



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

Autumn 2024



Claire, receiving her award from The Gardens Trust for Exceptional Contribution Award.

The Gardens Trust Exceptional Contribution Award.

The Trustees and Council of Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust are thrilled that Claire de Carle, the Chair, who was nominated by them for The Gardens Trust Annual Volunteer Award, has been awarded by the judging panel a new award the *Exceptional Contribution Award*.

The judging panel was so impressed by her activities that they decided to create a new award for her "immense contribution to the historic designed landscape sector." This will become a new, annual award, celebrating outstanding and sustained volunteer contributions over time. Congratulations, on being the first recipient of this new award. It is richly deserved.

Dear Members

I hope you all had an enjoyable summer and now the autumn is here we are thinking ahead to 2025, our events group are busy planning a programme of visits for you all to enjoy, further details will be available in the new year.

Do contact us if you know of any gardens that may be suitable for us to visit, they need to be at least an acre in size, with historical and/or horticultural features and preferably be able to provide the all-important tea and cake. We have some possible venues in mind; however, it is difficult to always find places in county, so we are looking at places in neighbouring counties such as Oxfordshire and have now booked a visit to the garden at Adwell near Thames to see the amazing daffodils.

We are also considering a visit to the rarely accessible, private Getty Library at Wormsley. I have organised a visit previously for the Gardens Trust and everyone thoroughly enjoyed looking at the array of treasures both historical and contemporary; we would need 28 members and guests with the cost between £35-40. Do let me have your thoughts on these suggestions as your feedback is essential to help us plan.

On a more personal note, I would like to thank BGT Council, Members and the Gardeners Network who contributed to my nomination for the Gardens Trust Award. I would particularly like to thank Gwen Miles and Clare Butler for putting the application together and Jane Carlton Smith, secretary of Oxfordshire Gardens Trust for suggesting my nomination in the first place. I was particularly honoured that a new award for 'Exceptional Contribution' was created and I was the first recipient.

Thank you for your continuing support and I hope to see some of you at our two remaining Autumn events and at our Christmas Lunch in November.
Early Seasons Greetings

Claire de Carle

Membership Offer:

Following on from a summer of events at historic gardens the Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust *Pop Up Road Show* has created an increased interest in membership.



Bucks Gt Pop Up Gazebo at Bledlow Manor Rare Plant Fair CdeC

So with autumn approaching and the Winter/Spring programme of events and talks published now is a good time to join the Trust and get 5 months free membership.

By becoming a member, you can enjoy our events at discounted rates and you can take advantage of our special offer of membership to 1st April 2026 for the price of one year's subscription.

Complete the membership form to be found on the website, www.bucksgardenstrust.org.uk/join-us/ and pay by GoCardless, BAC's etc.

If you need further information please contact the Membership Secretary, Sarah Gray on membership@bucksgardenstrust.org.uk.

Autumn Events:



Wednesday 23rd October
10.00am £10.00
Guided Autumn Walk of Stowe including display of D Day silhouettes with Kathy Jackson



Saturday 26th October
2.30pm £10.00
Evenley Wood: A new chapter by Daniel Winter, Head Gardener.



Saturday 30th November 12 noon. Christmas Lunch.
The Crown at Granborough
Guest speaker: Brian Dix



Buckinghamshire
Gardens Trust

Planning Report

Based upon the report submitted for the July AGM, the main changes this year have occurred in the manner in which casework is managed. Regular readers will recall that at the end of 2023, we were advised that the Gardens Trust Board had agreed to work together with other national amenity societies such as the Victorian Society, the Georgian Group, the 20th Century Society and others to all use the Joint Committee of the National Amenity Societies (JCNAS) casework database. In other words, where previously our Gardens Trust colleagues had reviewed weekly planning lists from across the country to identify applications affecting Registered Parks and Gardens (RPGs) and forward each one individually, the sheer number of applications had increased to such a degree that this work had become overwhelming. Therefore, through using the collated JCNAS database, the results were quickly filtered and the link forwarded from the Gardens Trust to the County Trust for assessment. However, it has not been quite as successful as we had all hoped and the first half of 2024 has seen some applications being identified quite close to their final date for receiving comments. The Gardens Trust pilot scheme will be reviewed later this year.

Furthermore, we have now heard that the process may have to change further. As government funding to the Gardens Trust has been cut back over recent years and their grant is now less than it was in 2008, the Gardens Trust are having to reconsider how they support the County Gardens Trusts (CGTs) in responding to planning applications. They are piloting a scheme over summer to reduce the number of applications that they deal directly with to focus on the most significant. Also, they will be unable to continue to flag planning applications to each county meaning that the County Gardens Trusts will need to take responsibility for the regular review and update of the planning applications and responses.

