



Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust

*To record and conserve the gardens and parks of historic Buckinghamshire.
To aid in the research and conservation of gardens, parks and green spaces within the historic
county and campaign for their protection.*

The Newsletter of the Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust

Summer 2023



*Hall Barn. View from the Garden Room (Colen Campbell) of the canal
Letitia*

Dear Members

I hope you are enjoying this lovely summer and managing to visit some open gardens. We have already held four successful events, the most recent being a private visit to the wonderfully restored Church Gardens in Harefield. If you missed this opportunity, I would highly recommend a visit, they open every Sunday during the summer, but of course you will have to contend with the crowds, you will be amazed by what the McHugh family have achieved.

<https://www.churchgardens.co.uk/sundayopenings>

With our Annual General Meeting just over a month away we are currently preparing an agenda including the re-election of trustees. So if you would like to be more involved in the governance of the Trust, but do not have the time to commit to a role on the Council then volunteering as a trustee could be the ideal opportunity for you.

As a trustee your responsibilities will include ensuring the Trust is complying with its governing document, act in the charities best interest, ensure we manage our resources responsibly, ensure the Trust is

accountable and above all bring new skills and experience to Bucks Gardens Trust.

We would also like to find someone to help organise our exciting events programme, this would involve contacting venues regarding bookings and helping with the Ticket Source website. I plan to form an events group of about four to share the work.

If you are interested and would like to discuss these roles further, then do contact me at:

claire@decarle.plus.com

The AGM is on Saturday 22 July 2023 at 2pm and this year is being held at St Dunstan's Church Monks Risborough. The event is free to all, however we would be grateful if you would sign up on Ticket Source so that we know how many members to cater for. The AGM papers will be sent to you in a few weeks time.

<https://bucksgardenstrust.org.uk/event/buckinghamshire-gardens-trust-annual-general-meeting-saturday-22nd-july-at-2pm/>

I hope to see some of you at the AGM and on our visits to Lindengate and Bekonscot, tickets are still available for both visits.

Claire de Carle



Louise Keil explaining garden history through objects in the Lucky Dip at Bledlow Manor NGS open afternoon

CdC



Jo's cottage garden in full bloom

Jo Mirzoeff

Planning Report

The first half of 2023 has seen plenty of planning applications rolling in from across the county to keep us busy.

In the former Chilterns and South Bucks area, we were consulted for a fourth time on proposals at Dropmore to demolish a 1980s house by the road and construct a Palladian-style mansion within the boundaries of the registered park and garden (RPG). The most recent application included the restoration of two former gate lodges to the wider Dropmore estate – one of which was already subject to a planning/listed building application last year which we supported. The inclusion of these appears to have to demonstrate ‘conservation gain’ for the new development. However, as the proposed new house still damages the setting of the RPG, we reiterated our strong objection.

At Hall Barn, we were consulted on proposals for alterations to the kitchen wing including the addition of a lantern roof. We originally expressed concern about the proposals but the recent Bucks Gardens Trust afternoon site visit was a useful opportunity to assess the proposals first hand and we revised our comments to support the application.

At Stoke Park, the former golf club, we objected strongly to proposals to create a new vehicular access path to link the main house to a modern house on the park boundary under same ownership. We felt this was inappropriate in such a significant landscape. We note this application has been withdrawn.

In the former Wycombe area, the masterplan for Wycombe Abbey is developing. We are about to review the latest iteration and will be providing further comments soon. Also impacting Wycombe Abbey are revised proposals for the Energy Centre at Wycombe Hospital – we supported the previous iteration after they reduced the height of a new chimney. The revised proposals include a number of new chimneys and we asked the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to ensure the new chimneys were kept to a low height and painted in a colour that mitigates their impact.

At Fawley Court near Henley, we have supported an application for riverbank repairs.

In the former Aylesbury Vale, there were more applications coming in for Little Yeat Farm within the Wotton Underwood RPG. We previously requested that the LPA require the applicants to conduct a Historic Landscape Analysis to inform the development of their plans. This has now been done with beneficial results.

At Stowe, we supported a number of small applications for good remedial works to existing structures within the RPG.

Near to Waddesdon, we were extremely concerned over an application for a substantial housing estate and energy farm at Littleton Manor Farm. The application has received many hundreds of responses from the public and many of the supporting comments are from individuals who do not live in or near Buckinghamshire. However, such is the planning system that you can comment on anything anywhere and a large development is always more palatable to people when it is elsewhere in the country. We absolutely support initiatives to address the need for more housing and the climate crisis, but these applications must be well-considered and appropriate in the setting. However, this application would result in development on previously undeveloped farmland with a huge impact on the setting of the Grade 1 listed RPG. We objected strongly and made a site visit.

