



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

Winter 2023



Copyright: Layton Thompson/Historic Houses

Lord Carrington receiving the Judges Choice Award for Bledlow Manor Gardens at the Historic Houses Conference.

Martha Cobbold, President of Historic Houses, Robert Carrington, Lord Carrington and Lady Ursula Cholmeley, Chair and judge of the Historic Houses Gardens Committee for the award.



The Judges Choice Award

*For almost forty years the public have voted one of Historic House's member gardens their favourite of the year. The award, run in conjunction with Christie's has gone from strength to strength since then – in 2020 more votes were cast for the shortlist than ever before, and a new category of award, **the Judges Choice**, was added to recognise smaller gardens.*

Any garden of a Historic Houses member property that is regularly open to the public may enter the award. Our judging panel whittles down contenders for the main award to a shortlist of eight, which then compete to win the votes of the public and Historic House members all summer.

In addition, the panel will make a second, direct, award to a garden they consider embodies excellence on a smaller scale, either of area, staffing, or access, and hence has less opportunity to influence the popular poll.

Each winner holds the crown for the whole of the following year – the sought-after title can considerably boost visitor numbers, really putting the garden on the map.

Extract from Historic Houses Press Release



Lord Carrington in the walled garden Open Day 2023 CdeC

Many congratulations to Lord Carrington, Head Gardener Mark Thompson and the gardening team at Bledlow Manor for their well-deserved *Judges' Choice* award at the Historic Buildings Parks and Gardens Conference on 14th November.

Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust was represented at the event by members of the Council, the Media Team and the Gardeners' Network. We also had Matthew Gladstone with Michael Harrison of Wotton House representing David Gladstone, our founding patron, and our 25th Anniversary patron Lord Carrington. The Gardens Trust, our umbrella organisation, was also an exhibitor.



Sculpture Garden, Bledlow Manor

CdeC

Dear Members,

Thank you all for your continuing support. Despite the challenging financial situation this year we have had another successful year: membership numbers remain steady at around 200 and our funds remain healthy.

We have organised seven events this year; particularly popular were the visit to Hall Barn and the evening visit to the Plant Specialist, and our exciting programme for 2024 will be launched after Christmas. We have now returned to in-person talks for the Winter Lecture Series at our new venue, Aylesbury Methodist Church. So please support us as it will be good to meet up with friends old and new and we have some excellent speakers lined up. We realise that it is sometimes difficult to plan ahead, but it is fine to turn up on the day without pre-booking.

We will also continue with our audience engagement programme next year and hope to take our stall with the 'garden history lucky dip' to six open garden events, so if you know of an event that we could come along to please let me know. All our events take a considerable amount of organisation and while I now have a small team to help with bookings, I would like to ask you all to consider coming along to at least one of these open days to talk to people about what we do – you would be amazed by how many people have not heard of the Gardens Trust. It is so important that we engage with a wider audience if we are to continue to fulfil our plans and sustain our membership in the future.

I think you will agree that Gwen Miles produces an excellent newsletter, and we keep our website and social media updated with interesting information. If you have photographs of gardens that you have visited, please send them to us, with a few lines about where they were taken and a link to further information if you have one. Just one thing to remember – we cannot use images taken on National Trust property and if they include people you must check with them first.

On behalf of the Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust team, I wish you a **Wonderful Christmas and a Very Happy 2024**. Best wishes, Claire



A wintery scene in my garden in Oakley

Planning Report

Time has not allowed us to provide a longer review of planning applications this quarter but we hope this covers the headline cases that we have been dealing with.

Firstly, the disappointing news is that a planning application for a single storey side extension at Wotton Underwood's South Pavilion Lodge Farm was granted approval at appeal. The Bucks Gardens Trust (BGT) had previously made a site visit and submitted a robust objection to the original planning and listed building applications in 2021 and our objections were referred to at length across officer reports for both the planning application and listed building consent applications. We were particularly unhappy because, when the applicant took the matter to appeal, the BGT were neither notified nor consulted of the appeal and the first we knew of it was when the decision was uploaded to the planning site. The local planning authority has sent a written response, acknowledging that we should have been consulted and reassuring us that our comments were also submitted in full to the planning inspectorate.