Whilst we completely understand the tremendous pressure that the Gardens Trust has been under and are very grateful for all the support from our key contacts there, this will result in a particularly large extra piece of work for our planning volunteers in reviewing and identifying relevant applications. Both of our planning volunteers are professionals working in the heritage industry so their available time is already limited. Nonetheless we will carefully consider this evolving situation to find an approach which allows us to deliver the best service possible to continue to support this statutory obligation. We will keep our members updated.

Jo Mirzoeff

Pop- Up Road Show

During 2024 we have expanded our programme of Audience Engagement events and have improved upon our experiences from last year, trying out new displays and attending new venues. Thanks to generous donations from our life members, we were able to purchase a wonderful new personalised gazebo, two folding tables and a new display board (see photos). We have also recruited a few more volunteers to help at the events, Mick Thompson, Peter & Gwen Miles and Claire de Carle are now becoming experts with erecting the large gazebo.



Garden History Lucky Dip, Stoke Poges Memorial Gardens GM

The first event was a return to Stoke Poges Memorial Gardens for the NGS open day in May, I was on holiday that weekend but Gwen reported a successful afternoon. In June we attended the 'Green Festival' at the Chiltern Open Air Museum, this was our first time and we did not know what to expect. Unfortunately, the event was not very well publicised and due to other events taking place in the area it was not well attended. At the end of June, we set up at the village hall in Haddenham for the popular Open Gardens afternoon in aid of Florence Nightingale Hospice. We were next to the ticket sales point however; people were more interested in getting off on their walk and garden visits. Next year we have requested that we are located near the church, where there are several gardens and tea facilities.



The queues for the Rare Plant Fair next to the Bucks GT Gazebo

By far our most successful event to date was the 'Rare Plant Fair' at Bledlow Manor on 21 July, to which our patron, Lord Carrington, had kindly invited us. We were allocated a prime spot next to the entrance, and it soon transpired that people turn up early in order to get the first pick of the rare plants. However, they were not allowed to enter until 11am and we had a captive audience, so we made our way through the queue chatting to people and handing out our cards with details of the website. The event was extremely well attended with approximately 600 Tickets sold, what's more these discerning gardeners seemed genuinely interested in what we do and Gwen reported a large increase in website hits in the week following the fair



Heritage Week in Buckinghamshire starts at the beginning of September and is free. It involves hundreds of organisations opening their doors to the public which are not normally open. The Trust accepted invitations from two historical gardens, Taplow and Cliveden, taking the new gazebo, exhibition boards and *Are You a Garden History Expert* objects table. We had a steady stream of visitors at both sites with people taking advantage of the good weather and free entrance. Our volunteers spent a lot of time explaining what we did and that we were not a part of the National Trust! There was considerable interest in the photographs of old garden tools and we are considering trying to collect some C19 & C20 tools, seed boxes, catalogues as part of a new exhibition. So if you have any ancient garden tools which we could use in an exhibition, contact enquiries@bucksgardentrust.org.uk

Our final event was the Bucks Local History Fair, at Aylesbury Methodist Church Hall organised by Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society (BAS) on the 5 October and where we had a table top display and exhibition board. Our volunteers were kept busy and we gained three new members, sold a number of publications and gave out the *Winter Programme of Talks*. The theme this year for the conference was

“Food for Thought” exploring Buckinghamshire’s agricultural past. Ruth Goodman the social historian, author & TV presenter gave the keynote talk on “Farming women, a history of the early modern countryside” followed by a Q & A session.



Sheila Meekum BGT volunteer & Forest Schools Specialist

We shall be continuing to attend events for the foreseeable future, as it is important to publicise what we do and hopefully recruit new members. Please support us or better still volunteer to help on the stall for a couple of hours, it is good fun and we meet some interesting people, plus you have time to look round the venue. Details of next year’s audience engagement events will be available in the Spring.

Claire de Carle

Gardens through the letterbox

Postcard from Park Sanssouci, Potsdam



Dear BGT members,
Jackie and I spent a rewarding day in this royal park as part of our recent trip to Berlin. It now covers some 700 acres and was first established in 1725 and extended by Frederick II ('the Great') of Prussia. It now contains a number of smaller charming gardens with different characters. The central axis with its fountain and numerous rond ponts ties the extended garden together. Frederick’s tiny and exquisite ‘palace’ and the remarkable Chinese tea house are the main building attractions.
Geoff Huntingford

Stoke Poges MEMORIAL GARDENS

Creating something new yet fitting for Stoke Poges Memorial Gardens

Stoke Poges Memorial Gardens is a Grade 1 registered, beautifully landscaped garden and burial ground for cremation ashes in South Buckinghamshire. The Gardens were designed by landscape architect Edward White of Milner, Son and White, and built in the 1930’s. Over the last four years I have been fortunate to be working on a two-acre extension to these historic gardens. Our hard work culminated on Friday, 14th June 2024, when we had the great pleasure of welcoming the Lord Lieutenant of Buckinghamshire, Countess Howe and the Chairman of Buckinghamshire Council, Cllr Mimi Harker OBE, to officially open the new area.