Within Waddesdon RPG, we have just objected strongly to further proposals to develop the former agricultural barns near the car park. Two barns were developed last year to create a craft brewery site. This application seeks to create a new visitor welcome with proposals for a café, pop-up shops and a gallery. Whilst the proposed buildings are designed to fit within the current agricultural character and footprint, we felt that the damage of the additional footfall, parking needs, lighting and noise emittance on this former quiet and agricultural area of the landscape would be detrimental and irreversible. We have again asked the LPA to require a masterplan for the remaining former agricultural buildings which we anticipate will be developed in the future.

In Milton Keynes, we submitted a third objection to proposals for a substantial residential development at the north of Campbell Wharf near Campbell Park.

As you read through our regular planning updates, it may appear that we regularly oppose many different applications, but this is simply because they do not consider or assess the impact on significant designed landscapes. Many applications will address listed buildings that might be impacted yet we find that the registered park and garden is usually the last thing that a developer will consider if, indeed, it is considered at all. It is therefore our role to speak out for these places to ensure they continue to be protected for the future enjoyment of everyone.

Jo Mirzoeff

The Poetry of Gardens 2. Christina Rossetti (1830-1894)



One of the most admired poets of the Victorian era, Christina Rossetti captivated readers with her delicate verses and introspective themes. She began writing as a teenager, and it was she who wrote the poem later set to music by Gustav Holst to become the much-loved Christmas carol, *In the Bleak Midwinter* which captures the still, quiet, mystical divinity in a snow-

covered landscape. Yet, the dangerously sensuous depictions of forbidden fruit in her long, rhythmically narrative poem, *Goblin Market*, evoke an entirely different sense of mysticism in the themes of desire and temptation, sin and redemption. Rossetti's profound spirituality, combined with a unique perspective on love, loss, and longing gave her the status of literary icon in her own day and, increasingly, beyond.

Beneath the layers of her poetry, a key influence was a fascination for the countryside and nature which she developed during frequent childhood visits to her grandparents, the Polidoris, 'entailing/ a 'long stagecoach journey'. They lived in Holmer Green, then a hamlet of dwellings scattered around a village pond, at the edge of the Chiltern beechwoods. She would spend hours exploring the life she found there: plants, insects, animals. A garden was something her parents' Bloomsbury townhouse, at 38 Charlotte Street, lacked. Currant bushes, holly, blackthorn, peach and cherry trees filled what as an adult, Rossetti acknowledged to be a relatively small space, but which as a child felt vast, filling her with wonder and offering 'inexhaustible delight.' Her sense of wonder and reverence is summed up in an anecdote offered by a childhood friend whom the Rossettis would visit at their country home in Surrey: '... she would take up and hold in the hollow of her hand cold little frogs and clammy toads, or furry many-legged caterpillars, with a fearless love that we country children could never emulate.'

Grandfather, Gaetano Polidori, was an Italian political refugee who settled in England. He was a professor of Italian at King's College, London and his daughter, Frances, later married Gabriele Rossetti, an Italian poet and scholar. Their past presence in Holmer Green is marked today by the names Polidoris Lane and Rossetti Place, believed to be situated where the Polidori's small holding had been, and it is further believed that bricks from the old

farmhouse were reclaimed to build Polidoris Cottage in Polidoris Lane.



Drawing of Polidoris Cottage courtesy of Holmer Green Village Society

Christina, born on 5th December 1830, was one of Frances and Gabriele's four talented and artistic children. Growing up surrounded by literature and art, they were exposed to a sophisticated cultural environment that would help shape their creativity, but it was the exploration and discovery of the garden which provided Christina with a rich source of allegorical material for exploring a wide range of themes in her poetry. Bees are a recurring motif, used to symbolize industry, order, and community. In *Goblin Market*, bees emphasize abundance and harmony, too. Birds make frequent appearances, representing freedom, spirituality, and the transient nature of life. In *A Birthday*, her heart is likened to a 'singing bird.' They also feature in the poems, *Winter: My Secret* and *The World*, to represent a yearning for freedom. The fleeting nature of beauty is often represented by butterflies and moths; fragile, short-lived creatures of metamorphosis. A darker and more introspective poem is *The Spider and the Fly*, where the spider is a metaphor for temptation and deceit in the exploration of seduction and vulnerability.

In the Victorian era, the garden was seen as a retreat, a place where one could find solace and tranquillity amidst the chaos of urban life. As a devout Anglican, Rossetti's faith played a significant role in her life and writing, and the sanctuary offered by the garden mirrored the sacred spaces of her religious beliefs. The garden's serene and contemplative atmosphere provided inspiration for her thoughts on the divine. In her poetry, she often drew from the garden's spiritual essence, using biblical imagery, metaphors, and religious allusions to explore themes of faith, redemption, and salvation as well as of innocence, purity, and the fleeting nature of life. She would draw parallels between the transient beauty of flowers and the ephemeral existence of human beings.

