car at first staying at a chalet cottage opposite Ridge House, known as The Woodhouse.

They soon started investing in property, buying Lavender Cottage on Chestnut Lane and Hedgerow on Quill Hall Lane. In 1915 Car purchased Downash (now The Old School House) in Bois Lane; she had seen the distinctive brick and flint property from the bus and had no idea it came with a substantial field which contained a dilapidated barn. This later became Car and Jo's home, the Tithe Barn.



Car extended the barn and renovated it to provide living accommodation and a studio. She also owned Sloe Cottage which she bought in 1929. This, along with Rose Cottage which the family also owned, is situated either side of an alleyway from which access can be gained to the barn, and there is also a drive to the concealed house from Chestnut Lane, adjacent to Downash.



*Plan showing the properties owned by the Richardson sisters in Bois Lane, Chesham Bois 1925 (Amersham Museum)*

The Tithe Barn and its large garden became the centre of many activities and social gathering in Chesham Bois. The garden was at its best in spring with wonderful displays of snowdrops and daffodils; the sisters would put up a sign at the top of the drive inviting people to come down and view them. The garden was a former orchard and was full of cherry trees, which inspired many of Car's paintings when they were in blossom.



*The Tithe Barn, Chesham Bois (Car Richardson)*

A bell in the trees was run regularly to scare off the birds, and when the black cherries ripened cherry-

gathering parties were held at which everyone stuffed themselves with sweet ripe cherries. There was also an old quince tree in the garden which had branches propped up with poles. It was a beautiful shape and Caroline also included it in her paintings.

There was an apple store and large shed in the garden, used to store trunks containing interesting souvenirs from their travels. The garden also had a well, now gone, which was used by the gardener to fill his water bowser; it features in several of the paintings/drawings. In front of the barn was a large herb garden. Car enjoyed growing herbs, especially fennel: they used them in cooking and medicinally in tinctures. (Author's note: I wonder if she knew Maud Grieve, who was growing medicinal herbs in Chalfont St Peter at the time and who I wrote about in my 2017 book.) The kitchen garden was very much the domain of their gardener, who was always known as 'Buttercup'. The Richardsons kept him in their employ even when he was too old to maintain the garden, and the kitchen garden went into a steady decline.

Both Car and Josephine were active in village life and served as parish councillors. They were both early members of the Chilterns Art and Handicrafts Club, which was founded by the artist Louise Jopling in 1919 (see Amersham Women Artists 2 in the next issue). Both women were involved with the Red Cross and worked in various nursing roles during both world wars. While she was working in the hospitals Car sketched over 100 drawings of convalescent soldiers.

Among her other subjects Car painted London scenes, including historic events such as the 1919 Victory Parade. She travelled around the county of Buckinghamshire painting picturesque scenes, and in the run-up to World War II she was commissioned by Bucks Archaeological Society to draw buildings of historical interest threatened by destruction. Thirty-eight of these were donated by Car to the County Museum. They included watercolours of Old Amersham (some of which show the annual charter fair) and Chesham. Another commission during World War II, possibly from the Ministry of Defence, was to draw windmills across the country, and this enormous collection is still held by her family.

Author's note: I am most grateful to Alison Bailey and Emily Toettcher at the Amersham Museum and Tony Voss (Mona's grandson) for their help with this project.

To view Car's paintings visit:

<https://paintings.antipole.co.uk/>

For further information:

<https://amershammuseum.org/history/people/19th-century/the-richardson-sisters/>

*Claire de Carle*

## Work is underway to restore the Water Gardens at Great Linford Manor Park

Earlier this year we announced the commencement of our works at Great Linford Manor Park in Milton Keynes. We have been awarded £3.1m from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to 'Reveal, Revive and Restore' the park's 18th century landscape, which was laid out when it was the grounds of the Manor house, which is now a private residence.

Despite the ongoing pandemic, we have been fortunate to work with the resilient team of contractors from Ground Control whose determination is driving our project forward. They have commenced work to expand the visitor car park at east end of the park (for those who are familiar, this is the Memorial Hall car park), and have now turned their attention to draining the three ponds which form the historic Water Gardens.

Through our project we've learnt that the three ponds began life as a stream during the early medieval period and were later excavated into fishponds for the Lord of the Manor. Then, sometime in the 18th century, they were designed into a system of three ponds which flow into one another. They are fed from a natural spring, known as the Hine Well or Hine Spring, which supplies them with a gentle flow of clean, clear water. The spring tops up the Round Pond, which flows over a small cascade, into the Canal Pond, under the Grand Union Canal and over into the Cascade Pond. There it tumbles over the Grand Cascade and out into the river valley beyond.