Lord Lieutenant of Buckinghamshire Countess Howe cutting the ribbon



Lord Lieutenant with garden volunteers, the Garden Ninjas



Lord Lieutenant with the Friends of Stoke Poges Memorial Gardens

The Bereavement Trail

Visitors often remark on how peaceful the gardens are and how much they help them heal from a loss. When starting the design for the extension this was very much part of my thought process. I wanted to

include some references to bereavement models, which are sometimes used in counselling. This led to the idea of creating a Bereavement Trail. The hope is that the various features of the trail will help visitors understand and work through some of the emotions they may face after a bereavement.



Butterfly Stone

We have worked with local crafts people to design and develop features such as the Butterfly Stones, the Dry River, the Stone Table, the Whirlpool of Grief and the Strings (to be placed later this year), which make up the Bereavement Trail. Each area or sculpture explains some of the emotions that one might encounter after a loss and helps visitors remember loved ones who have passed away. Visitors are able to follow the trail with the help of a leaflet explaining the various features (and in time, QR codes will help access the information by mobile phone). Do come and pick up a leaflet from the porch and have a walk round the trail.



Stone Table

The Covid Memorial Garden

Part of the design is the Covid Memorial Garden. It commemorates all who died during the pandemic and creates a space of reflection for visitors. The central memorial of Welsh slate and York stone is carved beautifully to represent an oak tree, a symbol of strength, stability and endurance. These are qualities shown by many people during the pandemic. This new space gives visitors an opportunity to explore and process some of the emotions experienced during the pandemic and aid their wellbeing.

Plaques in memory of loved ones who died during the pandemic (2020-2023) can be purchased to be mounted on a wall at the back of the Covid Memorial Garden. This is for people who died of any cause of death, not just Covid. The impact of restrictions such as lockdowns and limited contact with others was felt particularly keenly during times of illness and bereavement. Visiting loved ones was at times not possible and funerals were not always held in the traditional manner.



Lord Lieutenant and Chair with Martin Cook, stone carver, Covid Memorial Garden

We are keen to include as many people as possible to give a sense of the scale of the pandemic for future generations. If you would like more information, please contact the office on 01753 523744 or email Memorial.gardens@buckinghamshire.gov.uk We are grateful to the Friends of Stoke Poges Memorial Gardens, the Mobbs Memorial Trust and Tesco Community Fund for their generous support of this project.

Photographs courtesy of Harvey Whittam

Franzi Cheeseman, Head Gardener

Gardeners' Network Meeting, Wormsley Walled Garden 3rd October 2024 hosted by Head Gardener, Charlotte Tremlin.



Head Gardeners' Network

Everyone in the network had been looking forward to the event at Wormsley for some time, some had never visited before, and they were all interested in the demonstrations that were going to be given by two local tree experts.

About 55 people came these included the gardeners (a few of whom were new members) and their guests, 15 from Team Wormsley and representatives from Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust. We were also pleased to welcome our patron Lord Carrington who came with his head gardener, Mark Thompson.

Charlotte had organised an excellent afternoon and on arrival members were treated to a wonderful spread for lunch and stunning cakes provided by Ashley Catering. After lunch and a group photograph, Claire de Carle, gave a brief introduction and then handed over to Charlotte who told us about the garden. This was followed by a demonstration from Matt Vaughan of Geo Tree.



Matt's demonstration was set up outside the walled garden, where he explained how this innovation had come about when he had been working at Kew after the Great Storm of 1987. So many trees were uprooted or had been severed that the team initially dealt with the mammoth task of clearing up the site. It was some time before their attention turned to those that were still standing and less severely damaged, they noticed that these trees were doing remarkably well, they were healthier than before the storm. They concluded, that the roots had loosened, and the movement had created pockets of air in the formerly compacted soil, the roots could breathe more easily and take in more nutrients to benefit the tree.



Matt Vaughan demonstrating the Geo Tree system.

By using a tool similar to a pneumatic drill, connected to an air compressor, it is possible to create pockets of air in the ground that could be filled with a rich nutrient. The demonstration was amazing you could feel and see the ground move, the gardeners were fascinated and lots of questions followed. Unfortunately, this is quite an expensive process, and it is generally used on ancient trees and those that are looking unhealthy, however we are sure that everyone went back to their gardens and had a look to see if it was something the owners may be interested in trying. The other drawback is the technique does not work so well on trees that grow on chalk as it is difficult to penetrate.