The garden could also be seen as symbolizing the Garden of Eden, a place of innocence before the fall of humanity, as in *Shut Out* (below). In *The Convent Threshold*, Rossetti offers the garden as a sacred space of comfort and divine intervention, and in her well-known poem, *A Birthday*, she describes a garden filled with vibrant blooms, painting a vivid

picture of beauty and joy. The garden here becomes a symbol of celebration and renewal, representing inner emotions and desires.

Beneath her quiet humility - some have even suggested melancholy - Christina Rossetti had a reputation for having a somewhat fiery nature. Her father called her an 'angelic little demon' and her brother, William Michael Rossetti, wrote about her: 'To have a temper of her own was perhaps her right, to be amiable and affectionate along with it was certainly her endowment.' Yet she lived a relatively secluded life and never married, in spite of three proposals, the first of which became an engagement. It ended when he, the Pre-Raphaelite painter, James Collinson, converted back to Catholicism. She experienced periods of depression and several of poor health, and preferred old friendships to those of some of the literary figures she came into contact with, such as Alfred Lord Tennyson. However, she did appear to form a close friendship with William Morris and his family. Brother, William, edited and published a collection of her letters after her death in 1894, entitled *Letters of Christina Rossetti*, indicating that at least some of her correspondence was preserved. However, it is believed that many more letters were destroyed, whether deliberately or not by the private-natured Christina, the subject of debate.

Rossetti experienced a period of declining health before her death. In the last years of her life, she was plagued by her various health issues, including Graves' disease, which affected her thyroid gland. This condition caused fatigue, weakness and other symptoms that impacted her overall well-being. Her death, however, is generally attributed to breast cancer which she had been battling for several years before finally succumbing, on 29th December, 1894.

Catherine Youd

Shut Out

*The door was shut. I looked between
Its iron bars; and saw it lie,
My garden, mine, beneath the sky,
Pied with all flowers bedewed and green.*

*From bough to bough the song-birds crossed,
From flower to flower the moths and bees;
With all its nests and stately trees
It had been mine, and it was lost.*

*A shadowless spirit kept the gate,
Blank and unchanging like the grave.
I peering through said: "Let me have
Some buds to cheer my outcast state."*

*He answered not. "Or give me, then,
But one small twig from shrub or tree;
And bid my home remember me
Until I come to it again."*

The spirit was silent; but he took

*Mortar and stone to build a wall;
He left no loophole great or small
Through which my straining eyes might look*

*So now I sit here quite alone
Blinded with tears; nor grieve for that,
For naught is left worth looking at
Since my delightful land is gone*

*A violet bed is budding near
Wherein a lark has made her nest
And good they are, but not the best;
And dear they are, but not so dear.*

Christina Rossetti, pub. 1862

Sources:

Amersham Museum

<https://amershammuseum.org>

Marsh, Jan, *Christina Rossetti: A Literary Biography* (ebook edition, 2012) Faber & Faber

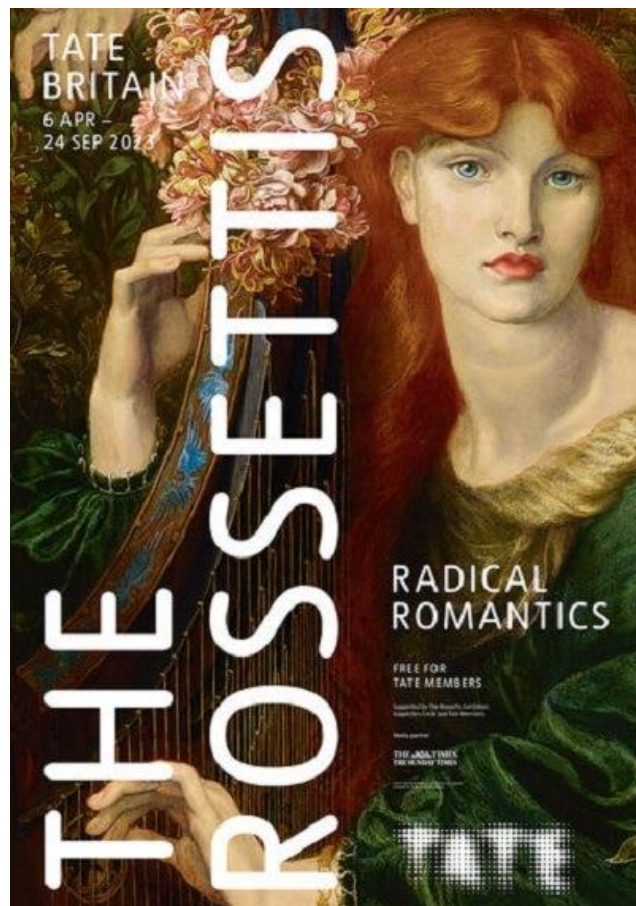
Oxford Dictionary of National Biography

www.oxforddnb.com

Poetry Foundation

www.poetryfoundation.org

Currently showing at Tate Britain, Millbank, London SW1P 4RG, is an exhibition entitled simply The Rossettis. Closes 24th September 2023.



