



# The Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust Newsletter



*The Dovecote* ©John Nash Estate

## John Nash and the Dovecote

Over the last year, we have all developed an increasing appreciation of our open spaces ranging from public parks, designed landscapes or rural countryside. They are places where we have enjoyed the beauty of nature, found comfort away from these difficult times and exercised our minds and our bodies.

A century ago, in the years following the First World War, a similar situation was happening as many people needed escape from the horrors of war and sought out the peaceful and idyllic rural England that they had fought to protect. One of those was the artist, John Nash, who had experienced war at first hand serving at the Battles of Passchendaele and Cambrai. With his wife Christine K uhlenenthal, they stayed in Whiteleaf at the Red Lion Pub and 'The Other Cottage' the home of fellow artist, Francis Unwin. In 1921 they moved to 'Haven Cottage' in Monks Risborough before settling at 'Lane End' in Meadle where they lived for 20 years. Nash's output during this period captured the beauty of the area, particularly the woods around Whiteleaf and his garden and the landscape around his Meadle home.

Nash and his contemporaries have been the subject of increasing interest in recent years and the Towner Art Gallery in Eastbourne is hosting an exhibition on John Nash to accompany the wonderful biography 'John Nash: *The Landscape of Love and Solace*' by Andy Friend.(1)

John Nash is of great interest to the Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust as part of our 'Artists and Their Gardens' project. Claire de Carle has written a report on the Nash's childhood home, Wood Lane House in Gerrards Cross. I am now researching John's years at Meadle and, as part of my research, I was asked by Andy Friend to help identify a previously unknown work by Nash which Andy believed to be from this area. Can you imagine how exciting it was to see the Dovecote which sits in the middle of St Dunstan's Park (formerly Place Farm) in Monks Risborough?

The Dovecote would have sat at the heart of Place Farm when Nash drew it. He would have been very familiar with Place Farm as it was just down the lane from Haven Cottage so it is curious that there are not further works representing it. The etching of 'The Dovecote' has been published in '*John Nash; Newly Discovered Engraving & Drawings*' (2) by Jeremy Greenwood who notes that Nash and Francis Unwin clearly worked together and learned from each other. Greenwood references Unwin's catalogue of works which included a white line woodcut entitled 'Place Farm, Monks Risborough (1923?)' described as 'Place Farm under the influence of Mr John Nash who attempted to etch the same subject under the influence of Unwin' (3)



*The Dovecot in St. Dunstan's Park*

© JM

## The Dovecote in Detail

It is thought that the square dovecote was built during the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Dovecotes were used to house pigeons kept for food during the Summer and



*The Dovecot with St Dunstan's Church in background* © JM

Autumn and the existence of such a structure denotes a religious or secular house of high status.<sup>(4)</sup> It is listed Grade II\* and Historic England details its construction from “coursed rubble clunch with some flint and tile. Large dressed stone blocks at quoins. Pyramid tile roof, central timber entry turret with similar roof”<sup>(5)</sup>

On the northwest elevation, there is a doorway under a chamfered semi-circular arch made from clunch which once had decorated carvings. It has been speculated that the door might have been a later addition or from an earlier structure on the site. We cannot be exactly sure of what other structures were on site when the Dovecote was originally constructed but, by the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it sat alongside a farmhouse and assorted agricultural barns which formed Place Farm. However, all these buildings were demolished in the 1960s and only the Dovecote remains. In the mid-twentieth century a large opening had been made on the east elevation, probably for cart storage, but this was later filled in with Purbeck limestone. In 2015, a condition survey was carried out and the dovecote was returned to its historic appearance with lime wash which helps protect the stonework.

As for John and Christine Nash, they moved to the Essex/Sussex border in 1944 however, if you look carefully you might find the grave of John's sister, Barbara in the churchyard at St. Dunstan's.

The etching is currently on show as part of the Towner Art Gallery, Eastbourne:

<https://www.townereastbourne.org.uk/exhibition/john-nash-the-landscape-of-love-and-solace/>

Place Farm; - If you are interested in a fuller history of the site, please look out for my article in our next edition or visit our website where you can find the

full article in the ‘Artists and their Gardens Project’.

*With thanks to Andy Friend, Jeremy Greenwood, Simon Hilton, the Estate of John Nash, Geoff Huntingford and the Princes Risborough Heritage Society*

1 Friend, Andy, ‘John Nash: *The Landscape of Love and Solace*’ Thames and Hudson, 2020

2. Greenwood, Jeremy, ‘John Nash; Newly Discovered Engraving and Drawings’, Jeremy Greenwood, 2020

3 Cat No. 83 ‘*Catalogue of the engraved work of F.S. Unwin*’, Print Collector's Quarterly, Campbell Dodgson, January, 1934. As referenced in Greenwood pg 8

4. Huntingford, G ‘Dovecote, Monks Risborough, Buckinghamshire’ (De Montfort University, 1997/8)

5. <https://historiccengland.org.uk/listing/the-ist/list-entry/1125788>

**Joanne Mirzoeff**

John Nash Exhibition: Towner Art Gallery in Eastbourne. Opens at Towner on 18 May until 26 September 2021 and will tour to Compton Verney Art Gallery and Park from 23 Oct 2021 to 2 January 2022.

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## 2022 Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust 25th Anniversary.



We are planning a series of exciting events to mark 25 years. Ideas include:

- \* a series of tree walks around our amazing parks led by one of our experts
- \* visit as many of our wonderful historic ‘Unforgettable Gardens’ as possible
- \* inviting members to a celebration party with special guests.