Ben Marsh from 4 Seasons tree care then gave a short talk about his work as an arboriculturist, again the gardeners were most interested as he really knew his stuff and it was clear the company understands how to look after ancient and rare trees that exist in many of the historic gardens in Bucks. Matt's talk was followed by lots of networking and the opportunity to discover the delights of the garden, the garden team were on hand to answer questions, everyone also enjoyed more of the delicious tea and cake!!!

A huge thank you to Charlotte and the Wormsley Team for making us most welcome and we look forward to our next meeting on 10 April 2024.

Claire de Carle



Replanted avenue from the lakes to the house

Photograph by JuG

Patron's Garden: Wotton House, the home of David Gladstone

But for the impulsive elan and determination of one woman, Wotton House and its Capability Brown Pleasure Grounds would now be a housing estate. Wotton House was two weeks from demolition in 1957, its landscape already divided and sold off, when Elaine Brunner came across it and famously declared – “oh no you're not!” to the demolition team. What followed was a remarkable restoration of the semi-flooded and in parts roofless house that she lived in until her death in 1998.

The Pleasure Grounds were another story. In 1957 the lakes were invisible from the house, the temples and bridges rotting in the undergrowth. Elaine, having first bought back the land parcel by parcel, set about restoring the temples and bridges. However, it's fair to say, she had her own ideas about Capability Brown's vision of romantic wildness. She kept the landscape perhaps *wilder* than he would have advised his noble client. The undergrowth mostly remained; the temples and bridges required the determination of a Prince Charming with a charmed sword to find.

In 1998, David and April Gladstone, Elaine's son-in-law and daughter, took over. The work on the Pleasure Grounds began in earnest. The starting point was an 18-month survey by Johnny Phibbs – until that point, its layout was only known in the vaguest terms. At its conclusion, Johnny pronounced it “one of the finest early Capability Brown landscapes anywhere”. Given the extent of the overgrowth, it

was more a statement of vision and hope than an evaluation.

Twenty-five years later, it's a vision that that has been fulfilled. The avenue from the house to the Warrells lake is replanted and leads the eye for more than a mile over the lake and through the oak-lined woods beyond; further miles of walking paths have been rediscovered with relaid archaeological precision (original substrates being found inches below the surface); trees cleared to reveal romantic vistas of temples, gods and urns and the house itself. Estate fencing – iron railings that that are invisible from a distance – have been recreated by hand so the landscape can flow seamlessly between fields and woods while containing the grazing livestock of the original model farm that the Pleasure Grounds circumnavigate. Trees have been replanted – in variety, but with particular attention to crab apples and hawthorn. Grassy areas are maintained with an eye on wild flowers – it's particularly pleasing to see that orchids are making a comeback. Shrubberies that once would have lined the outside of the outer walk have been replanted in part – an ongoing project. Swans grace the lakes cleared of reeds, as if nothing had ever happened.

It is an Arcadian vision that creates a sense of variety quite out of proportion to its size – folding and hiding is the particular genius of Brown here. He creates a continual stream of new views, while hiding the previous ones, sometimes within yards of each other.



Photograph by JuG

Arcadian it looks – but the work to reveal it has been more Trojan. The endeavour is a story of two people: David Gladstone and Michael Harrison, the Estate Manager. Each has egged the other on, Michael finding a clue of a trail, saying to David “what about...”, David replying “yes, and let’s also consider...?”. Rather than a single grand plan, things evolved over 20-plus years as the landscape revealed itself. Sometimes an uncovered path has literally led to the next big job. Over the years, through on-the-ground practice, they have developed an intuition for what Brown would have done, to the extent that Johnny Phibbs has been heard to say that he fears Michael Harrison may understand Capability Brown better than he does.

The Rotunda: before and after Michael Harrison



Where to next? Looking forward there are still things to do. Let us consider some islands – Grotto and China; or the tantalising mention in a 1789 map of a Fishery, a Nursery and an Orchard in the undiscovered north-western extremity...

David, Mary and Matthew Gladstone



David Gladstone

Photograph by JuG

**Overview of Wotton:
Park & Garden: Historic England**

The historic designed landscape surrounding an early-C18 country house, with a contemporary layout, probably by George London and Henry Wise, developed into an extensive mid-C18 park for George Grenville by Lancelot Brown; William Pitt, later first Earl of Chatham, is credited with significant input with regard to the design.

Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: I

List Entry Number: 1000608

Date first listed: 30-Aug-1987

Statutory Address: Wotton Underwood, Aylesbury Vale, Buckinghamshire, HP18 0SB

<https://historicengland.or.uk/listing/wotton-underwood>

Photographs: www.photographybyJuG.com



Sunken garden in the South Garden

G Miles

Patron's Garden: The Manor House Bledlow Garden

On inheriting the Manor House and its 12-acre garden in 2018, we commenced a major renewal programme. The House acquired a new roof and other modernization and work started on the garden. The garden was mainly laid out by Robert Adam, the landscape architect in the 1960s and 1970s and every effort has been made to preserve his design.