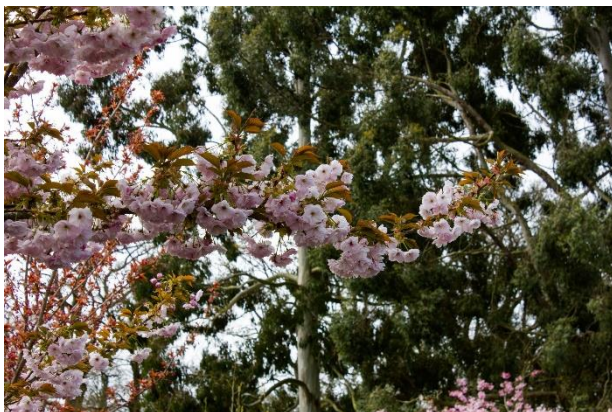
Tree Walk: Batsford Aboretum, Moreton in the Marsh. Wednesday 26th April



Batsford Swamp

John O'Dwyer

On the site of a typical C18 estate garden – French geometric style succeeded by informal parkland – Lord Redesdale, grandfather of ‘the Mitford girls’, established Batsford Arboretum as a ‘wild woodland garden with Asian influences’ in 1890s. Bamboos, Japanese maples, Asian conifers, oriental-style landscaping, water features, and statuary were included and although the gardens were neglected in WW2 they gained a new lease of life when they came into the ownership of the 2nd Lord Dulverton in the 1950s. In 10 years the grounds were restored to the status of an arboretum of international standing.



Cherry Blossom

John O'Dwyer

The BGT visit led by Michael Hunt on 26 April was designed to coincide with Cherry Blossom Time. Batsford holds the National Collection of Japanese flowering cherries, over 120 specimens. The bulk of these were introduced to the UK between the 1860s and 1920s. Some of the most famous of those at Batsford include *Prunus* ‘*Shirotae*’ (Mount Fuji cherry), *P. incisa* ‘*Fujimae*’, the Fuji cherry, and *P. ‘Tai-haku*’ (the Great White Cherry). This last was famously recognised and propagated by Captain Collingwood Ingram or ‘Cherry Ingram’ who in the 1920s noticed a specimen in a garden in Sussex when it was thought to be extinct in its native Japan.

As you probably know, in Japan the cherry blossom trees (‘*Sakura*’) are effectively ‘worshipped’, the blossoming being tracked from south to north across the country (not unlike the fall colour in New

England); the blossom only lasts a couple of weeks so ‘hanami’ or the custom of flower viewing has to be carefully scheduled. This short blooming time means cherry blossom represents human mortality, as well as symbolising love and good luck.



Cherry blossom – *Prunus* ‘*Gyoiko*’

John O'Dwyer

Almost as spectacular are the magnolias, there being over 100 examples, one of the best being *Magnolia campbellii* ‘*Darjeeling*’ also known as the Himalayan pink tulip tree.



Magnolia campbellii ‘*Darjeeling*’

John O'Dwyer

Other beautiful trees include the Pocket-handkerchief tree *Davidia involucrata*, flowering dogwoods, Wollemi pine, *Catalpa*, *Cercidiphyllum* (Katsura), *Cercis* and the huge collection of both Japanese and American *Acers* which provide flamboyant colour in autumn.

Clare Butler

Visit: Hall Barn, Beaconsfield. 18th May



*Hall Barn terrace. Introduction to the history of the garden and Barn, Claire de Carle, Hon. Jenefer Farncombe & Dr. Sarah Rutherford
Claire de Carle*

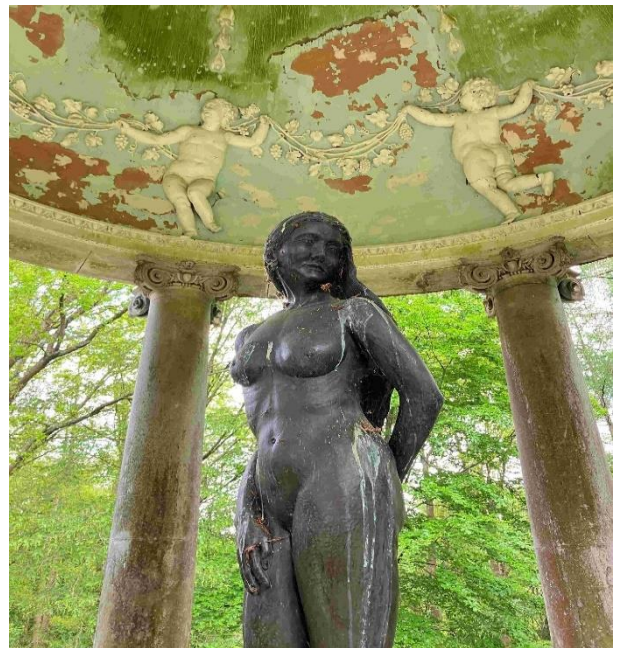
There could hardly have been a lovelier day for a garden visit than Thursday 18 May when 50 of us descended on Beaconsfield to enjoy a perfect afternoon at Hall Barn, the historic home and gardens of the Honourable Jenefer Farncombe, one of the Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust's Founder members. Mrs Farncombe welcomed us with a brief history of the estate and Sarah Rutherford followed up with an outline of the best route round the grounds which we could then wander round at will.