Secondly, you may recall that, in our summer update, we reported on an ongoing application at Dropmore to demolish Burwood, a 1980s house by the main road, and to construct a Palladian style mansion. The BGT had made a few site visits and, whilst we did not object to the replacement of the existing house, we robustly objected to the proposed position of the new house within the Registered Park and Garden (RPG). The most recent application had incorporated proposals to restore two former gate lodges to the wider Dropmore estate – one of which was already subject to a planning/LBC application last year which we supported and which had already been approved. The inclusion of these appears to have been intended to fulfil a request from the planning authority to demonstrate 'conservation gain' for the new development and, as a result, planning permission for the new house within the RPG was granted.

More encouraging was the planning decision on an application at Harleyford Golf Club where we submitted comments on proposals to convert an existing outbuilding to offices and construction of two storey side extension with glazed link. Whilst we did not object to the new adaptive use of a semi-redundant outbuilding, we expressed strong concern about the impact of the glazed link and the extensive use of plate glass in the heart of the RPG. We now understand that this application has been refused by the planning authority.

Harleyford Manor itself is under separate ownership to the Golf Club and we were recently invited to make a site visit to review proposals to bring the old Dairy back into use. The site visit was a wonderful opportunity to better understand the landscape and the changes that have happened since the wider estate

was split up. The application itself is very encouraging and we were able to offer our full support to it.

The Gardens Trust were also invited to comment on proposals for a new building within the walled garden at Chequers although no planning documents were publicly available due to the potential security issues in uploading documents to the planning website.

We have also commented on a number of applications for substantive new garage buildings at Mentmore and Tyringham. Whilst we had no objection to the principle of introducing simple garage structures in either location, we would prefer to see smaller ancillary structures with simple timber doors and small windows and we are particularly concerned when we see proposals for large, ornate and heavily fenestrated structures which read more as potential domestic dwellings.

Jo Mirzoeff



Harleyford Manor – landscaped lawn Jo Mirzoeff



Harleyford Manor - sculptured grass parterre fronting the house & River Thames Jo Mirzoeff



The three sites on an Ordnance Survey map of 1900, reproduced with the permission of the [National Library of Scotland](#)

Robert Marnock in Buckinghamshire

During the summer of 2023, Sheffield Botanical Gardens in partnership with the Gardens Trust celebrated the Scottish landscape gardener, horticulturist and writer Robert Marnock (1800–1889). Although these celebrations have now finished, you can visit the website to view the online exhibition and find out more about Marnock: <https://www.sbg.org.uk/celebrating-marnock>

Robert Marnock worked in south Buckinghamshire throughout the 1860s. The gardens he is known to have been involved with are Hitcham House (formerly Blythewood), Berry Hill and Taplow Court, which form a cluster to the east of the River Thames. All three sites changed hands around 1852 owing to the sale of the Taplow estate by the Earl of Orkney. The new owners had made their money in business and therefore had sufficient funds to have their gardens created by one of the top designers of the day, Robert Marnock. They are located to the south of the better-known neighbouring estates of Cliveden and Dropmore. This area of Buckinghamshire was much sought after during the C18th and C19th due to its proximity to Windsor Castle. There were also good connections by river and later the Great Western Railway to London; it remains popular today with the M4 to the south.

Despite considerable growth during the C20th, the area has a rural feel, with Burnham Beeches to the north and the vast areas of parkland surrounding Dropmore. There is however a constant threat of development from Slough and Maidenhead, which continue to expand.

Of the three Marnock gardens, the one at Hitcham House is probably the best surviving. Berry Hill has suffered considerable neglect, and it is still to be determined exactly what Marnock did at Taplow Court. A fourth site in the area has also been added, Greenlands near Henley, formerly thought to be in Oxfordshire, which is still to be researched.

Robert Marnock was one of the many outstanding gardeners who came to England from Scotland with the aim of building a career. He started in the kitchen garden at Bretton Hall in 1825, progressing to become head gardener. His big breakthrough was winning the competition to design the Sheffield Botanical Gardens in 1834. He then became the first curator, and he later moved to London and took over a nursery in Hackney in 1839/40. Along with Decimus Burton he redesigned the Royal Botanical Society's gardens in Regent's Park. He also took on private commissions for parks and gardens and later fully dedicated himself to landscape gardening. By the 1870s he was looking for a convenient point to retire, and the project at Taplow Court, which he started in 1877, was probably one of his last private house commissions. His retirement project was Alexandra Park, Hastings, completed in 1882.