**So how can you help?** As we need to start organising these events as soon as possible we are looking initially for **2 volunteers** to:

1. help organise the programme of events
2. to apply for grant funding for the Trust and its future projects.

If you have any suggestions or more importantly would like to join the team, please get in touch.

Claire de Carle [claire@decarle.plus.com](mailto:claire@decarle.plus.com)

Vice-chair, Project Co-ordinator & Trustee

### Research and Recording

The project is continuing to tick along despite the ongoing limitations and restrictions to our research. We are hopeful that by June we will be able to recommence site visits (there are a number which have been on hold for over a year, due to Covid!).

During the last year, our most important asset has been our new website: I am pleased to report there has been considerable interest with well over 1,000 hits in recent months. People are spending time reading our reports on locally important sites and artists and their gardens. A huge thank-you to Gwen for her continuing work in difficult circumstances. We hope to receive further training on hosting the site shortly – I certainly need some!

I would like to point out that the website and newsletter (also edited by Gwen) are for ALL our members to utilise, so if you would like to write a short post about a subject related to garden history or submit a 'postcard' for the newsletter do email Gwen; she is always pleased to receive material.

We continue to work with the HER team at Buckinghamshire Council (BC). The council has recently received a government grant to fund a pilot 'Local Heritage List project' and, given our considerable expertise, gained in the last seven years of our project, we have offered our assistance with this important campaign. I am also extremely pleased to announce that we have been awarded a further grant of £2,000 by Bucks. Council to enable us to continue our research into the next phase (2021–23).



*Grendon Underwood. The gate piers, main entrance (Google Earth)*

Julie Wise (HER officer) continues to update us on 'at-risk sites' and in January, alerted us to the proposed expansion of HMP Grendon Underwood. This report was a matter of urgency and could not wait until restrictions were lifted, so it was to be a desk-based dossier. Getting into prisons for visits at the best of times would be fraught with security issues but with Covid restrictions nigh-on impossible! Julia sent me the OS maps and aerial photographs and some excellent historical images. I also trawled the internet and had a good look at the

site using Google Earth. I managed to produce a report in a matter of weeks, which was edited and finalised by Sarah, then Julia circulated it to all interested parties at BC. The Grendon Hall report is on the website: <https://bucksgardenstrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Grendon-Hall-BGT-RR-Dossier-23-Mar-21.pdf>



*Ye Grendon Underwood 1918 Ye Olde Countree Faire*

Other sites currently in progress are: Denham Court, The Tile House, The Vache and Stockgrove Park; public parks: Chandos, Black Park and Ouse Valley.

And finally, one of our long-serving members, June Timms, has recently retired from the R&R project. We thank her for all her excellent work and wish her well.

*Clare de Carle*

### C19<sup>th</sup> Brick Kilns to be restored at Great Linford

The Parks Trust are completing a restoration project on two scheduled Brick Kilns located at Great Linford, by the Grand Union Canal. Brickmaking was a local industry in Milton Keynes for hundreds of years with bricks being transported via the neighbouring canal to areas such as Wolverton, New Bradwell, Cosgrove and Castlethorpe. The restored kilns should be open when the Bucks GT visit on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> July. To find out more about the Brick Kilns and the brickmaking industry in Milton Keynes visit the website: [www.theparkstrust.com/brickkilns](http://www.theparkstrust.com/brickkilns)



*Brick Kilns*

*The Parks Trust*

### Gardens across the Pond

Our series of postcards “Gardens through the Letterbox” has become increasingly popular and encouraged many members to write for the Newsletter. We plan to continue with the ‘postcards’ but also publish occasional articles focusing on gardens visited abroad by members.

### Longwood Gardens, Pennsylvania, USA

I have enjoyed reading members’ ‘Postcards’ about gardens they have visited at home and abroad and decided to share an amazing garden that I visited in 2017.

In September 2017 my husband and I visited Pennsylvania, primarily to go to ‘Fallingwater’, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. In May of that year there was a short paragraph in the RHS magazine ‘The Garden’ about Longwood Gardens near Philadelphia who had just reopened their spectacular Fountain Gardens after a \$90 million refit. We decided to add Longwood to our itinerary.



*The Main Fountain Garden. There is a grotto behind the central colonnade.* ©MB

Pennsylvania had been home to several Native American tribes before the Dutch colonised it in 1643. The English took control in 1667 and in 1681 William Penn, a Quaker, received a royal deed from King Charles II and established a colony based on religious tolerance ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_Pennsylvania](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Pennsylvania)).

In 1700 a Quaker named George Peirce purchased 402 acres from Penn’s commissioners. He cleared and farmed the land and his son built the farmhouse, which still stands, in 1730. In 1798 George’s great-grandsons began to plant an arboretum which extended to 15 acres. By 1850 the arboretum had one of the best collections of trees in the nation and was a great amenity for local people, called Peirce’s Park. Sadly, subsequent heirs allowed the property to deteriorate and after several changes of ownership 41 acres of trees were due to be felled for timber in 1906. In order to save the trees a wealthy industrialist named Pierre du Pont bought the farm (<https://longwoodgardens.org/history/1700-1906>). His

original purchase had been 202 acres but he had increased this to 926 acres by the 1930s through additional purchases of adjoining properties.