*Hall Barn and terrace
Claire de Carle*

The house (Grade II*) is a delightful late 17th century house, much altered over the years, which today closely resembles its original proportions. The positioning of the house is unusual: it sits in an elevated but asymmetrical position between two canals. There are no long views to open countryside but massive yew hedges and groves flank terraces above the canals. The grounds open out as you walk along the Grand Terrace. These pleasure grounds were almost certainly developed in the early 18th century by Edmund Waller III, the stepson of John Aislabie of Studley Royal, in conjunction with Colen Campbell who designed many of the charming garden buildings which adorn the grounds.

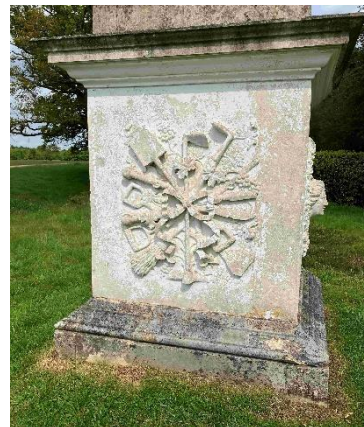
The Grand Canal, which lies in a hollow south-west of the house, is adorned with a Campbell building at either end (the Garden Room and the Fishing Temple) and as you wander into the shade of 'The Grove' you soon find that long rides direct your walk to a rest in the Temple of Venus. 'The Burnham Venus' (below) is a modern sculpture of 1988 by Mantripp under a charming ceiling decorated with putti and garlands. Progressing onwards you reach the Obelisk, also by Colen Campbell, the plinth of which is decorated with carvings recognising the Waller family and the garden itself. From here a pastoral view opens out into the old park with just a glimpse of the tower of Beaconsfield church to the north, partly hidden in trees beyond the M40 (which sadly has cut off the northern tip of the parkland from the main estate).



*The Burnham Venus
Valerie Joynt*

By now, the prospect of tea and cakes was summoning the walker to rush past Pigeon House Close with its beautifully spaced out specimen trees from the 19th and 20th centuries; a quick diversion to see the stableyard met with a disappointment – not a Georgian farm as she had hoped – and so back to a very welcome tea and even better chat with those Bucks GT members who were still lingering on.

We were very privileged to see this garden which is rarely open to visitors, but it was noted that a popular Shakespeare event takes place in the grounds annually and so, weather permitting, further visits could be made.



Plinth of Obelisk with Waller family carvings

Valerie Joynt

Visit: 'Tree Treasures Walk' Turn End, Haddenham. 30th May



The Dry Garden

CdC

I am very keen to work with local historic gardens and their gardeners to build partnerships and to that end we recently organised a joint event with Turn End. The event was open to both Bucks Gardens Trust members and Friends of Turn End and was led jointly by Michael Hunt, our expert on all things tree related, and Jackie Hunt, a knowledgeable plants woman and the Turn End gardener.

The garden is just half an acre in size and packed with exciting plants. We decided to have two tours, one in the morning and another in the afternoon; in total 24 members attended. Many of our members had not previously visited Turn End and were very surprised to find such a tranquil garden in the centre



The dry garden, foreground pine (humpty) and pomegranate, beyond the wall false acacia and yew

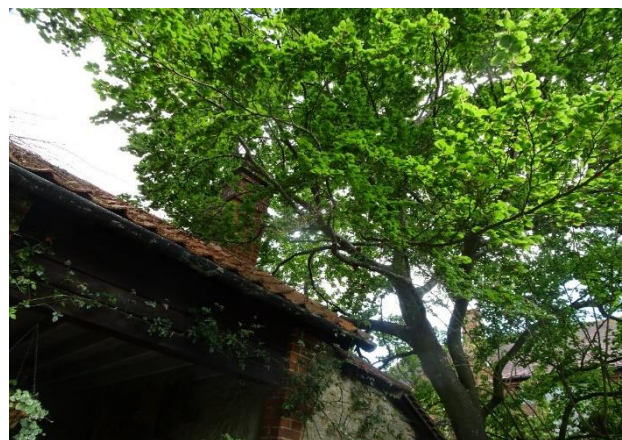
CdC

of Haddenham. To quote Michael, "The garden has an amazing atmosphere and a real sense of calm and as the Japanese call 'Shinrin Yoku' forest bathing, so good for health and mind I was so relaxed being there in amongst the trees and garden rooms."