*The water has been drained from the ponds to allow for dredging and maintenance*

Unfortunately, in recent years the Water Gardens have not been functioning as they should. Self-seeded trees have breached the walls of the ponds and dropped debris into the water, disrupting the flow. It has also been five years since any water successfully made it down the Grand Cascade, instead it flows around the sides. In February 2020 we removed some of the trees around the ponds, allowing in sunlight and to prevent any further damage. Having appointed

a project hydrologist, we now have a plan for fixing the water system.



*Before and after the trees were removed in February 2020. Now there is a wonderful view across to the Almshouses. On a clear day the Almshouses are reflected in the water of the Round Pond*



The restoration process is taking place in two stages, the first of which is currently underway. Firstly, we are draining all the water from the ponds out into the river valley beyond. This will allow the contractors to access the walls of the ponds and the silt at the bottom. Then, over the winter, the ponds will be left empty so that the silt has time to dry out, creatures have time to rehome in other water bodies, and birds will be discouraged from nesting there (this means we won't disturb them during stage two in the spring). In Spring of 2021, we will be dredging the silt from the bottom of the ponds and repairing the structures.

Find out more about the hydrology of the site on our website: [www.theparkstrust.com/glmp](http://www.theparkstrust.com/glmp)

We also filmed an interview with our project hydrologist who explains our plans for restoration: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YuSncojsRVM&t=41s>

The park remains open to visitors while works are taking place. It is best to park at Milton Keynes Arts Centre's free car park, located off Parklands at MK14 5DZ.

*Ellie Broad, The Parks Trust, Milton Keynes*



### Barking up the wrong tree!

*Sadly, this year we will not have the pleasure of the Bucks Gardens Trust Christmas lunch or the traditional annual address from the eminent park and garden archaeologist and member of the Society of Dilettanti, the incorrigible Brian Dix. In lieu, Brian has kindly provided the following article – as erudite, entertaining and thought-provoking as ever.*

Although it remains unclear precisely how Christmas will be celebrated in this oddest of years, one certainty is that convivial seasonal lunches like BGT's annual bash are off the menu. I will miss seeing everyone and we must hope that the situation will improve in 2021. In a year that has been more notable for cancellations than commissions, I have lost count of the number of meetings, conferences and other events which have been either called off or postponed to a later, generally unspecified, date. I have kept busy applying (i.e. mostly arguing) for refunds or vouchers arising from the advance payment for abandoned journeys and related hotel accommodation!

One topic which I looked forward to learning more about concerned the different attitudes from across Europe towards the replanting of trees in historic parks. An international conference may yet take place next November but it has already set me thinking about aspects of our practice here in the UK, which includes neglect and doing nothing or very little – sometimes disguised as benign management to favour wildlife conservation.



*Avenue trees at Boughton, Northamptonshire – past their sell-by date?*

Parkland constantly alters as the plants it contains flourish and die. Whilst good husbandry may help to protect the longevity of trees of heritage significance, at some stage a decision to remove or replace a tree is inevitable. Life-cycles vary enormously – some oaks, for example, can assume massive proportions and persist for many centuries. Other trees, like many of the species that were planted within historic avenues or among the clumps and other groups created in the eighteenth century, are near the end of their lives – if they have not already succumbed to one of the fatal

diseases that are becoming common. As well as regular checks on the condition and well-being of the tree-stock, it is equally essential for the owners and managers of historic estates to develop a policy for long-term succession.

The response ranges from the large-scale removal of trees by clear-felling in advance of reconstruction by complete replanting to replacement through new planting alongside historic features prior to their eventual decay and removal.



*Reconstructed avenues beside the Long Water in Home Park*

As an instance of the method of total replacement we can take the example of the seventeenth-century avenues in the Home Park, which forms part of the Hampton Court estate in West London. A progressive programme of restoration began towards the end of last century. Initially this followed the details provided by historical maps combined with information from modern tree surveys. However, the subsequent recognition and careful recording of field evidence of former tree positions and other details have since guided accurate relocation and help to understand the way in which earlier planting was carried out.