The first task was to remove, or crown raise trees planted over the past 40 years when the Sculpture Garden and Lyde Garden were created to let in more light to encourage the underplanting after the removal of unwelcome understory in the shape of grasses and ivy. The second task was to severely prune, reshape or replace shrubs that had become overgrown, and the third task was to selectively replant shrubs and perennials where space allowed and when new longer flowering or more exciting varieties of those species were available. An ongoing programme to reduce the size of the large beech and yew hedges to their original planned height and width has also commenced.

A major feature of the garden is the old Walled Garden which traditionally had been reserved purely for vegetables and espaliered fruit on the walls. We have introduced more cross paths to provide better access and rows of flowers for picking like dahlias, gladioli, asters, iris, phlox and alstroemerias. The central border of Peonies, delphiniums and nepeta

has been preserved whilst the north/south path has been replanted with prunus Lusitania leading the eye to the central pagoda covered in R. Phyllis Bide and the Owen Turville mural of Vertumnus in the manner of Arcimboldo.



Lord Carrington in Walled Garden

GM



The most recent and dramatic replanting scheme has taken place in one of the yew lined 'rooms' designed by Robert Adam called the coracle garden after the William Pye water feature in the centre. The decision was taken to remove all the original planting dating back to 1969 consisting of various varieties of shrubs such as mahonia, rosemary, viburnum, potentillas, Hemerocallis and yucca and introduce a modern planting scheme in contrast to the rest of the garden. Great support and advice were given by designer and plantsman Sean Walter and a Mediterranean garden has been the result. Cypresses of varying sizes have been scattered across the outer part of the garden together with hibiscus 'woodbridge', Raphioleipsis Coppertone, heptacodium, grasses like Calamagrostis Karl Foster and varieties of Indigofera. For the central sections lower growing plants have been selected like Echinacea pallida, Dianthus carthusianorum and eryngium zabellii Big blue.



In the south facing garden where the original avenue of highly scented viburnum calesii has seen some casualties, replacements have been secured and two topiaries of the family's pugs are seen on the surrounding gravel. The planters at the back of the reflecting pond are planted with cornus pagoda and below the old granary, with its staddle stones, the old plantings have been replaced by Rhus and Grevilia providing a setting for a sculpture by Matt Maddocks called Vision. On one of the walls around the reflecting pond there is a new lead sculpture in the shape of a roundel depicting Bocca della Verita by

Anne Cordery. The very ancient original is set in the wall of a church in Rome.

The Sculpture Garden which contains wonderful works by Paul Vanstone, Peter Randall-Page, Terence Coventry and Patricia Volke and others has seen some interesting new additions including a life-size adolescent Indian elephant made in Kerala from an invasive bamboo type grass. A more discreet small composite elephant (that used to cover a drain by the house) in the shape of the family crest peers out of a forest of Symphytum and a bronze fish that smiles on one side and frowns on the other by Marzia Calonna overlooks the garden.



Finally on the North facing side of the house, newly planted beds with Mahonia Soft Caress, Anemone Ruffled Swan and hydrangeas have been established alongside the old rose beds with their R. Compte de Chambord. An adjacent newly built brick planter facing towards the four reflecting ponds with their lead herons is full of R. Olivia Rose Austin surrounding a Ionicera Baggesons Gold topiary of a griffin which is a supporter on the family coat of arms.



Lord Carrington July 2024

Hampden House: guided walk and lunch at Hampden House 30 April 2024



1741 Estate Map, Joseph Colbeck

G M

Around 30 members assembled on a glorious morning for coffee and biscuits in the delightful 'Hill House' at Hampden House (converted to a reception space from the House's old brewery). It was laid out for us as if ready for an elegant banquet. We were greeted by Marie Helen Oliver representing the current family owners. Gwen Miles spoke briefly about the longevity of the Hampden family connection with the House and Estate (surviving opposition to the Stuart monarchy and the South Sea Bubble), matched only by the longevity of the landscape itself, starting in medieval times, being recast with the house after a tremendous storm in the 1730s. Gwen referred to the effort needed by herself and her two collaborators in the Trust's Research Project in preparing the report on Hampden House because of the huge wealth of records available.



The walk was guided by Gwen (history and designed landscape) and Michael Hunt (trees) who had evidently organised their double act very carefully. We started with the magnificent Cedar of Lebanon close to the west entrance front and its carriage sweep. Michael explained that its stupendous height and girth (almost 29m (95ft) and 11m (36ft) respectively) were thanks to its early date, c.1640. It was one of the first cedars to be planted in this country. The walk continued counter-clockwise

round the house passing some renovation work on the rustic screen wall to the south of the house and to the stone quoins on the south corner of the house's garden front which had been eroded following the application of render when the house was in use as a private girls' school. Michael described the splendid main trees in the little wilderness on the south side including a yew, a tall lime and a distinctive Monterey pine that had started growing on a considerable slant but had corrected itself halfway up.