Taplow Court



The gardens at Taplow Court late C19 (Bucks Archive)



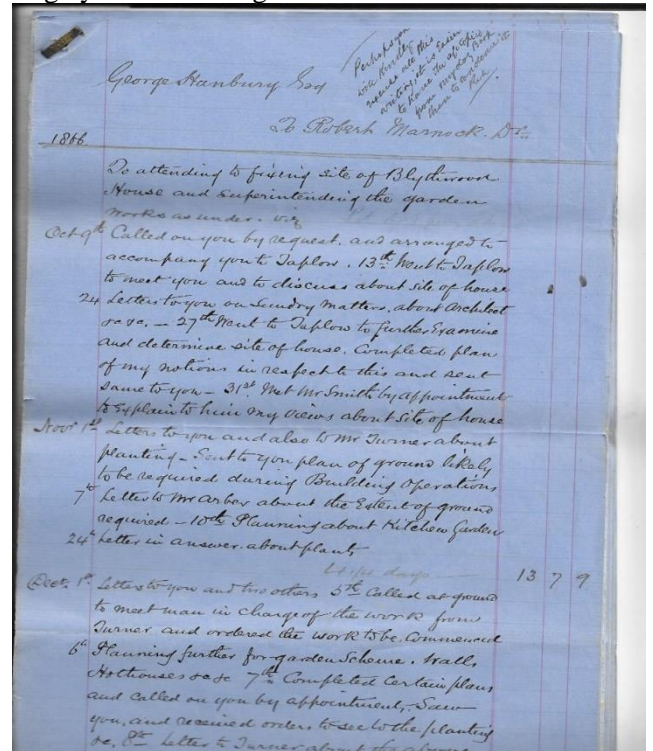
Taplow Court 2023

Clare de Carle

A plan from 1877 held by Bucks Archives, which was probably drawn by Marnock or one of his staff and is based on a much rougher sale plan of 1852, gives few clues to the work that was carried out at Taplow. However, by comparing his work at Hitcham and Taplow we can identify similarities in their styles. In the pleasure grounds at Taplow his alterations probably included the creation of grand borders, alterations to the parterre and new tree planting. The existing terraces were planted with flower borders edged with box hedging, taller shrubs to the rear and bedding plants in the foreground. The Bucks Archives photographs show the immaculate pleasure grounds in the later part of the C19th, and it was probably these that were remembered and mentioned by William Robinson in the *Gardener's Chronicle* obituary (see Sheffield Botanical Gardens website). At all three of the Bucks sites, he planted large numbers of trees. Given his interest in trees and shrubs they would have been incorporated into his improvements at Taplow. It is probable that he used some of the varieties that he had previously used at Berry Hill and that some were intended as statement trees. The main features, the Cedar Walk and the riverside walk, were already in place but may have been added to and the edges softened along the boundary of the park. As the cedars dated from the C18th some may have needed replacing by the 1870s. Britain from Above aerial photographs from 1953 show younger trees in the pleasure grounds and the 1899 25" OS map shows trees in the park and gardens which are not present on the 1877 plan.

Hitcham House (formerly Blythewood)

At Hitcham House Marnock designed the garden from scratch rather than working on an existing garden, working for George Hanbury from 1865. His accounts are still held by the family and include detailed descriptions of his work over the following couple of years. Marnock was planting in the 'gardenesque' style as defined by JC Loudon, so all the trees and shrubs were arranged according to their kinds and dimensions, initially close together and thinned out later, to best display the natural form and habit of each. The ideal for this type of garden was once the trees had reached 9 to 12 meters and the shrubberies were full and in vigorous health, the planting throwing scattered shade over the smooth lawn. In the relatively small garden at Hitcham, Marnock achieved his aim of a broad sweep of high-quality lawn and the position of trees in relation to it. This style of garden required maintenance of a high standard which would have been possible at the time it was created, but following WWI and into the C20th this was no longer achievable, and the design has largely become overgrown.

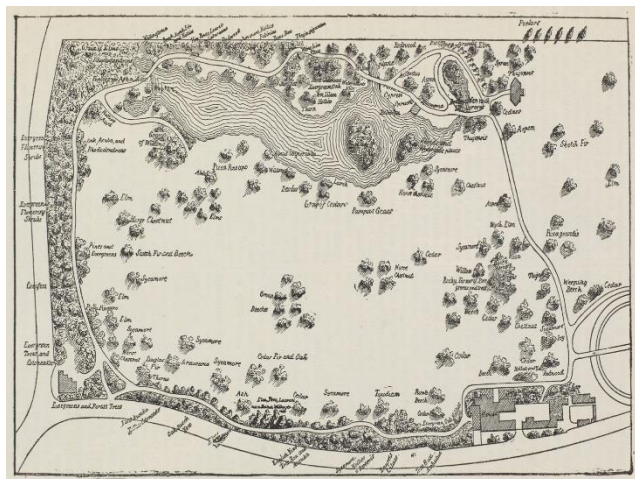


Robert Marnock's accounts 1866 (with kind permission of Robert Hanbury)