Following a brief introduction about the history of the site from Jackie, Michael related some information on the walnut tree *Juglans regia*. There are several specimens at Turn End; the largest was moved to the front of the house in the 1960s and it has thrived there since. We then moved into the walled dry gravel garden, where the flowers were thriving due to the recent sunshine. There are a number of trees surrounding the garden including *Acer saccharum*, *Ginkgo biloba*, *Robinia pseudoacacia*, *Punica granatum* and a couple of pines, *Pinus mugo* 'Humpty' and *Pinus aristata*.

Moving on to the central area of the garden, the trees continued to surprise, the most unlikely being a giant sequoia, a survivor from the former C19th garden of the Edwardian villa. Another tree from the earlier garden is a very sizeable horse chestnut. Other trees included a Holm oak *Quercus ilex*, Box *Buxus sempervirens* and three birch trees: *Betula szechuanica*, *Betula jaquemontii* and *Betula fetisowii*. As we walked round the garden we were entertained by beautiful birdsong, including great tits, blackbirds and Michael's favourite the blackcap. Michael is particularly interested in Japanese cherries; unfortunately we were too late to see them in bloom, but he pointed them out to us: *Prunus* 'Shogetsu', and *Prunus hilleri* 'Spire'.

In total there are more than 30 trees in the garden at Turn End, however my favourite was the unusual beech *Fagus sylvatica* 'Cockleshell', the fresh green leaves a beautiful shell shape.



Cockleshell birch (*Fagus sylvatica*)

CdC

If you missed our visit there are a number of opportunities to visit on 'Garden Sundays' this summer: <https://www.turnend.org.uk/new-events>.

I would also recommend the Haddenham Open Gardens Day in aid of the Florence Nightingale Hospice on Sunday 2 July:

https://www.opengardens.co.uk/open_gardens.php?id=2249

Finally, I would just like to say a huge thank-you to Jackie and Venetia at Turn End for their hospitality, Michael our brilliant guide and Joanne Kidd for baking delicious shortbread and representing BGT in the afternoon.



Jackie & Michael answering questions.

CdC

Claire de Carle

Visit: Church Gardens, Harefield. 13th June



Two arches in wall in detail– use not identified G Huntingford

Around 15 Trust members visited these gardens on a hot and cloudless afternoon as a follow-up to the Zoom talk given by Kay Mc Hugh the previous January.

The gardens represent the survival of the formal gardens of Harefield Place. This house had to be rebuilt after a fire c.1656 and the replacement was eventually demolished in 1813 after a fairly illustrious history which included a visit by an ageing Queen Elizabeth I in 1602 and a mention of ‘two Spanish or silver firs’ in John Evelyn’s ‘Sylvia’ (1679). According to the Ordnance Survey, it stood between the McHugh’s house and the eastern end of the ANZAC War Graves enclosure in the Churchyard.

Kay and her architect husband Patrick McHugh bought the surviving property in 1996 which was essentially a residential conversion of the former stables or coachhouse of Harefield Place: the ‘conversion’ had been lived in for many years by a very independent old lady who refused to have any modern services or conveniences installed. The house was derelict and needed everything provided from scratch. The gardens had been used for a while as a market garden supplying vegetables for Uxbridge but latterly had been a dumping ground for building rubble and refuse. They were completely overgrown and full of derelict sheds. The stables and garden walls had been listed in 1974.



Raised terrace and arcaded wall in 2nd enclosure

CdC

Bringing up a family of three girls, fighting continuing vandalism, Patrick and Kay applied themselves to the gargantuan task of restoring the gardens and making a home in the derelict stables. They slowly uncovered the layout of the surviving garden. The Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England surveyed and analysed the earthworks, garden walls and standing structures. The gardens of Harefield Place were added to the Register of Parks and Gardens in 2001. With the architectural and historic significance of the site fully recognised, the McHughs continued to apply for permissions to proceed with their work and commissioned our own Sarah Rutherford to produce a Conservation Plan in 2004 - an ideal choice as Sarah had just left English Heritage where she had been Head of Register.

After a brief introduction in the splendid new café building (called ‘Arcadia’), Kay led us out into the sunshine and round the walled garden with its formal



layout which occupies about a third of the historic enclosure under their control. We saw the huge amount of work involved in the restoration of the surviving walls and the delightful whimsical way in which salvaged items (many dug out from the site itself) have been used throughout the layout.



Organ pipes put to good use.

G.Huntingford

The organ pipes constitute a fine example of this: they were surplus to requirements once the nearby church had decided to replace its pipe organ with an electronic one. Kay's musical sensibilities could not let the organ and its pipes be thrown away and they were rescued, many more pipes than could ever be re-used in the house, so that some of the unwanted ones have been erected in a bed near the entrance and others rise out of the pumpkin patch in the walled garden. We were led through the impressive fruit cage designed by architect Patrick (a complex metal frame with netting).