View from the ha-ha back to the east front

CdC

We crossed the lawn to the east of the house at the top of 'The Glade', the eastern avenue. Gwen explained that it was extended down to the road with the 'pepperpot' lodges following in 1743/4. We plunged into the woodland on the north side of the house, along a path kindly improved for us by the Estate with ash chippings on the softer areas. The ice house was open for our inspection with lighting and temporary guarding around its entrance, yet another example of the care and attention shown by the Oliver family during our visit.

The walk finished with a view eastwards where Gwen pointed out the features of the medieval park and their remarkable survival. Michael talked about the commercial side of the neighbouring wood where sitka spruce had been used for paper production and for building Mosquito planes during the war. Marie Helen said that the area will eventually be replanted with native species.



Lunch at Hill House (former brewery, kitchen,)

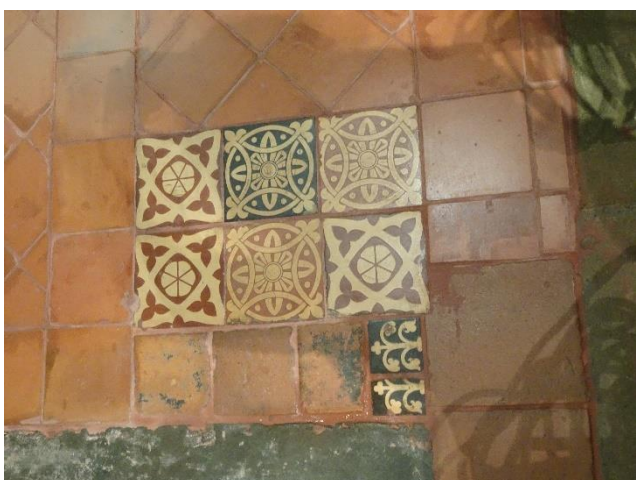
CdC

We returned to Hill House for a lunch of warm quiche and salad (and a glass of wine) followed by rhubarb fool.



Church of St Mary Magdalene(Grade II) CdC

After lunch we were invited over to the parish church and given an excellent talk by the Rev. Heywood on the ongoing restoration of the church. As a churchman first rather than as an historian, he was relieved that they had not found any wall painting or burials, though tiles from the famous medieval Penn tileworks had originally been laid in the church, only to be broken up later and used as hardcore! Six undamaged examples have happily been laid in the chancel's new floor.



Remaining Penn Tiles CdC

The splendid weather, the location and the arrangements combined to make an extremely successful event. **Geoff Huntingford**

Visit: Taplow Court, Thursday 9 May 2024

Taplow Court occupies a dramatic position at the edge of a chalk ridge looking down south and west over the Thames Valley. Its Grade II listed gardens include the impressive remains of a C7 Saxon burial mound, as well as early 18C pleasure grounds and parkland originally joined with that of adjacent Cliveden. Robert Marnock has recently been attributed as the C19 garden designer responsible for Taplow Court's formal gardens with adjacent lawns and woodland walks. Today, it is the home of SGI-UK, a lay Buddhist society.



Taplow Court, showing the informal meadows of the Northern parkland and a veteran Cedar tree Jacqui Edwards

On a beautiful warm, sunny day in early May, about 25 BGT members and their guests enjoyed an inspiring tour by Taplow Court's Head Gardener, Phil Rollins. While respectful of the historic layouts and structures surrounding Taplow Court, under Phil's direction the gardens are now well along a journey to being managed in a much more sustainable way, in reflection of Buddhist principles. Existing garden planting is being moved towards drought-tolerant hardy perennials, and grassy areas are increasingly left to grow long to form informal flowery meadow areas, mowed at the end of either July or September. The overall effect, achieved by a small team of just a few gardeners, is a quite beautiful mixture of formality and a more relaxed, contemporary, contemplative style closely in tune with nature.

Highlights of the visit were the contrasting views from the top of Tappa's burial mound, ascended by a spiral grass path; the delicately ornate mid-C19 Dairy designed by N.J. Cottingham before his tragic early death; the lovely walled south-facing former kitchen garden, now richly planted with fruit trees and perennials and used as a memorial garden and place

of reflection; the unusually effective raised dry gravel beds in one of the more recently designed areas; and the flower-strewn meadows of the parkland, contrasting with the formality of Taplow's venerable Cedar Walk.



The gardens at Taplow Court late C19. Bucks Archives

We finished with a very informative display by Claire de Carle on Marnock's work at Taplow Court and nearby; some excellent tea and cake and, as a bonus, the opportunity to visit the grand interior of the house. For those who might wish to visit in future, Taplow Court and gardens are open to the public on the first Sunday of each month during Summer 2024.