Service buildings for Marnock's kitchen garden at Hitcham House (Claire de Carle)

Berry Hill



Marnock's Plan for Berry Hill (RHS Linley Library)

The land at Berry Hill was part of the Taplow estate owned by the Earls of Orkney, which also included nearby Cliveden. The 5th Earl was declared bankrupt in 1852 and John Noble, a leading varnish manufacturer, bought Berry Hill in 1855, but he only stayed 16 years and moved out in 1871.

The garden of 1.5 hectares comprised shrubberies and pleasure grounds. Marnock was immediately called in to design a layout which William Robinson described as 'a fine example of the English or natural style' (*The Garden*, 1872). By 1860 over 7ha had been planted with transplanted standard specimen trees (see plan) and shrubs and flowering plants. Noble asked Marnock to create his gardens in the shortest possible time and he managed to achieve this, as the *Gardener's Chronicle* of 1860 (p. 815) reported:

'This affords a good example of successful transplanting and furnished a place in a short time. Four years ago, the gardens had little pretensions to distinction, their extent being little more than three acres... The grounds now consist, however, of upwards of fifteen acres, beautifully laid out, and contain as fine specimens of Pines as can be found in places that have been established for centuries.'

Noble left Berry Hill House in 1870 as it was too small for his large family and servants. The house was leased to family members and eventually sold in 1902. It became a country club in the 1950s, but burnt down in 1969 and was replaced by a block of flats, Berry Hill Court.

We will shortly be uploading the Marnock research to our website and two excellent reports on Hitcham House/Blythewood by Geoff Huntingford will be added to our research and recording list.

Claire de Carle



**Winter Talk
Saturday 27th
January 2024 - 2.30**

**Puzzle Programme
by David Marsh**

Celebrating Cliveden's 'Quaker parter' and 'sleeping' 18th century landscape gardens

This year, 2023, marks a very important anniversary for Cliveden. Exactly 300 years ago, Lord Orkney laid out his 'Quaker parter' and started work on his unique early 18th century landscape garden of walks on the steep side of the hill here, with stunning views overlooking the Thames.

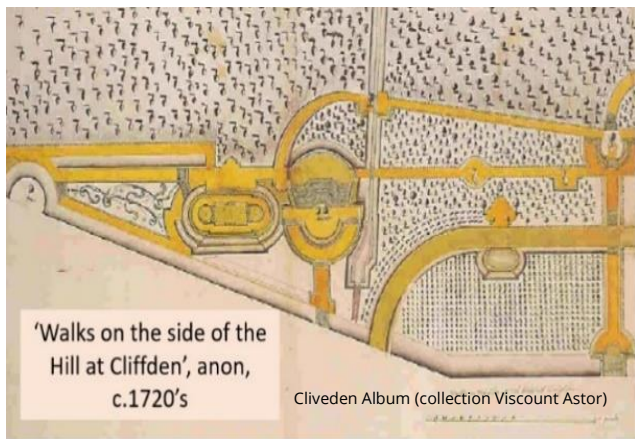
George and Elizabeth Orkney were a power couple intimately involved with King William III. They bought Cliveden in 1696 with Elizabeth's income and spent the next 40 years improving the house and grounds in the latest taste (1).



Cliveden Parterre c1759, attr William Tomkins (collection Viscount Astor)

George spent almost 20 years considering various elaborate new designs for Cliveden's parterre, but in the winter of 1723-4 finally decided to lay it entirely to patriotic, lush, green English grass, with a few gravel paths. This was far from a cheap option, as to keep the parterre's vast six acres in pristine condition a team of experts would have needed to cut it very often with scythes, with clippings and weeds being removed by hand. In December 1723 Orkney described his plan to his brother: "I call it a Quaker parter for it is very plain and yet I believe you will think it noble ... I hope it will be approved by the conosseurs" (2). Today, in keeping with Orkney's vision, Cliveden's parterre still includes large areas of closely cut lawn, and the later, Victorian, flowerbeds are unusually restrained in their triangular design, so the visitor is not too distracted from the amazing view from the South Terrace.