*Recording former tree positions in Home Park*



Following archaeological survey, which established the spacing and other details of the original planting scheme, including how the rows had been laid out, the existing trees of various dates and size were completely removed. They were replaced by new trees planted in the historical positions which were relocated after ground levelling; the use of heavy standards provided an instant effect. Depending upon climate and other environmental factors, with good management they should flourish for at least another 200–250 years. And then, potentially, the process starts over again...



*Blenheim*

The need to take a long-term view but with a different plan for succession forms the conservation philosophy at Blenheim Palace. Built on an imposing scale, the house remains largely unaltered but there is no doubt that the significant remodelling of the grounds by ‘Capability’ Brown between 1763 and 1774 provides a setting of exceptional grandeur and stateliness. Within its highly contrived landscape the density of trees was carefully calculated and manufactured. The location and appearance of each clump were finely conceived to address the shape of the land, with trees graded according to height and chosen to provide a mixed foliage of various shades.



*Historic clump at Blenheim – past its sell-by date?*

Since Brown’s time, his landscape has undergone a number of alterations but the most obvious change is the effect of old age upon the historic design, whereby much of the original planting has reached the end of its natural life. However, rather than carry out a major onslaught on the historic tree stand followed by total replanting, here the restoration approach envisages continuous replacement through sequential replanting.

Such a process of rotation or ‘shadow planting’ involves creating new tree groups approximately half-way through the life-cycle of an existing feature, with the intention that they will have grown to maturity by the time the original feature needs to be clear-felled. For example, a new clump will be located as close as possible to a surviving original so that it becomes established before the older setting is removed. In turn, it too will be replaced by a future clump to be replanted in the original position. In this way the key features are always present within the local landscape, although in one of two alternative specific locations.

This kind of approach has been considered in other places but rejected because it can significantly alter the visual setting by an increased massing that is not historically authentic. A refreshed landscape such as this will always be some kind of hybrid, caught up in a series of alternations with changing effects and shifting vistas.

Restoration has been described as a reworking and reinterpretation of history. Choosing the period or moment to which a garden or landscape should be restored is always difficult. Many places have never stopped changing, being continually developed to reflect the new ideas, fashions and whims of successive owners and their architects and other designers. Modern management, as much as any major modifications or remodelling in the past, follows the latest fashion but it is replanting and maintenance that are the typical ongoing processes. However, it is clear that some historically authentic tree-plantings are becoming difficult to preserve.

In the long term it may be necessary to provide for tree succession through a treescape of more diverse species, which reference the historic landscape design but acknowledge that climate change and issues of biosecurity will influence their selection. Ideally, the choice should always be made with proper regard to the style of earlier planting. Changes in foliage and palette threaten the visibility and integrity of historic parkland landscapes. Planting with different species may significantly alter the silhouette and colour composition, as well as change historical effects of light and shade. Associated changes within the understorey may likewise affect the nature of flowering shrubs and other plants to create new but different and anachronistic sensations of sight and smell.

Where the only decision might be to abandon the historically important species, all evidence of the ancestral vegetation and tree management methods should be recorded before becoming irrevocably damaged or ultimately lost. Continuing advances in digital technology ought to enable greater sophistication in our methods for recording past planting design as well as permitting virtual reconstruction, however dispiriting that seems. Asking new questions, experimenting with new methods, and exploring new ways of interpretation can only benefit our understanding of the past.

**Brian Dix BA FSA**

.....  
✍ *Gardens through the letterbox (1)*

*Postcard 27th September 2016, Seville, Spain*



*Dear Bucks GT,  
A shaded rill between fountains in the 19th century gardens of the Real Alcázar palace in Seville. Many of the fountains have been turned off to conserve water but the lush planting of trees provides some relief from the heat. It's difficult to get decent photos of the Moorish garden courtyards within the palace due to the large numbers of visitors and constricted spaces; no such problems within the wider gardens. Off to find an ice cream but I'm planning to come back here again tomorrow.  
Regards, Julia*

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### **Buckinghamshire gardens on film**

Buckinghamshire has been described by VisitEngland as the 'most filmed county in England'. Given that the county has its own major film studio, and is close to London, this is perhaps not too surprising, but Buckinghamshire's wide range of historic parks and gardens must also be a factor, as a little investigation makes clear.

Buckinghamshire is the proud home to 46 registered parks and gardens, and a lot more that have been recognised as being locally important through the Bucks Gardens Trust's Research and Recording project. Many of these have featured in television and film, some considerably more frequently than others: at the top of any league table for filming in the historic gardens of Buckinghamshire would have to be West Wycombe Park (Grade I), Chenies Manor, Dorney Court, and Waddesdon Manor (Grade I).