The southern half of this garden is occupied by narrow raised beds where organic vegetables are raised with much use of companion planting.



Pond, stream, raised terrace & arcaded wall in 2nd larger enclosure

Claire de Carle

The larger and possibly more significant enclosure contained a large number of cob-nuts which were obscuring and damaging the historic structures. The centre piece is a pond installed in the original central depression and fed by a long-established stream. The north side of this part of the garden is dominated by a raised terrace bounded by an arcaded wall of around 20-odd red brick deep arched niches in varying states of preservation, most of the damage coming from the roots of the mature trees growing in the higher ground immediately behind it. The eastern wall is in worse condition. Much needs to be taken down before it can be restored. Against the southern wall Kay is trialling a 'forest garden'. The concept is to mix plants in a polyculture rather than a monoculture to produce a healthier ecosystem. The system involves planting using the natural forest storeys: tree canopy – understorey – ground cover. Nearby she is using 'Hugelkultur' mounds - raised planting beds to improve growing conditions of areas of poor or waterlogged soil. These involve placing soil on top of logs and compostable material. Kay is obviously well-versed in these cutting-edge organic growing techniques and is obviously donating a huge amount of time and energy to testing them.

After the tour, the visitors retired to 'Arcadia' for excellent tea and cake, served by Kay and her daughter Aideen. A number of the group bought the excellent guide book which ends with a gallery of photos underlining the stupendous work done by the McHughs at Harefield

Geoff Huntingford

This garden is now open for visitors check on website

<http://www.churchgardens.co.uk>

Opening times: Sunday 1-5 pm – pre-booking recommended.

Guided tours available for groups (highly recommended).

Plenty of parking.

Afternoon tea in the new "Arcadia" tea room.

Evening Visit: The Plant Specialist Nursery, Great Missenden on Wednesday 21st June



Sean standing in the stock and trial beds explaining 50% loss of stock this winter. GM

For 26 Buckinghamshire Garden Trust members and their guests this was a rather unusual way to celebrate the midsummer solstice. The sun shone, the weather was balmy and the display gardens looked wonderful and we were in for a real treat – to see what really happens behind those gardens and alphabetically arranged plant display sale beds.

Having ensured we were all seated on the terrace Sean explained the history behind the nursery which was established in 2002 by his business partner Keith Pounder and himself, Sean Walter. The Nursery (and its display gardens) is located in the village of Great Missenden in the Chilterns and it is dedicated to growing a wide range of new and unusual herbaceous perennials and ornamental grasses, making reliable garden plants especially for our changing climate.



Plants in their pallets waiting to be checked GM

As Sean explained at no time has gardening with perennials been more exciting. The sheer range of colour and variety allows endless combinations and styles and they are particularly relevant when sustainability and sensitivity to our environment and the changing climate are paramount.

Plant breeders worldwide continue to introduce new forms of old favourites, which often have more extended flowering periods, more vigour and a more comprehensive range of colours. Many new plants that catch Sean and Keith's attention are added to the



Backstage of the nursery started at the Potting Shed GM

to their stock and trial beds, with the most being offered for sale from March to October.

Unlike many nurseries the Plant Specialist Nursery has not succumbed to mail order and customers need to pay regular visits to see the changing and wide ranging stock. Not such a hardship! They have also resisted on site refreshments!

After our introductory talk Sean took us through the "Staff Only" gate to explain the layout of the nursery which was surprisingly large and protected from the elements by high hedges. At this time of year the poly-tunnels are mainly dispensed with to enable the plants to harden off during the main growing season. However, there was the challenge of how many we could get through the doorway of the large polytunnel to see what treasures were being hidden there by Sean.



Polytunnel challenge! GM

Leaving behind the trial beds for new plants and a special cage for the hosta and ferns we were let loose to wander through the display gardens and then fill baskets with essential plant purchases.

Good freshly brewed filter coffee, tea, water and biscuits were laid on for the group and the staff and Sean were in constant demand for advice on plant choice.

A very big thank you to all those at The Plant Specialist Nursery who made this Summer Solstice so very special. More detail of opening days and hours visit : <https://theplantspecialist.co.uk/>

Gwen Miles

Buckinghamshire Gardeners' Network Meeting, Turn End, Haddenham



Gardeners' Network meet in the courtyard of Paul Wilkinson studio.

On 30 March the second meeting of the Buckinghamshire Gardeners' Network took place at Turn End in Haddenham, hosted by me, Jackie Hunt.

The newly formed group was created by the Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust to help working gardeners in the county to connect with each other, discuss issues and share contacts. To date 20 people have joined the Network. All have been given a year's membership of the Bucks Gardens Trust, which is very much appreciated.