In 1723 Orkney also started work on his ambitious scheme to transform the cliffy side of the hill, between what is now the Chapel and the Blenheim Pavilion, into his literally groundbreaking early 18th century landscape garden, allowing fabulous views over the Thames. We know from Orkney's letters that he worked with Charles Bridgeman, the 'Capability Brown' of his time, to create his garden, part of which is shown by the intriguing plan here. The lone tree and the oval at the left are close to the spaces now filled by the Chapel and Memorial



'Walks on the side of the Hill at Clifden', anon, c.1720's

Cliveden Album (collection Viscount Astor)

'Walks on the side of the Hill at Clifden' anon, C1720's Cliveden Album (collection Viscount Astor)

Garden. The task was extremely challenging (heft then being mainly available from people and horses) and the two men argued about its difficulty and cost. By October 1723, Orkney was writing: "I must do the best I can but think it is a greater work than I thought, but I still think it will be much better than was Intended ... the Amphitheatre is quite struck out, but where to get turfe and tree for La grand machine, besides ther is great difficulty to get the slope all that side of the Hill where the precipice was, but Bridgeman mackes difficultys of nothing I told him if I thought it had been the one Half of what I see it will cost I believe I never have done it, he says the beginning is the worst." (3) The Amphitheatre, shown in the centre of the map, is Cliveden's unique, little known, second amphitheatre, and 'La grande machine' was a presumably Versailles-inspired scheme intended to pump water up using power from a waterwheel in the Thames below, to feed a cascade.

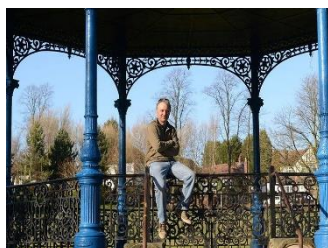
Today, almost all the features shown in the plan, including the Amphitheatre, paths, viewing points and an old lime avenue, lie 'sleeping' on Cliveden's hillside, visible to those who know how to look. Orkney's network of paths between the Chapel and the Blenheim Pavilion, which look so natural now, allow visitors to enjoy Orkney's wonderful views over the Thames, unaware of the extreme care in their design and the drama and difficulty of their creation.

(1) James Crathorne (1995, rev. 2001) *Cliveden, the Place and the People*, pp.34–51.

(2) Orkney to Selkirk, National Library of Scotland, MS1033, 5th December 1723.

(3) *ibid.*, 2nd October 1723.

Jacqui Edwards



**Winter Talk
Saturday 24th
February 2024 2.30**

**Public Parks
Paul Rabbitts**

Emberton Country Park

Extract from Research and Recording report
<http://bucks.gardenstrust.or.uk/?s=emberton+country+park>



Image: Heron Lake

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Overview

Emberton Park, opened in 1965, is a fine and very early example of a mid-C20 naturalistic Country Park landscape laid out by a local authority for public recreation shortly before the 1968 Country Park Act. It was one of England's first country parks to be designed from scratch, comprising naturalistic planting with a network of paths around former extraction pits. Walking trails and paths take the visitor around four lakes, through wooded glades and open grassland.

Newport Pagnell Rural District Council used the Physical Education Act 1937 to inform their ideas to create a recreation area open to all. Country Parks were pioneered by the Countryside Agency from the late 1960s and developed in partnership with local authorities for the remainder of the C20.

There are around 250 recognised country parks in England and Wales, most being designated in the 1970s after Emberton, a very early, example was created, perhaps the earliest designed from scratch.

Emberton is one of four diverse local-authority run Country Parks in historic Bucks, contrasting with the other three in the south of the county: Black Park (1970), Denham Park and Langley Park, which used existing historic designed landscapes. As a naturalistic public landscape with large expanses of shrubby planting as a key feature, it was developed in advance of the extensive and varied group of Milton Keynes New Town parks conceived in the 1970s and still being completed.

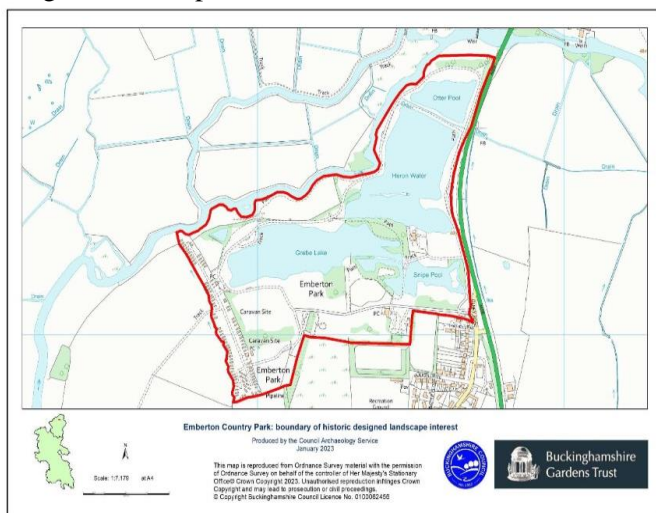
Archaeological Interest The site has the potential for further archaeological evidence associated with the Late Iron Age and a Romano-British settlement along a section of Roman Road evidence of a pottery kiln also exists. It also has potential for finds