West Wycombe's on-screen CV includes films as diverse as *X-Men: First Class* (2011), *The Importance of Being Earnest* (2002), *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* (2016), and *Labyrinth* (1986), in which the landscape features in the opening scenes. The garden also features very prominently in much of the filming at Chenies Manor, and is in fact the star in *Tom's Midnight Garden* (1999).



*The Sunken Garden at Chenies Manor, as featured prominently in Tom's Midnight Garden*

Just as the gardens influence the films, so the films can influence the garden: the gazebo built for *Little Dorrit* (2008) remains a feature in the grounds today.



*The 'Little Dorrit' gazebo at Chenies Manor*



Dorney Court has also featured in *Pride and Prejudice* and *Zombies* (2016), as well as (amongst many others) *Elizabeth: The Golden Age* (2007), *Emma* (1996), *A Man for All Seasons* (1988), and *Bohemian Rhapsody* (2018). Waddesdon Manor was first used as a film location in 1960, and both grounds and house have featured many times since then, including in *The Queen* (2006) and this year's version of *Rebecca* (as an aside, Waddesdon is not the only Buckinghamshire garden to feature in an adaptation of *Rebecca*: Nether Winchendon featured in the 1997 version). Built in the style of a sixteenth-century French château, it is no surprise that the house at Waddesdon is often called upon to stand in for foreign locations, but other Buckinghamshire landscapes are also called upon to do the same, with West Wycombe being an American park in *Labyrinth* (1986), and a Russian military retreat in *X-Men: First Class* (2011).

Some parks and gardens are harder to find on film, having appeared only once. For instance, Dropmore (Grade II) has only been used in *Doctor Who: Day of the Daleks* (1972), while Shardeloes (Grade II\*) appears only in *The Duke Wore Jeans* (1958, featuring Tommy Steele).

Various film and TV series may only visit individual properties once, but do revisit the county as a whole on a regular basis. It is probably easier to list the parks and gardens which have not featured in *Midsomer Murders*, for instance, or in *Downton Abbey*. The regular appearance of Bond films in Buckinghamshire is perhaps less of a surprise, given that the 007 Stage at Pinewood is so local: parts of *Tomorrow Never Dies* (1997) and *Goldfinger* (1964) were filmed at the Grade II Stoke Park, a significant sequence in *The Living Daylights* (1987) at Stonor (Grade II\*), scenes in *The World is Not Enough* (1999) at Stowe (Grade I), while Chalfont Park featured in *Thunderball* (1965), and the interiors at Waddesdon were used in *Never Say Never Again* (1983).

The studio at Pinewood also has its own historic garden, described as 'magnificent formal gardens [and] a picturesque lake' on the Pinewood website: the house and gardens at Heatherden Hall were retained as the core of Pinewood Film Studios on its launch in 1936. More information about these gardens is available in the Research and Recording dossier for Heatherden Hall, available on the Bucks Gardens Trust website.

A slightly less well-known film connection in Buckinghamshire is the Hammer Film Company's tenure at Hampden House between 1978 and 1982, resulting in a number of Hammer House of Horror films being made there. Again, a Research and Recording dossier for this garden is available on the Bucks Gardens Trust website.

On occasion, parks and gardens feature as themselves, such as in the *Antiques Roadshow* (Bletchley Park (twice), Hughenden Manor (Grade II), and Waddesdon), in documentaries, or in *Time Team* (Chenies Manor, 2005). Bletchley Park takes the crown, though, for featuring as itself within various dramas, such as *The Bletchley Circle* (2012–14), and *The Imitation Game* (2014).

The net effect of all this filming is to make the parks and gardens of Buckinghamshire more familiar to many, and also to increase interest in visiting them, which can provide welcome income generation opportunities. They are featured regularly in Bucks Gardens Trust's social media, using the hashtag #BucksGardensOnFilm: if your garden has been used for filming, or you have spotted one of Buckinghamshire's many historic gardens on screen, do flag it to us on Twitter (@bucksgardens) or Facebook (@BucksGardensTrust), using the hashtag, and we will add it to our growing list of stars of the large and small screen.