We started the afternoon with tea, coffee and cake at our neighbouring studio of Paul Wilkinson Photography, which provided a welcome warm space from the cool changeable weather! I then took the group on a short tour of the garden, explaining how it has evolved since it was created in the 1960s by its owners Margaret and Peter Aldington.



The Aldingtons purchased the site because it was once the garden of an early Edwardian house and although overgrown it still retained several old wychert (mud) walls, a coach house and many mature trees including a giant sequoia, walnuts and a horse chestnut. Peter and Margaret built three houses here, including their own, and gradually developed their garden around it. The garden is just over half an

acre in size, comprising many rooms each with a different character and planting style, including a dry sunny garden, shady 'woodland', traditional mixed borders and formal bedding. We have a large and ever-growing plant collection.

The houses are listed at Grade II* and the garden at Grade II. Turn End is the only listed post-war house and garden created by the same hand. We are honoured to be part of the small but hopefully growing group of post-war gardens and landscapes, as campaigned for by the Gardens Trusts.



Courtyard of the main house

Claire de Carle

The meeting enabled us to share recent gardening experiences. This included discussing management of box blight and box moth caterpillar and jointly commiserating about plant losses due to winter cold! We also valued the opportunity that this Network will give us to get out and see gardens and meet other people, particularly for single-handed gardeners and for those with infrequent public openings. A suggestion was made to try to visit each other's gardens at open days such as the National Garden Scheme. A WhatsApp group has also been set up as a forum for group discussion.

We concluded the afternoon with drinks at the King's Head pub, a short walk down the road.

Thank you to all who came to the meeting, I look forward to future Network meetings and BGT events.

Jackie Hunt, Gardener, Turn End

The next meeting of the Gardeners Network is on Thursday 5th October at 1.00 at The Manor Bledlow courtesy of Lord Carrington. Meeting, talk by Dr Sarah Rutherford *Responding to Climate Change in Bucks Gardens – Resist or Adapt?* & tour of garden.

News:

Robert Marnock in Buckinghamshire

In the last two months Claire de Carle and two other researchers, Geoff Huntingford and Louis Keil, have been involved in research for a Sheffield Botanical Garden and Garden Trust joint project on the C19 garden designer Robert Marnock and his work in Buckinghamshire. There is more detail now available at this link

<https://www.sbg.org.uk/celebrating-marnock/marnock-in-bucks>. Reports on Hitcham and Berry Hill (work in progress on Taplow Ct) will be published shortly.

The Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust Community Champions Garden History Lucky Dip events



Recently the Bucks GT have been involved in two community events, one at The Memorial Gardens at Stoke Poges and more recently at the NGS Open Garden afternoon at The Manor, Bledlow. The aim of

this activity is to share garden history stories with new audiences and help to promote the importance and wonder of these historic spaces with more members of the public and of course introduce them to the work of the Trust. We have had some interesting responses, including that many people have never heard of the Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust!



Stoke Poges Memorial Garden

GM



The Manor, Bledlow.

CdC

We have two more dates booked for Heritage Days so look out for details in the e-bulletins.

If you are running a community event this year and would be interested in Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust taking part we can offer a one off 'Garden History Lucky Dip' activity and a plug for the Trust. Contact Gwen Miles: websiteadmin@bucksgardenstrust.org.uk

Welcome to New Members:

The Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust is delighted to welcome the following new members Janet Philpot, Letitia Yetman, Peter Miles and Dr Richard Angwin and Barbara Angwin.

We look forward to meeting you at lectures and events.

Events:

Summer

Wednesday 12th July 2pm

Visit: Lindengate, Wendover Road, Aylesbury. £15.00

Saturday 22nd July 2pm Annual General Meeting

Venue St Dunstan's Church Monks Risborough.

FREE – please book

Following the formal business of the afternoon, the Revd. Peter Godden will give a guided tour & talk about the history of the church which is 11th century Grade I listed. Jo Mirzoeff, will talk on the history of St. Dunstan's Park, John Nash and other local artists.

Tea/coffee and cake will be provided and then you are free to have a walk around the village and visit the Dovecot in the nearby park.

Autumn

Saturday 30th September at 10.30

Restoration of Great Linford, Milton Keynes

FREE – please book as usual.

Guided walk by Ellie Broad around the now completed restoration work of Great Linford. Bring a picnic

Wednesday 27th September at 5.30 for 6 pm

Visit: Bekonscot oldest surviving model village in the world. The trains will be running. Tea & coffee & short talk for this evening visit £10

Autumn/winter series of talks/lectures to be announced.

Bookings should be made through:

www.ticketsource.co.uk/buckinghamshire-gardens-trust

Any queries then contact Rosemary Jury via email

enquiries@bucksgardenstrust.org.uk

Copy Dates for 2023 Newsletters

Winter - Sunday 26th November

Email to newsletter@bucksgardenstrust.org.uk

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