associated with the Civil War Battle at Olney as a row of soldiers' graves has been located.

Architectural Interest: There is no significant historic architecture nor any associated with the 1960s design.

Artistic Interest: The initial design and layout of the park was managed by Newport Pagnell Rural District Council. It is an example of how sympathetic restoration of gravel workings combined with innovative design can provide excellent leisure facilities within a rural landscape at a time when the future of the countryside was under threat. It makes expert use of the rolling rural setting in its design with external views including of the iconic Olney church spire.

Historic Interest: The area had been crucial in the construction of the nearby M1 motorway (Britain's first) the gravel dug, being used in its construction. With the completion of the first section of motorway in 1959 the gravel pits became disused. Its historic importance is as a very early example of a purpose-built Country Park. The development of the Country Park is a significant historical phenomenon in landscape design in the past 60 years and the designs thus have high heritage significance as post-war designed landscapes.



HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT UP UNTIL THE OPENING OF THE PARK

Emberton Country Park is one of the first of England's country parks to be developed. While Studley Royal (West Riding Yorks, now owned by the National Trust) was created around the same period, (Lambert 2006) it was not designed on a new site specifically for the contemporary needs of public recreation.

The idea of Country Parks was first raised as early as 1929, but it was to be some decades later before legislation enabled local authorities to develop suitable land. The 1960s saw increasing momentum in acquiring land for leisure activities. The reasoning behind this drive was threefold: to ease the pressure on the more remote places of natural beauty, to protect the countryside and, thirdly, to provide accessible leisure activities for the public without having to travel far (Lambert, 2006).

In 1952, the area which is now the Country Park was used as gravel pits to provide material for the development of the first section of the M1 Motorway nearby to the east which opened in 1959. Newport Pagnell Rural District Council and Buckinghamshire County Council then acquired these disused gravel pits on the edge of Emberton village in April 1965 for the sum of £24,000. The initial design and layout of the park was achieved by Newport Pagnell Rural District Council. It "became a model of how sympathetic restoration of gravel workings can provide first class facilities" (Emberton Park Nature Trail Brochure). Three main principles guided the initial thinking and the original concept:

The desire to retain as much as possible of the flora and fauna.

No noisy activities such as power boats or fairgrounds.

To have natural places in the countryside with a family focus.

Almost all the work was carried out by Newport Pagnell Rural District Council's engineers and administration was done by existing staff prepared to work overtime. Thus, a significant amount of money was saved. The idea of a restaurant was rejected as "not" being in keeping "with the basic plan which concentrated on small play areas for children with other areas left completely natural for wildlife. The park was thus deliberately designed without buildings.

Amazingly, the Park was ready for its open day on Whit Sunday, June 1965. It was held up as an example of how derelict land can be reclaimed for leisure facilities with representatives Bucks Gardens Trust, from the government and other interested parties visiting the park.

Over time, with monies obtained from national and local grants, planned improvements were made and the site further developed. The park was the first country park to gain recognition from the Countryside Commission. Whilst ownership and management of the park has since been transferred to Milton Keynes City Council, the same principles apply today



Image: Glebe Lake

Kathy Jackson

Kathy Jackson (Researcher)

Sezincote

This is a gem of a house and a favourite of mine which I visit from time to time as it has a unique garden and specimen trees.

It was designed by the architect Samuel Pepys Cockerell, younger brother of the nabob Charles Cockerell. It is a notable example of Neo-Mogul architecture, a 19th-century reinterpretation of 16th and 17th-century architecture from the Mogul Empire. It is thought that Sezincote is the only Mogul building surviving in Western Europe. The artist Thomas Daniel advised on the classical Indian architecture with Repton consulted on landscaping the grounds (no Red Book). Work began on Sezincote in 1805 and was substantially complete by 1807, the time of the Prince of Wales's recorded visit. The house was hugely restored after WW2



The house is built in sandstone, instead of typical white marble, with a copper dome and minarets. It is set in a picturesque water garden with fine bog plants, seven spring-fed pools, waterfalls, a grotto and a temple to Surya, the Hindu sun god. The south front has a curving orangery with peacock-tail windows, jali-work (fretwork screen) railings and pavilions. This front frames the Persian Paradise



Photographs courtesy of Michael Hunt.