*The Winter Garden joining the two wings of the original Peirce farmhouse* ©MB

Du Pont travelled extensively and visited the Crystal Palace at Sydenham, RBG Kew, many French chateaux including Versailles and Vaux le Vicomte, and many Italian villas including Villa d’Este (<https://longwoodgardens.org/history/1870-1954>). These all inspired him in his creation of Longwood Gardens, which he designed and added to continuously until his death in 1954. Du Pont’s first creation was a 600ft Flower Garden Walk in 1907 and this was followed by an Open Air Theatre, Winter Garden Conservatory on his house, the main Conservatory, Italian Water Gardens, Main Fountain Garden, etc. Du Pont and his wife loved to entertain and held many parties at Longwood but he also opened the gardens to the general public (*A Guide to the Great Gardens of the Philadelphia Region*, 2007, Temple University Press). The du Ponts had no children and Pierre was concerned that the Gardens should continue after his death, so in 1937 the Longwood Foundation was created to handle his charitable giving and in 1946 the government gave approval for the Foundation to operate the gardens with tax-exempt status “for the sole use of the public for purposes of exhibition, instruction, education and enjoyment” (<https://longwoodgardens.org/history/1936-1946>).



*The long herbaceous borders* ©MB



Looking towards the Main Conservatory from the Fountains MB

After du Pont's death Trustees of the Longwood Foundation continued to run the Gardens and in the late 50s and early 60s new gardens, 13 waterlily pools, new greenhouses and a visitor centre were constructed. A new Department of Education was formed to run public classes, lectures and summer schools and international student training. The performing arts are also very active including organ concerts, musical events and an open-air theatre.



The water garden in the Main Conservatory designed by Roberto Burle Marx ©MB

From 1966-1996 new greenhouses and many new 'gardens' were opened. In 2014 the Meadow Garden was finished; utilising "principles of ecological landscape design and locally sustainable practices to help preserve the open spaces surrounding the formal gardens" (<https://longwoodgardens.org>).



The Herb Garden

©MB

From 2014 to 2017 the Main Fountain Garden that I had read about was rebuilt and restored, including 68,000 hours' work on the historic stonework and major new plantings. We saw the fountain display to music during the day and I did feel Louis XIV would have been very envious! (At night the water is multi-coloured and a bit too 'Disney' for me.)

There is so much to see at Longwood Gardens; many different styles of garden design all maintained to a very high standard. If you are ever in Pennsylvania I recommend a visit but give yourself a whole day!



The lake Longwood Gardens

©MB

Mary Buckle

### Durability Guaranteed – Mrs Coade and Stowe

Eleanor Coade (1733–1821) must have been a truly remarkable woman. Mrs Coade, as she was known although she never married, lived in an era when ladies of slender means often had to sell themselves in one way or another to survive, and the more affluent ladies were well-mannered decorations (stereotyping, I know!).

From the 1760s Mrs Coade manufactured a unique product in one of the most deprived areas of London, Lambeth on the south side of the Thames, and the product was named after her: Coade stone. It is now thought that she was one of the most important businesswoman of her day. There have been several products that claim to have secret recipes – Drambuie and Coca-Cola come to mind – but the secret of Coade stone (actually a type of ceramic) was not finally authenticated until the 1990s.

Coade stone's durability and ability to be finely worked without damage made it very popular to the architects and designers of the period, and of course the owners of Stowe were no exceptions.

Within the gardens at Stowe and the immediate vicinity are several examples of its use. Perhaps the finest, the Gothic Cross, has recently been rebuilt in a shady glade behind the Temple of Ancient Virtue, incorporating some of the original pieces of Coade stone. There is also the coat of arms of the Marquess of Buckingham on the Oxford gate entrance. But the

most striking must have been the four Coade stone lions on the top of the base to Capability Brown's Cobham's column (they arrived, with the base, after Brown's time). Unfortunately in 1957 Lord Cobham's monument was struck by lightning (perhaps the gods' rather belated revenge for him supposedly hanging some poachers!) and shattered the lions, now replaced by stone replicas.



Temple coat of arms on the Umbrello in the parkland at Stowe  
©KE

In the park the fine Gothick Umbrello (a stone conduit house) has the Temple coat of arms and motto (*Templa quam dilecta*) on a frieze under the roof.



Chimney on the Buckingham Lodges with manufacturers stamp  
©KE

The Buckingham Lodges have reliefs and chimneypieces of Coade stone and the bridge over the Ouse on Bridge Street in Buckingham also has a Coade stone coat of arms. Bearing in mind that the gardens have lost a large number of buildings I'm sure other examples must have existed.

Many examples of Coade stone are still visible throughout the country and abroad; the one that intrigues me is a statue possibly of King Alfred in Trinity Church Square, Borough, London. I lived in that square and knew of the statue. It was rumoured to be of King Alfred then but I never thought that many years later I would discover it was made of Coade stone



Bridge over Ouse on Bridge Street, Buckingham with Inscription and Coat of Arms ©KE



Manufacturers stamp 1805 on bridge above  
©KE  
**Ken Edwards**

English Heritage: Eleanor Coade as an important woman in C18 & C19th manufacturing is featured in the English Heritage Women in History section on their website:

<https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/learn/histories/women-in-history/eleanor-coade/>

Editor's Note: If you know of other examples of Coade stone in Buckinghamshire please send in photographs with details of location. We will be delighted to publish them and Ken will be pleased to add them to his collections of examples.

✍ **Gardens through the letterbox**

Postcard April 2019, Avenue Gardens, Kabul, Afghanistan

Dear Bucks GT

Kabul is high so there is a nip in the air, but the Judas trees are blooming magnificently. Babur, the first Mughal emperor, died, and was initially interred, in Agra. However he had made plans for an Avenue Garden to be his final resting place and he was reburied here in Afghanistan.