Tour of the house with guide CdC

www.sgi-uk.org

SGI-UK
Buddhism in Action for Peace



Jacqui Edwards

Visit: Rycote Park, Monday 10th June

Our visit began in the beautifully restored barn with coffee, homemade biscuits and a fascinating talk by Sarah Taylor on the history of the site and its restoration before splitting into two groups.

Bernard and Sarah Taylor acquired Rycote Park in October 2000 and immediately set about a major renovation of the house – the remnants of a Tudor mansion with C20th additions – and the surrounding Capability Brown Park, together with the creation of a garden. In 2001, they commissioned Elizabeth Banks to produce a Parkland Restoration Scheme. The main aim of the scheme was to clean and restore the 12-acre lake originally landscaped by Capability Brown and to revert to parkland pasture (funded by a Countryside Stewardship grant) .



Sarah Taylor at the start of the guided walk

Once this restoration was under way, attention turned to the gardens, again with advice from Elizabeth Banks. The brief was to create formal gardens immediately around the house, to evoke the lost C16th- and C17th-century aspects of the garden from pre-Capability Brown times (see Kipp and Knyff print of c1715 - Rycote website), opening out into open park and woods further away. The Edwardian walled kitchen garden was also restored, a new Allitex glasshouse built and gradually over the last 20 years other areas around the main lawns and the lake have been transformed with more interesting trees and shrubs. There are sculptures on the edge of the lawn by David Roper Curzon, Rupert Till, Laura Antebi and Stanley Dove together with several sundials by David Harber. Today, the garden, is under the expert management of Siriol Lewis.





Formal garden East Terrace GM

Our guided walk by Sarah was in an anti-clockwise direction starting at the East Terrace garden, protected by a wall on two sides, where traditional flowers like David Austen roses and delphiniums enhance a bowl-shaped modern water feature (a sundial) offset by the remains of an original Tudor tower with the layout of the herbaceous beds more formal in the Sunken Garden. To the north of the house a shade plant border and the amazing Oriental Plane (a champion); a walled patio garden with a Mediterranean feel next to the swimming pool; a herb garden in the Tudor manner to the south of the house; and a knot garden outside the front door.



Herb garden GM

Beyond the house the large lawn leads down to the lake which we did not visit. The original gardens were designed by Inigo Jones, swept away by 'Capability' Brown and then, Liz Banks (first female President of the RHS), who planned the latest restoration which has included removing thousands of tonnes of silt from the lake.

Our next stop was the well-ordered large walled garden to the north of the house and its compost heaps! The garden is a fully productive vegetable garden with two cutting flower borders and the glasshouse has a mixture of ornamental tender plants, plants for the house, tomatoes, peppers, aubergines, cucumbers, melons and salads in season, as well as figs and grapes. On our way to the herb garden, we passed an extensive apple orchard planted in the 1910s, of which all the trees have been identified through their DNA.



Allitex glasshouse & kitchen garden GM

For the second part of our tour, we changed guides and walked to Rycote Chapel and the newly restored ice house. The magnificent yew tree by the chapel, planted in 1135 to commemorate the crowning of King Stephen, was impressive and the Ancient Yew Group regularly measure its girth.



Royal pew recently restored CdC

The current chapel was consecrated and dedicated to St Michael and All Angels in 1449, having been built by Richard Quartermayne who had married Sybil de Ricot. It is famous for its very impressive royal canopied and domed pew, and family pew of blue painted sky with clouds and gilded stars. Next to the chapel one of my favourites, a newly refurbished, thatched Ice House which was open for us to visit.

A big thank you to Bernard and Sarah Taylor and guides for their time and sharing their vision. We are in awe of what they have achieved.



Newly refurbished Ice House CdC

Website information: www.rycotepark.com

Compiled by Gwen Miles & Claire Butler

Visit: Lilies, Weedon, 9 July 2024



Sporting rainhats and carrying umbrellas, 23 of us walked up the drive with flowerbeds to the left and the first of some interesting sculpture to the right. We gathered under the first of the fine ornamental trees through the garden which survive from C19 to meet the head gardener, Andrew McCarthy, and learn a little about the history of the house to start our tour. Early origins of the site include the uncorroborated suggestion of a C12 monastery with the name 'Leleis' giving rise to the name of Lilies we know today. The site was, however, in the hands of the Lee family from the early C16 to the end of the C18 so 'La Lees' may also have given rise to 'Lilies'.

Registered as one of Buckinghamshire's locally important sites, today's Lilies is a small country house with informal gardens and a small park, which was established in the early C19. It was Lord George Nugent, originally of Stowe, who lived here for 45 years, establishing the park and garden from the early 1800s. After a fire in the 1860s, the house was rebuilt for the then owner Henry Cazenove by George Devey, and the present layout reflects closely that mapped in the late 1800s, which did incorporate some of Lord Nugent's original landscape.