**Victoria Thomson**

.....  
✍ **Gardens through the letterbox (2)**

Postcard 29th September 2016, Cordoba, Spain



Dear BGT,  
*Moorish-style garden in the courtyard of the Alcázar de los Reyes Cristianos near the Mezquita mosque in Cordoba. Built in the late 13th century by Alfonso 10th following the recapture of the city from the Moors, this palace and fortress was the headquarters of the Inquisition until 1821. The palace now houses some impressive Roman mosaics and a sarcophagus from excavations in the city.*

Regards, Julia

.....

## Not quite a bear hunt: looking for animal sculptures in Milton Keynes



Concrete Cows

The Parks Trust

Probably the most famous sculpture in Milton Keynes is 'Concrete Cows', created in 1978 by the American artist Liz Leyh. There are three cows and three calves, approximately half life size. They are now in Milton Keynes Museum and their replacements, replicas by Bill Billings, now adorn Bancroft Park. The theme of domestic animals is continued within Milton Keynes Theatre with 'Electric Sheep', the work of Bruce Williams (2003). There are, however, many other sculptures within the Milton Keynes parks connected to the natural world, many of them intended to help people connect with the parks and the wildlife to be found within them.

Bill Billings also made 'Triceratops' (1979) which can be found at Peartree Bridge. It is periodically repainted and the designs are often suggested by local schoolchildren. Bill Billings' son Ryan repainted it in 2018 using traditional colours.

When Caldecotte Lake was being excavated in 1982 an ichthyosaur fossil was found; however it is the birds that can be seen that are the focus of 'The



Wings of Enterprise' by Walter Richie (1991) on the roundabout at the Caldecotte Lake Drive entrance.

Another bird featured at Willen Lake until recently. 'Leda and the

Swan' by Michael Morse McDonald (1992) was given to the Parks Trust by the artist. Willen Lake was chosen as an ideal location due to the proximity of the lake and the number of swans that grace the grounds and lakeside. The granite statue is currently in storage due to development works at Willen Lake, but work is being done to relocate it to a new site on Willen Lake.

'R3EVOLUTION', by Sara Myers, is located on the island in Lodge Lake, which is a popular location for fishing. The piece depicts a lake scene, with fish and other wildlife featured. It combines an industrial,

urban material, corten steel, and a natural, wildlife theme.

The amphibian theme is continued with 'Frog Band' by Emmanuel Changunda and Obedier Madziva (2013), by the ponds at the Howe Park Wood education centre. One of the group of four – a singer, a guitarist, one playing maracas and a drummer – went missing in December 2015, but the local community crowdfunded monies to get the band back together and a new band member joined in 2016. If you want to see more frogs head back to Midsummer Place to see 'Frog Clock', by Kit Williams (2000)



Frog Band (Emmanuel Chabunda &amp; Obedier Madziva) PT

The longest piece of public art in Milton Keynes is 'Log Wave' (also known as the Ashland Snake) by Chris Drury (2014). It is made of 550 randomly curved coppiced sweet chestnut logs pinned together with Timberlock screws and measures 120 metres.

Since 1987 Jack Stephenson has been adding to his wooden carvings in Linford Wood. They are often created from old tree stumps and represent a variety of animals and plants. They include owls, Rupert Bear and a gorilla and are mainly found along one path known as the art trail.



In 2016 the Gyosei Art Trail along the Grand Union Canal was created. The trail consists of eight pieces with a theme of Japanese connections,

canal history and natural history. 'Arachne Weaves' by Linda Johns takes inspiration from how a spider makes its web. Ptolemy Elrington's 'Dragonfly' is made from abandoned shopping trollies. There are two benches: Rob Griffiths' 'What Lies Beneath', which depicts animals and fish found in the canal, including a huge and rather morose-looking frog, and Jeremy Turner's 'Three Post Bench' inspired by Japanese temple architecture and tatami mats, and





*Three Post Bench (Jeremy Turner)*

*Parks Trust*

featuring among other wildlife images insects and their larvae from the engravings of an 1898 edition of *The Royal Natural History*.

There are also a beautiful mosaic by Melanie Watts entitled 'Autumn Splendour', Laura Boswell's Japanese-inspired enamel panels featuring local birds, and Andrew Kay's life-size shire horse, a reminder of the horses which used to pull barges along the Grand Union Canal. Another horse can be found to the west of the Library outside Lloyds Court, 'Black Horse' by Elizabeth Frink (1978).

*Gill Grocott*

**Editor's Note:** Apologies to Gill Grocott as we did not acknowledge her authorship of the report on *The Secret Garden Wolverton, Milton Keynes* in the Autumn 2020 issue of the Newsletter.