The gardens were developed around 1528, and march down the hill with a central rill issuing from an octagonal basin. The grave is under cover at the top of the slope where there is also a somewhat dubious gilded statue of the emperor on a camel.

Best wishes, Liza Wormell



SAVE OUR HERITAGE WITH  
**THE GARDENS TRUST**

**Buckinghamshire 'Unforgettable Gardens'  
Stoke Poges Memorial Gardens**



Visitors Guide

Well, you learn something every day. I knew of William Robinson as the proponent of revolutionary but hugely influential ideas about naturalistic planting, put forward in such books as *The Wild Garden* (1870) and *The English Flower Garden* (1883); and about his arguments against architects' involvement in garden design (*Garden Design and Architects' Gardens*, 1892). But among his prodigious output was a volume called *God's Acre Beautiful, Or, The Cemeteries of the Future*, in which he applied his gardening aesthetic to urban churchyards and cemeteries, which he thought should be uncluttered by tombstones and memorials. This campaign included trying to convince an unwilling public of the advantages of cremation over burial, and the book's publication in 1880 predates the legalisation of cremation by four years. A 1902 Act of Parliament enabled local authorities to build crematoria; one of the first was at Golders Green where landscape design was considered from the outset and Robinson's design of the gardens with open lawns, flowerbeds and woodland gardens became a model for crematoria settings for much of the 20th century. The terms 'gardens of rest' and 'gardens of remembrance' began to be used in the 1920s.

Opposition to cremation persisted – in 1930, cremations accounted for less than 5 per cent of all funerals – but adoption by members of the Royal family, leading politicians and Anglican clergymen, and then the lifting of a Catholic ban on the practice in the 1960s, gradually led to today's position of around 75 per cent of people opting to be cremated.

Stoke Poges Memorial Gardens (Grade I) are unusual, though not unique, in being a landscape for cremated remains unconnected with a crematorium. They exist through the generosity of Noel Mobbs (not yet 'Sir'; 1878–1959), who had bought Stoke Park in 1928. Stoke Park, at one time owned by the Penn family and with landscaping by Brown and Repton, had been turned into a golf course and the UK's first country club in the early 20th century, and soon afterwards part of the park and surrounding land was sold for housing (before World War II there was no legislation preventing unrestricted development: builders could build whatever and wherever they liked). Gray's Meadow next to the church, containing Gray's Monument and the Penn memorial, had been saved by public appeal and made over to the National Trust in the 1920s. Mobbs acquired 20 acres (8 ha) of land south of St Giles church to further protect the tranquil rural setting of the building that had inspired Thomas Gray's 1751 'Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard', and to provide a Memorial Garden to be a 'living memorial to the dead and of solace to the bereaved'. The land was dedicated as 'non-denominational grounds' in 1935 and given to Eton Rural District Council in 1971 (later subsumed into South Bucks District which in turn has now become part of Buckinghamshire Council). Significant restoration work was carried out during 2001–2004, a project supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, South Bucks District Council and the Mobbs Memorial Trust.

The gardens were designed by Edward White (1873–1952), a partner of Milner, Son & White, a leading landscape architect firm of the day. White had a great interest in the cremation movement and was also responsible for the development of the gardens at other major cemeteries and crematoria in the late 1930s. The Stoke Poges plan was completed in 1937. The gardens were to contain no buildings or monuments as in a cemetery; small gardens and plots were available for purchase for the repose of ashes but the landscape was designed as a complete garden with overall unity.

At the main entrance at Church Cottage south-east of the church is a little museum relating to the Penn family and Thomas Gray. From here you follow a westward avenue bisecting the site through lawns to a circular stone pool set in a ring of lawn, with a central fountain of cherubs with a swan. Beyond this the walk leads up a flight of stone steps, edged by balustrading and decorated with four urns showing the Four Seasons, to the area of formal gardens. Paths

off each side of the main walk provide access to the yew-hedged areas which line either side of the central path, kept as memorials to individuals or family groups. The walk continues through an ironwork



*Circular pool and avenue*

© John O'Dwyer



*Main Avenue*

© John O'Dwyer

gateway, past raised parterre gardens on either side, each one a knot garden worked in low box hedges woven between stone paths, enclosed by clipped yew hedges. From here the main path, at this point sunken between raised yew hedges, reaches the entrance to the Colonnade Garden. This is a square, sunken water garden surrounded on all four sides by a raised stone and timber pergola. To the north, paths lead through



*Colonnade Garden*

© John O'Dwyer





Rock and water garden

©Clare Butler

an extensive area of informal rock and water gardens overlooking lawns sloping down towards Stoke Park. South and west of the Colonnade Garden paths pass through a grassed area planted up with flowering trees and shrubs set in lawns, and leading to a circular rose garden to the south. East of here are more informal plantings, including a magnificent 600-year-old oak tree.



Ancient Oak

©Peter Hawkes

There are 500 gated family gardens, individually designed by Edward White to represent a 'home-coming', and in which are interred the ashes of some well-known people. One of the larger gardens memorialises the Gurkha Rifles. In addition there are over 3,000 individual plots. Although the main purpose of the Memorial Gardens is the interment of cremated remains, it is a vibrant and interesting place to visit, open all year round, with a wealth of history and many activities on offer such as guided walks, a butterfly day in August led by an expert, and an autumn 'fungus foray'. There are heritage open days and the gardens open twice a year with the National Gardens Scheme. An annual service of Thanksgiving takes place on the first Saturday in October.