Garden set off by the surroundings of a Repton landscape. There are even two elephants to mark the entrance and lead you down the steps to the water garden from the landscaped grounds.

The gardens have a wealth of trees including champion trees such as the weeping hornbeam *Carpinus petulus* 'Pendula'; *Fraxinus americana*, an American white ash, and *Betula utilis* subsp. *jacquemontii*, a Himalayan birch. It also features a fine *Cedrus libani*, the Cedar of Lebanon, as well as a fabulous *Liriodendron tulipifera* 'Aureomarginatum', the variegated tulip tree, plus of course my favourite, the Japanese Acers.

Sezincote House is closed until May 2024 but the gardens are open from January 2024, 3 days a week., It is 3 miles from Stow on Wold at Moreton-in-Marsh, Gloucestershire GL56 9AW. More information and visiting times for house, tea room and garden <https://www.sezincote.co.uk>

Michael Hunt, BGT Tree Specialist

Saturday 16th March 2.30pm

Talk: Gardeners' Royal Benevolent Institute & Exbury Gardens by Francesca Murray



Talk: Modernist Architecture in Amersham
by Alison Bailey. 11th November
Aylesbury Methodist Centre



High and Over

Photograph: Mary Buckle

The first of our talks to be held at our new venue, Aylesbury's Methodist Church Centre, proved to be very interesting.

Thank you, Alison, for introducing us to the context in which Modernist architecture developed in the town. She concentrated on Amyas Connell's High and Over in Amersham, which led the way ahead of more famous sites you might know such as Lubetkin's Highpoint in Highgate. Just as interesting was how the house has fared over time. As it has remained in private ownership, going from a single dwelling, being controversially divided into a pair of semis in the 1960s and then reinstated in recent years with many original features uncovered and restored, it could so easily have been demolished. Its singularity and design features have made it especially difficult to maintain and the restrictions of its heritage status only add to that. What a shame that the various elements of a modern interpretation of a country house garden are mostly lost (apart from the hollow and pool), denying us the opportunity to see the garden's evolution, and reminding us to persevere with the task of recognising and preserving innovative 20th century gardens and landscapes.

The interest continued with Alison revealing the Amersham buildings, both private and public, built in this 'Moderne' tradition in the 1960s and '70s, and even the recent remodelling of a home along these principles hidden away in Chesham Bois. Alison's talk reminded me to keep my eyes open rather than taking the buildings along my High Street for granted.

Our new venue was bright and warm and had plenty of space for both listening to the talk and for chatting afterwards while consuming those lovely cakes. The chairs were particularly comfortable! I am looking forward to David Marsh's talk on 'Puzzle pictures' in January.

Louise Keil

Christmas Lunch
Saturday 25th November 2023,
The Crown, Granborough

Around 30 BGT members gathered at The Crown, Granborough for a resumption of the traditional Christmas lunch which had been on hold for a few years. It's the sister pub of the Old Thatched Inn at Adstock which used to be our favoured venue, and the experience was just as good.

Our Chair, Claire de Carle, presented our esteemed ex-chair Dr Sarah Rutherford with a gift on the occasion of a significant birthday, and said that a John Lewis voucher would be going to Rosemary Jury, now ensconced in Brighton, in recognition of all her work on behalf of BGT. She also thanked the members of the Council and other helpers, who now form an effective Events Team.

As usual our star guest Brian Dix (when he had recovered from his journey from Wales) gave a trenchant address, noting that locally to him, societies are closing down for lack of support and 'new blood'. Parks and gardens will only survive if we can inculcate respect, regards and love for them, he said. BGT is promoting parks and gardens via outreach projects and a network of contacts being built up via Head Gardeners, schools and the Young Archaeologists' Club. All members need to be involved by distributing leaflets, encouraging friends and neighbours to show an interest or join the Trust, and helping out with events and publicity, as too much work falls on the officers. We need to make sure the success of BGT is continued.

Recommended reading: Hazel Conway and Paul Rabbitts, 14 November 2023, *People's Parks - The Design and Development of Public Parks in Britain*, John Hudson Publishing.