### **Court Garden and Higginson Park, Marlow**

Higginson Park by the River Thames at Marlow is a much-loved area for families to gather for picnics and riverside walks as well as being the principal open space in the heart of the town. Yet the history of this popular local asset is not as well-known. Situated on the north bank of the river, just to the west of the High Street and the Bridge, the area originated as pleasure grounds for the Manor of Marlow given by William the Conqueror to his wife Queen Matilda. In the mid-16th century, Sir William Paget, who conducted diplomatic missions for King Henry VIII, acquired an extensive plot of land in Marlow including this plot which became known as Court Garden. The Paget family retained ownership until Sir William's descendent, the 2nd Earl of Uxbridge sold the Estate in 1758. The new owner, Dr William Battie was a successful London physician who had written a 'Treatise on Madness' had helped to promote psychiatry as a respectable medical discipline. Fancying his skills as an architect, Battie constructed Court Garden house that still exists today although forgot to include a staircase (1). The Grade II\* house has two storeys and an attic, is approached from the north with the rear south-facing stuccoed elevation looking towards the River Thames.

Furthermore, it was Battie who created the gardens around the house to include numerous outbuildings and walled garden, the wall of which still exists.



*Kitchen garden wall as constructed by Dr Battie still in situ today © Gwen Miles*

Richard Davenport, a London surgeon, was the next owner following Battie's death in 1776. The Higginson Park Management Plan (2) suggests that the gardens were known as 'Davenport's Pleasure Grounds' but were not open to the public. A drawing of the Estate from 1793 prominently shows Court Garden House to the west of the town and the Marlow Bridge. Whilst clearly painted from the south side of the river, the setting and surrounding landscape to Court Garden shows tree-lined parkland leading down to the river.



*Engraving showing a view across the River Thames to the town and surrounding countryside, with Court Gardens left of centre. Marlow. June 1793 (3)*

After Davenport's death in 1799, Court Garden passed to his nephew but he resided at the family estate at Capesthorpe Hall in Cheshire and so Court Garden was rented out for almost a century. Between 1810 and 1812 General Alexander Hope (4) rented Court Garden as his private home. Sir Alan Hyde Gardner, 2nd Baron Gardner, was the subsequent tenant until his death in 1815 (5). In 1882, Anthony Hutton took a 21-year lease on the house. The 1882 OS map (6) shows that there were lawned pleasure grounds immediately to the south of the house enclosed by a boundary and then mostly open

parkland with specimen trees and a path leading down to the river. To the east of the house the substantial walled vegetable garden had espaliered fruit trees.



*Looking N/NE, a view across the front lawn to the river frontage of Court Gardens, Marlow, June 1896 (7)*



*Riverfront today with open parkland, established treeline and park railings parallel to the River Thames* Gwen Miles

On Hutton's departure in 1891, Robert Griffin took on the remainder of the lease until the Davenports finally sold the house to him in 1894. Griffin refurbished and altered the house which, after nearly 100 years of being rented out, had fallen into disrepair. The 1901 Census tells us that Robert Griffin was a 60 year old JP and was living in Court Garden with his daughter Caroline and five servants including a Butler. A coachman and a gardener lived in the Stables and another gardener, Robert Gibson, was living in The Lodge with his wife and four children.

A decade later, 70-year-old Robert Griffin had been married for less than a year to 38-year-old Jeanne from Paris. Gardener Robert Gibson, now widowed, had moved into the Stables with his two youngest children. However, by 1918, we can assume Mr Gibson was no longer there (8) as the Griffins advertised twice in 1918 for "Gardener, head working; wages 35s per week, cottage, coal, vegetables and light; references indispensable" (9) and then again "Wanted Head Working Gardener £2 weekly, small cottage or four rooms over stables; coal and vegetables; must have good references." (10)

Griffin had allowed locals to use his grounds as a park so, when the estate was put up for sale following his death, there was great concern about the threat of possible housing development. Local businessmen launched a fundraising committee to purchase and create a permanent public park under the banner of the 'The Sir George Higginson's Birthday Centenary Fund'. Higginson was Marlow's most distinguished resident and was about to celebrate his 100th birthday. The Committee sought to raise £5,400 (11) to purchase the lots which covered the house and its immediate grounds. The vendors, Robert Griffin's heirs, donated £1,000 and waited to complete the sale until the funds had been raised. Apparently 600 donations were received ranging from one penny to 300 guineas and by May 1926, the deposit had been raised and the sale went ahead.