How appropriate that one of our 'Unforgettable Gardens' should be Gardens of Remembrance.

### Bibliography

Buckinghamshire Council, South Bucks area, 'History Of The Gardens'

<https://www.southbucks.gov.uk/about-the-gardens>  
English Heritage, 'Crematoria Designation: Register of Parks and Gardens Selection Guide, Landscapes of Remembrance', 2013

Historic England, 'Stoke Poges Gardens of Remembrance'

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1001255>

Stoke Park Ltd, 'Estate History of Stoke Park'

<https://www.stokepark.com/history/estate-history-book.html>

WA Truelove & Son Ltd, 'The history of cremations in the UK' <https://www.watltd.co.uk/the-history-of-cremations-in-the-uk/>

*Clare Butler*

### Can You Help?

The Buckinghamshire Council Archaeological Service is looking for people to help update the 'Parish Summary' for the Bucks Heritage Portal. The 163 parishes require a potted history of locally significant archaeological sites, landscapes and buildings with illustrations and links to other records, etc. If interested email: [her@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:her@buckinghamshire.gov.uk), subject heading FAO Lucy Lawrence, Knowing Your Place. Include your name, parish interested in, association with the parish, and any affiliation to a local society.

### New social media guru

We are delighted to welcome **Ellie Broad** to the Bucks GT team as our social media expert. She is promoting the Trust through the Facebook and Twitter accounts. [socialmedia@bucksgardenstrust.org.uk](mailto:socialmedia@bucksgardenstrust.org.uk)

### A Welcome to Chiltern Heritage Orchards

In 2016 horticulturalist and lecturer Lindsay Engers started a traditional mixed fruit orchard in the Chilterns on a farm near St Leonards.

He farms using traditional short, intensive sheep grazing and strict organic standards to establish over 250 different cultivars of fruit. The choice of fruit is mainly commercial cultivars popular in markets, hotels, and grocers of the 19th century. They include once common apples such as White Spanish Reinette; pears: Pitmaston Duchess; damsons: the highly prized Aylesbury Prune and greengages: Denniston's Superb.



*The heritage orchard at St Leonards*

©LE

This commercial orchard has many features common to the orchards of the 19th century. Tree canopy training is narrow and pencil or pyramidal pruned, advocated by the great Thomas Rivers (1798–1877), the Hertfordshire plantsman. The continuously grassed orchard is currently in conversion to acquire Soil Association Organic Certification. Wildflowers and rare creatures abound in the summer meadow grass after the spring grazing. Marbled White butterflies and rare spider, beetle and ant species live alongside crickets and grasshoppers whose rasping song can be heard among the skylarks' calls wheeling high above.

This heritage orchard utilises three simple principles of agricultural business:

- 1 **historical** knowledge of reliable cultivars and growing requirements.
- 2 **organic** and **regenerative** growing techniques which produce highly flavoured and pesticide-free crops.
- 3 using diverse **ecological** environmental practices to support the crop through beneficial insects, birds and bats which, of course, creates incredibly productive habitats for many rare wildlife species.

The management of the orchard utilises no weedkiller, fungicide or insecticides; minimal seaweed fertiliser and basalt rock dust soil

remineraliser are used in line with organic standards. Chiltern Heritage Orchards is proving that a highly productive, mixed agricultural landscape is also a stable, species-rich wildlife haven.



*Spring blossom on canopy trained fruit tree*

©LE

The move to artisan food producers, local markets, farm shops and the home delivery of foods has fuelled interest in the reintroduction of local heritage fruits. Many of the cultivars have been rescued by nurseries such as local Bernwode Fruit Trees and further afield, Keepers and Walcot nurseries. Their amazing work has enabled the reintroduction of commercially extinct fruits to the public. These includes Warden Pears, once relied on as potato or meat substitutes, now winning favour with some dieticians. Many of the orchards' cultivars have been



*Beurre DAmantis – heritage pear*

©LE

shown by scientists to have higher Vitamin C content, higher soluble and insoluble fibre and antioxidant levels with better flavours than more modern cultivars. For example some cultivars do not turn brown when cut and are used in restaurants for their keeping qualities. Others are almost extinct: cider apples; the famous American Hewes Crab, or ancient pears such as Citron de Carmes, forgotten plums: Belle de Louvain; late season bullaces: Winter Crack, and medieval Service trees, popular in Europe for cider and eating. It is impossible to list all cultivars grown in this article, but historically significant local cultivars include Bazeley, Long Reinette and S.T. Wright apples.



Vicar of Winkfield, heritage pear

©LE

A key aim for the orchard is that as a thriving business, it works with other artisan food businesses in the Chilterns. Traditional full-flavoured organic cider and other beverages and juices are to be made from the huge range of fruit grown in the orchard. Also, to supply organic apples and pears to enthusiastic local cider and perry makers. Organic damsons, greengages, plums and cooking and desert apples and pears are coming into production and will start to be available.

The stories and food culture of these almost lost fruits is a treasure we must cherish. Growing them allows the enjoyment of the flavours of the past, while enriching our environments and protecting the health of the country.

If you are interested in Chiltern Heritage Orchards please browse our videos plus crop updates and contacts on our YouTube and Instagram channels and visit our website [chilternheritageorchards.com](http://chilternheritageorchards.com).