Clare Butler



Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust Christmas Lunch at The Crown
Photograph: John O'Dwyer

Editor's Note: Paul Rabbitts is the speaker on Saturday 24th February 'Public Parks'

Outreach Projects: The Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust Gardeners' Network



The Gardeners' Network has now been up and running for just over a year and I am pleased to say has been a great success.

In October our patron Lord Carrington and head gardener Mark Thompson hosted the meeting at Bledlow Manor. Following an introduction from Lord Carrington, the 35+ attendees (including some BGT council members) were treated to an excellent talk by Dr Sarah Rutherford on climate change, followed by a tour of the garden. The gardeners all enjoyed the afternoon very much (we always provide plenty of cake and tea).



We meet just twice a year as the gardeners take the afternoon off from their hectic garden responsibilities and we are pleased that their employers are happy for them to do so. In 2024, in March we will be at Claydon and in October at Wormsley walled garden where we will be treated to a demonstration from Geo Tree.

We will be applying for funding for this worthwhile project; however, at present we are most grateful to two of our longstanding members for their generous donations towards the cost of the project. One of the things we would like to do is set up an online forum. In the meantime, the members use their WhatsApp group to communicate.

“The trust is doing brilliant work and I enjoyed the last HG network meeting at Lord Carrington’s place.” *Barry Smith, Head Gardener, Stowe*

“Many thanks for organising such a fabulous visit to Lord Carrington’s wonderful garden with the Head Gardeners’ group. It has been great to get to know all the other local Head Gardeners and an invaluable source of knowledge to tap into.” *Charlotte Tremlin, Head Gardener, Wormsley Walled Garden*



Photographs Claire de Carle

Claire de Carle

Chiltern Young Archaeologists Club

On the morning of Saturday 18th November Gwen Miles and I set off for Jordans in a very leafy and rather damp South Buckinghamshire. We had been asked to present a session to the members of the Chilterns Young Archaeologists Club (YAC’s) who meet in the village hall once a month for two-hours. The club is run by Nigel Rothwell (a geologist) and his wife Janet (an archaeologist) with the help of a couple of volunteers, there are 20 members aged between 7 and 16



Gwen studied archaeology at university and taught for many years, however I was right out of my comfort zone! We spent several hours planning what we would do and then sourced the materials for an all-important activity. It was a good opportunity to use the ‘Garden History Lucky Dip’ which we had rolled out at events over the summer. However, first

we introduced ourselves and then asked the children to tell us about themselves and their gardens and why they liked archaeology. We also told them about the work of the Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust.



A selection of 'Garden History@ objects' CdC

We handed out the garden history objects and gave them a few minutes to discuss them, then with a little prompting we figured out how the objects related to gardens. After a short break we showed them images of earthworks, crop and scorch marks we looked at aerial photographs of Quarrendon and a LIDAR image of Wing Park near Leighton Buzzard. We also looked at the extensive evidence of the privy garden which had survived at Hampton Court.



The young people then had great fun setting up their own 'Grow your own cropmark' experiment, using clay and stones to build a wall in a seed tray this was covered in compost and cress seeds and watered thoroughly. We look forward to seeing some photographs of the results in about a week's time!! Perhaps we will have sown the seeds of some future garden historians or at least archaeologists.

Claire de Carle

BGT Events:

Winter Talks Programme

Aylesbury Methodist Church & Centre HP20 2NQ
Saturday 27th January 2.30pm
Talk: Puzzle Pictures by David Marsh

Saturday 24th February 2.30pm
Talk: Public Parks by Paul Rabbitts

Saturday 16th March 2.30pm
Talk: Gardeners' Royal Benevolent Institute & Exbury Gardens by Francesca Murray

Book or turn up on day: Members £10, Guests £12.50
<http://ticketsource.co.uk/Buckinghamshire-gardens-trust>

Other Events:

Kate Harwood: Last Landscapes (The landscapes of British cemeteries over the last four centuries).

Monday January 8th 2024 Zoom & free
Book: [Last Landscapes presented by Kate Harwood](#)
[Tickets, Mon 8 Jan 2024 at 14:00 | Eventbrite](#)



The talk covers the development of cemeteries, and since 1902, of crematoria, and their differing landscapes addressing different purposes. Context from Buenos Aires to Surat, from Stockholm to Cape Town is provided. Kate Harwood is Conservation & Planning Officer for Hertfordshire Gardens Trust and lectures, writes about and researches historic parks and gardens.

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