*Looking NW, a view of the grounds, with a sundial prominent. Court Gardens, Marlow, 1926 (12)*

Having secured the land, a formal presentation was organised and donors to the Fund were given special access to the park. Many locals turned out for the event, the local Girl Guides made a Guard of Honour and HRH Princess Mary, the Princess Royal made the formal presentation of the Deeds to Sir George. The Deeds included a clause that required the park to remain open for the benefit of the public for recreational use.



*General Sir George Higginson addressing the crowd after being presented with the deeds to Court Gardens. Marlow, July 1926 (13)*



The Higginson Park Society was formed in September 1928 to make the house and park “available for the use, recreation or enjoyment ... of the public” and the Society took out a mortgage for the creation of the bowling green and the tennis courts in the former walled kitchen garden. The house was leased to the Council as offices and the Society was wound up in 1955. Wycombe District Council are now the trustees.

So what do we find on visiting Higginson Park today? It covers a 23-acre site and features a Leisure Centre with a pool, tennis courts and a gym as well as a children’s playground and skate park along with Marlow Park Cricket Club and Marlow Bowls Club in the wider grounds. The Higginson Park Management Plan appropriately separates the park into character areas determined by their original use and also their function now. The Plan acknowledges that some of the original layout and structure has been lost but endeavours to preserve it where possible. Clearly there are designated areas for play and sport but perhaps it is the other areas that are of most interest. The south-west section of the park near to the Thames shows evidence of historic ‘canals’ running east to west across the site which have now been designated for wildlife with a specific conservation plan and the introduction of bat and bird boxes.

Immediately to the south of the house, the grounds are maintained in their historic form as close-mown lawn and historic photographs show wonderful



Trunk of one of the mature London Planes

The area to the east of the house is now the most developed with the children’s play area but the winding path and ornate cast iron gates echo the original layout of the park. There are nine mature London Planes which are thought to have been grown from seed given to Dr Battie by Sambrooke Freeman (who owned Fawley Court) following his Grand Tour of about 1770. (14) Unfortunately, the 1970s Leisure Centre does little to mark the historic layout and character of the estate.

mature trees and the delineation of the formal lawn through metal railings. However, these mature trees now obscure the view from the river to the house that could be seen in the 1793 drawing. The Marlow Millennium Maze was introduced here.

More recent additions to the Park include the statue to Sir Steve Redgrave, a 20-year-old Pin Oak and an ×*Chitalpa tashkentensis* tree planted to mark the 250th anniversary of the Court Garden House. As Higginson Park approaches its 100th anniversary, it remains at the heart of Marlow life – possibly more so in 2020 when the opportunity to escape to outside space, to wildlife and to flowing waters has become more important to the life of a community than ever before.



View from the steps of the main house to the Thames

GM

Joanne Mirzoeff

#### References:

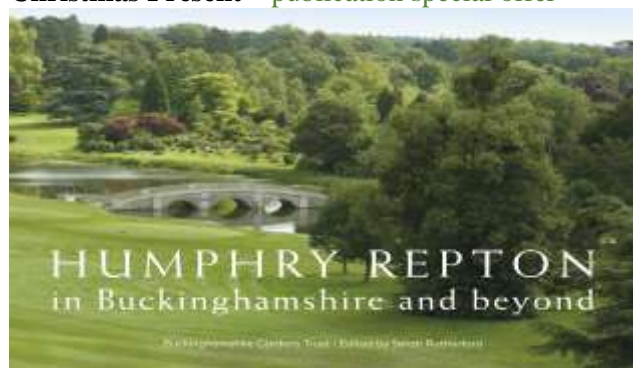
1. It is claimed that Dr Battie’s staircase omission is the source of the term ‘to be batty’ = someone a little mad
2. Higginson Park Management Plan pg 7w
3. Courtesy of Wycombe SWOP  
<http://swop.org.uk/swop/swop.htm> Photo RHW:51528
4. General Alexander Hope was the Governor of the Junior Department of the Royal Military College, which was based at Remnantz, another significant property in Marlow, between 1802 and 1812 before moving to Sandhurst
5. Baron Gardner’s legacy was that he was married twice and discovered his first wife had an affair during their marriage. Proceedings in the House of Lords which heard evidence from servants and also about the gestation of human pregnancy established that the son born during the first marriage was, in fact, illegitimate. An Act of Parliament followed and his son from his second marriage inherited the title
6. <https://maps.nls.uk/view/102339956>
7. Courtesy of Wycombe SWOP  
<http://swop.org.uk/swop/swop.htm> Photo RHW:94249
8. Mrs Griffin clearly wished to maintain her French links as two advertisements sought a French cook in 1916 and later a married couple to act as Butler-Valet and Cook-Housekeeper ‘may be French’ in 1918
9. Reading Mercury, July 13<sup>th</sup> 1918, taken from British Newspaper Archive
10. Reading Mercury, November 30<sup>th</sup> 1918 taken from British Newspaper Archive
11. Equivalent to £1.2 million in today’s money
12. Courtesy of Wycombe SWOP  
<http://swop.org.uk/swop/swop.htm> Photo RHW:51536
13. Courtesy of Wycombe SWOP  
<http://swop.org.uk/swop/swop.htm> Photo RHW:51554
14. <https://www.chilternsaonb.org/ccbmaps/594/137/court-garden.html>