*The Chiltern Heritage Orchards Team*

### *✍ Gardens through the letterbox*

Postcard 2019,

Caserta, Naples

Dear Bucks GT,

Caserta just outside Naples is where the 5th son of the King of Spain, the Bourbon King Charles 7th of Naples, built what remains the largest royal palace in the world, now a Unesco World Heritage site. Charles ruled over Naples and Sicily, part of the Spanish empire. In 1759, before the palace was finished, he succeeded to the Spanish throne and never came to live at Caserta which was finished by his son Ferdinand.

The palace was modelled on Versailles. The formal baroque garden features a long alley with canals, fountains and cascades, grottos and classical sculptures, which stretch uphill 2.5 miles. Also the botanical garden called "The English Garden", and more which we lacked the stamina to perambulate. To see it all in one day does not do it justice and there is also the old town of Caserta to visit.

It is the water features which put the rest into the shade. The walk out from the back of the palace up along the water gardens is not to be missed, it is more of an architectural wonder than a setting for plants but it has to be one of the finest displays of its kind. There are fish and we saw a terrapin, also a snake which was not well received by all parties! Best wishes Martin Humphrey



**Women in Garden History: Valerie Finnis**  
(1924–2006) Photographer, lecturer and gardener



*Valerie Finnis in her garden shed. © Photograph Jan Baldwin World of Interiors April 2009*

Although Valerie Finnis did not live in Buckinghamshire, the Bucks Garden Trust has much to be indebted to her for. The Finnis Scott Foundation makes grants to horticultural and art history projects and was established in accordance with the will of Lady Montague Douglas Scott (Valerie Finnis) in 2006. The Research and Recording project has been fortunate to receive two of these grants during the last seven years.

By the age of five Valerie was showing an interest in gardening and was encouraged by her mother. From the age of 13 Valerie attended Hayes Court boarding school in Kent, where she suffered from homesickness and was given a garden plot to tend. She found consolation in gardening and her talent was nurtured by the head gardener and an enlightened headmistress. Hayes Court closed at the start of World War II and Valerie moved to Downe House School near Newbury. Here she made friends with a young gardener, Mary Young, who had trained under Miss Beatrix Havergal at Waterperry (just over the Bucks border in Oxon).

Valerie left school in 1942, and settled on a career in horticulture. She spent 28 years at Waterperry, first as a trainee gardener and then as a member of staff, and ran the Alpine department for many years. For much of this time she lived in a small flat at the top of Shotover House in nearby Wheatley, home of Colonel John Miller, the Queen's Crown Equerry. From 1955 plant photography became a major interest and her images were soon appearing in books, adverts and on greetings cards. In 1961 she displayed photographs at Kodak's head office and won an RHS gold medal for them. She also acquired an excellent reputation as a lecturer, judge and

Alpine expert, and made several television appearances.

In July 1970 she surprised everyone by marrying the widower and retired diplomat Sir David Scott. David lived at the Dower House on the Boughton Estate in Northamptonshire which belonged to his cousin, the 8th Duke of Buccleuch (he famously told Valerie that he lived in a semi-detached house near Kettering!), and immediately after the wedding ceremony they were out in the garden weeding! Their years at Boughton were very happy: David actively gardened into his nineties, and died in 1986 just short of his 100th birthday.

In 1990 Valerie founded the Merlin Trust, named after David's only son who had been killed in North Africa in 1941. It provides scholarships for young, aspiring, adventurous horticulturists, who have included Tom Hart Dyke. She had an active role in the RHS, was on several committees and visited the Chelsea Flower Show every year for more than 50 years.



*Grape Hyacinth Muscari Artemesia 'Valerie Finnis'*  
RHS Flower bulb of the year 2012

©RHS

'Alongside the dungarees and digging Finnis, there existed a completely different Finnis, actress, mischievous, a woman who adored gossip and outrageous hats. She joined the exclusive circle of People who keep Pugs. She knew most of the people who mattered in the gardening world and many of them were invited to the Dower House, where they were usually photographed and asked to write in one of her extraordinary scrapbooks' (Anna Pavord).

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*Claire de Carle*

## Women in Garden History: Maud Grieve

(1858-1941)

2021 marks the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the death of Maud Grieve. The inspirational herbalist, writer, teacher and gardener

*'Now let me tell you about that wonderful plant'*



Maud Grieve was born in London in 1858. She spent her early married life in India, and on their return at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the couple built a house, the Whins, in Chalfont St Peter where Maud established a beautiful garden.

At the outbreak of World War One she transformed her garden into a herb farm to meet the urgent need for medicinal plants by the pharmaceutical industry. She was also involved in setting up the 'Herb Growing Association'. She supplied plants and seeds



and pamphlets on their cultivation and established a training school for women and ex-servicemen from the colonies.

In 1918 she let out her drying shed to the war artists Paul and John Nash where they accomplished some of their finest war commissions.

Maud is probably best remembered for her book *'The Modern Herbal'* which was published in 1931; it is considered to still be relevant today.

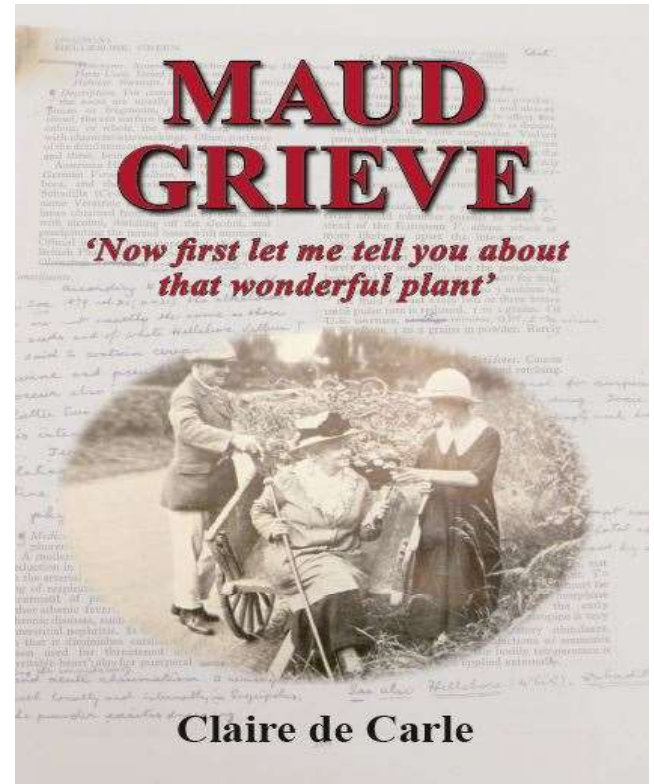
Maud was well known in the village in her lifetime, but unfortunately today few residents of Chalfont St Peter know of her. All trace of The Whins herb farm and garden has disappeared under twentieth century housing development.

### Maud Grieve *'Now first let me tell you about that wonderful plant'*

This is the first biography of this remarkable lady to be published, which examines her work in depth and in the wider context of herbalists, pioneering women gardeners and the social events of the time. It includes images from the period and the author's photographs of the area today.

The author, Claire de Carle, is a member of the Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust. This biography was the focus of her dissertation subject which she self-published in 2017. Copies are still available see details below.

*Claire de Carle*



ISBN 978-1-911133-21-6

To order your copy email the author:

[claire@decarle.plus.com](mailto:claire@decarle.plus.com)

£12.00 including postage & packing

## Women in Garden History

### Weeding Women: Shaping England's Gardens



Let the careful Gardener fet his Weeder-Women or Boys, every Morning, and always after Rains, to pick off and destry all those Snails and Slugs, which at this Season of the Year are invited abroad to feek their Food, because, if they are suffered to remain, they will increase greatly, and become very troublesome.

In Stephen Switzer's *Practical Husbandman and Planter* (1733), he recommends wide paths between beds for ease of access and as we can see from this quote, weeder woman and boys to pick off and destroy snails and slugs every morning!

Who does the weeding in your household and that of your family, neighbours and friends? We suspect it is the women! English Heritage has been investigating **Weeding Women: Shaping England's Gardens** as part of its *Women in History* series:

<https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/learn/histories/women-in-history/weeding-women>. It looks at the understated role of women in history who worked in the garden, who were given monotonous tasks such as pest control, or worked as 'bothy women' or given the seasonal work of weeding.

Val Bott in her article 'A Bequest to the weeder' <https://nurserygardeners.com> notes that it was not until 2006 that she first came across weeder women when she was researching the Chiswick manor of Sutton Court. In the accounts kept by Lord Fauconberg's steward, 1690 to early 1700, they were paid six pence a day. Her research details further examples of employing women to do this work as labourers but whose expertise ensured that only weeds were pulled out rather than prized expensive plants!

The Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust has its own examples. With change of ownership the archives of Hampden House, Buckinghamshire were deposited with the Buckinghamshire Archives (BA)

This treasure trove of extensive estate records (c.1252–1931) gives details of dates, names, work and costs in the stewards' accounts/bundles and notebooks, including references to women working in the gardens.

In the Hampden Estate Wood Book (D/MH /30/5) 1696–1706, May 28 1703, Mr Wofson, Head Gardener, recorded that Mary Oliver and another woman were paid to weed the garden at 6d a day; it does not state how many days they were employed. In the 33 Day Books for 1740–1784 and 29 Stewards' Accounts 1737–1791 there are further examples: in 1741 Ann Wall was paid 4/- for 8 days' weeding, and in 1748 Jo Mason's son was paid 12/- for a month's weeding while his father built gates and boxed trees (D/MH/29/8). A full research and recording dossier on Hampden House can be found at <https://bucksgardenstrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Hampden-Ho-BGT-RR-dossier-30-Sept-20.pdf>

These records are only part of a story of gardening women and as 'weeder' their work was mainly seasonal and on large estates. What did they do for the rest of the year – were they multiskilled and worked in other areas of the estate as a flexible labour force? More research is needed. Perhaps you can help.

Notes: Bruegel painting: **The Four Seasons, Spring** by Pieter Bruegel the Younger. In public domain National Museum of Arts' Romania. This wonderful painting shows springtime activities, planting, hoeing, weeding, sheep-shearing, dancing, feeding geese and tying in vines, with women very much involved in all areas.

*Gwen Miles*

### Women in Garden History: Margery Fish (1892–1969) Plants woman and garden writer

'Margery Fish, virtually single-handedly, was responsible for the renewed popularity of the 'cottage garden' style of planting in the second half of the twentieth century' (Catherine Horwood).

Margery Fish (née Townsend) has a very tenuous link with Buckinghamshire: although she probably visited her family in Chalfont St Peter frequently, unfortunately there is little documented information about her early life to confirm this. While writing my MA dissertation I discovered that her family had lived round the corner from my subject Maud Grieve, the herbalist. There is also a link with Valerie Finnis who was a friend (they always referred to each other by their surnames) and one of the few people allowed to photograph her.