With thanks to:

<https://www.wycombe.gov.uk/uploads/public/documents/Parks-and-woodland/Higginson-Park-management-plan.pdf>  
<http://www.marlowsociety.org.uk/marlow-history/court-garden/index.php>  
<https://www.chilternsaonb.org/ccbmaps/594/137/court-garden.html>  
<http://swop.org.uk/swop/swop.htm>

## News Snippets

### Christmas Present – publication special offer



This Humphry Repton Anniversary publication is now available at a cost of £20 including p & p. Dr Sarah Rutherford and the Bucks Gardens Trust “go beyond the remit of cataloguing Humphry Repton’s work on the county to a broader consideration of his contribution to garden history” (Louise Moss, Art Historian). Please send your order and cheque to Bucks GT, c/o Rosemary Jury, 11 Fledglings Walk, Winslow, Buckingham, Bucks MK18 3QU email: [rosemaryjury@wendovermail.co.uk](mailto:rosemaryjury@wendovermail.co.uk)



### Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust Membership

Give your friends membership of the Bucks GT for Christmas. Membership taken out now will be valid until 31st March 2022. Single £15, Family £20,

Life £150. Membership includes access to The Gardens Trust membership events at cost, etc. Please contact the Membership Secretary, Gwen Miles for details: [membership@bucksgardenstrust.org.uk](mailto:membership@bucksgardenstrust.org.uk)

### Buckinghamshire Heritage Portal

<https://heritageportal.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/>  
An amazing new research tool – try it! The Heritage Portal includes the Historic Environment Record for the county of Buckinghamshire. The database contains over 35,000 records and covers from the earliest humans to the end of the Cold War and beyond. *Julia Wise*

### Dates for your diary: Bucks Gardens Trust Events

Events for January and February to be advised. See website for more details [www.bucksgardenstrust.org.uk](http://www.bucksgardenstrust.org.uk)

### Online Winter Lecture Series 2020/21

#### The Gardens Trust and London Gardens Trust

12 lectures from 5 October 2020 to 22 March 2021

**Booking:** All lectures and booking online.

<https://bookwhen.com/londongardenstrust#focus=ev-sg7x-20201005180000>

**The Gardens Trust** Christmas series of four lectures based on plants related to Christmas and more...

[www.thegardenstrust.org/events](http://www.thegardenstrust.org/events)

### Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society (BAS)

Bucks GT is an associate member. Winter lectures once a month via Zoom. Book at

[www.bucksas.org/uk/events.html](http://www.bucksas.org/uk/events.html)

## What did you do during lockdown?



During lockdown Bucks GT have really diversified their talents and produced an amazing range of reports and taken part in Zoom conferences and lectures. Perhaps more unusually, Claire de Carle, our Vice Chair, took up the challenge to write a letter to Horace Walpole about Covid experiences for the Strawberry Hill House Exhibition. For more details see:

[www.strawberryhillhouse.org.uk/letters](http://www.strawberryhillhouse.org.uk/letters)



## Can you help?

We are collecting details of how Covid is affecting gardens, landscapes, nurseries, gardeners, volunteers, clubs, societies, the NGS, etc. in Bucks, and also any areas specifically used by Bucks GT such as archives, museums, venues, talks. Please email:

[socialmedia@bucksgardenstrust.org.uk](mailto:socialmedia@bucksgardenstrust.org.uk)

(thanks to Bedfordshire GT for the idea)

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