The Townsends were a Quaker family who had four daughters, Dora, Nina, Margery and Kathleen. Margery was born at Stamford Hill, London and educated at the Friends School in Saffron Walden and secretarial college. Once the girls had grown up

the family moved to the relative quiet of the Buckinghamshire village, sometime towards the end of the First World War. The Townsends initially rented 'The Spinney' in Misbourne Avenue, while their new home, 'Greenacres' in Monument Lane to which they moved around 1920, was being built. Sadly, their mother Florence died in 1920 and their father Ernest, a tea importer, in 1926. Margery's sisters remained in Chalfont; however, she was already working and probably living in London – it was becoming more acceptable for women to have their own lives and careers.

Dora continued to live at Greenacres and Nina married Francis Boyd-Carpenter whose mother lived next door at Cedars Cottage. Their son Henry eventually inherited Lambrook Manor, later selling it in 1985. Margery spent over 20 years working in Fleet Street, initially with countryside magazines and then with Associated Newspapers. There she accompanied Lord Northcliffe on a war mission to the United States in 1916, and then worked as secretary to six successive editors of the *Daily Mail*, the last of whom, the widower Walter Fish, she married on 2 March 1933, three years after his retirement. In 1937 they purchased East Lambrook Manor near Ilminster in Somerset for £1,000, settling there permanently two years later.



*Pestemon 'Margery Fish'*

They immediately commenced work on restoring and creating the garden. Margery was a novice and initially relied on Walter for advice, as she had previously left the gardening to her sisters. She wanted to create an informal garden using cottage garden flowers, while also allowing for spreading and self-seeding of native plants. There was to be floral interest appearing all the year round. Her husband, on the other hand, preferred a more formal style with extravagant displays of summer flowers. The battle of wills between them was described in the first of her gardening books, *We Made a Garden* (1956), which is as much about a difficult marriage as about the difficulties of starting a garden from scratch.



*Margery Fish by Valerie Finnis (Garden People)*

Only after Walter's death in 1947 could Margery fully implement her ideas and develop her skills as a plants woman. She had a passion for unfashionable green hellebores and other shade-loving spring flowers: epimediums, primroses and snowdrops. She sought to make things grow in cracks and crevices. She soon had a group of correspondents, with whom she swapped ideas and rare plant material. These included Lawrence Johnston of Hidcote Manor, the garden designer Nancy Lindsay, and her neighbour Violet Clive of Brympton d'Evercy, an equally passionate gardener.

By the late 1950s, East Lambrook garden was being opened to the public for charity and had a small plant nursery attached to it. In 1963 she received a silver Veitch Memorial Medal from the Royal Horticultural Society.

The garden at East Lambrook is on the Historic England Register of Parks and Gardens at Grade I and is well worth a visit.

#### Bibliography:

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<http://www.eastlambrook.com/pages/site.php?pgid=1>

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Horwood, Catherine, *Gardening Women*, (2010)

*Claire de Carle*

## Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust Summer Events

Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> June at 2pm



Visit to Peterley Corner Cottage, Perks Lane, Prestwood, Great Missenden, HP16 0JH.

A three-acre garden with wildflowers, specimen trees, roses & herbaceous borders. The cost - £12 for members -

£13 for guests, with tea and cakes.

Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> July at 2pm



A visit to the gardens of The Manor House, Bledlow, HP27 9PB. The private gardens of the late Lord Carrington. There is a walled kitchen garden, water garden, parterres and sculptures. A dramatic example of an Arts

and Crafts compartment garden

The cost - £10 for members - £12 for guests

Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> July at 2pm



A guided walk of the main historic landscape features of Great Linford Park, (MK14 5QJ) and explain this National Lottery Heritage Fund project. Members will be able to see the exteriors of the 17<sup>th</sup> century Manor House, the pavilion

stables, the almshouses, the medieval church and landscape features, the Doric Seat, ha-ha and wilderness.

The cost - £5 for members & guests

Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> August from 12 noon



Summer Social at Rousham, OX25 4QX. Monty Don says "Kent is the great genius of eighteenth-century garden

design and Rousham is his masterpiece, one of the greatest gardens in the world" Please bring your own picnic.

Cost £3 plus £8 per person for ticket machine

Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> August at 2pm



Visit to Aston Pottery and Gardens, Aston, Near Bampton, Oxfordshire, OX18 2BT. . With guided tour of gardens.

Cost - £8 for members - £10 for guest

September (date to be advised)



A guided evening walk at Stowe to see the recently replaced statues with Richard Wheeler, National Specialist in Garden History and Head Gardener Barry Smith

Cost - £5 for members - £6 for guests

**Bookings:** To book an event contact Rosemary Jury [events@bucksgardenstrust.org.uk](mailto:events@bucksgardenstrust.org.uk)

### The Gardens Trust:

<https://thegardenstrust.org/events>

As an affiliated county member of The Gardens Trust you can book the lectures/courses at reduced cost or for free.

### 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Calendar 2022

The Trust plans to publish a landscape desk calendar to celebrate the Trusts 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Theme, 'Unforgettable Gardens' of Buckinghamshire. It would be wonderful if every member submitted a photograph – we could have a gallery!



The size preferred is 213 × 98mm, 2516 × 1158 pixels, but Photoshop is able to work magic. Colour or black and white.

As soon as you

have photographs you would like to submit, please send them to Gwen Miles with your name and title for the photograph to:

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

### Copy date:

14<sup>th</sup> August 2021 for 1<sup>st</sup> September printed edition.

We are always delighted to receive articles, photographs of "Unforgettable Gardens" in Bucks and "postcards".

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