Leaving the front of the house to walk across the lawn by the fountain and small rill we passed a large purple beech towards a striking, more unusual fern-leaved beech (*Fagus sylvatica* var. *heterophylla* 'Aspleniifolia'. Thank you, Michael!), which we all admired.

Andrew explained that much of the work in the last couple of years has been in rescuing the borders from the overgrown, dark shrub planting to introduce more colour and ornament to the borders. Another aspect of the work at Lilies is around forward planning, ensuring that all the estate's plantings, the woodlands and hedging for example, are fit and healthy. This is not just for aesthetic improvement but also for the

biodiversity of the estate. This was exemplified by the efforts that have been put into establishing the partially walled flower meadow with its grass paths, young trees and espaliered fruit trees round the walls. A pleasure garden for those bees making honey in the eight hives there, Andrew explained that this option is not a simple one, but that an annual programme of maintenance and renewal is required to develop a balanced meadow.



Brollies cast aside, we continued into the walled kitchen garden which is quartered and contains a swimming pool, vegetable plot, tennis court and a grass quarter with another statue raised on a mound to enjoy. Parts of these kitchen garden walls have been identified as C16, reminding us that the site had a life in Tudor times. Crossing the road, we met the Kunekune pigs who were the stars of the show with many of us having to be shepherded on. Ongoing restoration of the wood by the piggery has meant that owls and hedgehogs from TiggYWinkles have been successfully rehomed there.



Before returning to the house for delicious cakes with our tea, we entered the woodland west of the house to see an unusual feature surviving from Lord Nugent's time, the Grove of Friendship. This grove contains the last few commemorative stones which were placed to mark tree planting by his illustrious friends. However, some have been moved and it is difficult to know which trees they might have once marked or who was the friend. We had met Charles Dickens earlier in the afternoon, his stone being under a Fernbeech tree, but not its original spot.



Fortified by the most delicious lemon and pistachio cake among other delights, some of us returned to the meadow to meet the Buckinghamshire Honey Company, Dave and H el ene, who manage Lilies' hives and many others across North Bucks. A fascinating talk by Dave describing the bees and their movements, hive design and the different types of frame inside the hive. This was followed by a tasting of H el ene's honey: runny, the creamy soft-set and naturally set, and then the product with turmeric, ginger or both. What an interesting end to the visit, which underlined the estate's connection to the wider community. All were agreed that we would love to come back to Lilies in a different season. With grateful thanks to George Anson and Head Gardener, Andrew McCarthy, for a very enjoyable afternoon.

Louise Keil

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 **Gardens through the letterbox**

Postcard from Corfu



Dear BGT,
 Hello from the beautiful island of Corfu, justly called 'The Garden of the Gods' by author and naturalist Gerald Durrell. We visited the estate owned by the Rothschild family in the north east of island, which is recognised locally for its responsible management of olive groves and conservation of the wild landscape. This fabulous swimming pool was designed by Javier Barba and utilises a former quarry. Situated right on the coast and with stunning views across to Albania, it is definitely one of the most breathtaking pools I've ever seen!
 Jackie Hunt, Gardener, Turn End

Enquiries !

A recent and intriguing message came from a Belgian aviation journalist, Frans Van Humbeek, relating to a Belgian aviation heritage data base. His enquiry concerned Eton St John Cemetery; he had noted a report on the BGT website (Dr Sarah Rutherford, July 2020).

Seemingly Guy Henri de Baillet Latour, of the 'de Baillet Latour', Belgian family, died in an air crash, south of Campbeltown in Scotland, on 1 September 1941.

According to a memorial plaque in Latour, Guy was buried in Eton, having been a pupil at Eton College. Frans asked if the grave in the Eton St John Cemetery still exists?

Frans' enquiry was made in May of this year and, despite much research, no evidence of Guy's resting place has been found; there is no headstone.

Enquires are often made as to the availability of Claire (de Carle) to give talks, others concern events and there are garden related queries; these it is possible to pass on for appropriate answers - but fielding enquiries is always interesting ... and fun!

Wanted: Photographs & News

Do you have a beautiful garden? Have you recently visited a designed landscape? Have you been out in your local park or garden and taken photographs. Be a roving reporter & contact us: enquiries@bucksgardenstrust.org.uk

We would love to build a library of photos from our members of gardens, parks and designed landscapes that you have visited (or even photos of your own garden) that we could feature on our social media pages.

It is always great to see what our members are up to and we would love to share this with other members and followers on our social media accounts. **Darcie Kerr**

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Copy Dates for 2025 Newsletters

Spring 9th March
 Autumn 5th October
 Email to newsletter@bucksgardenstrust.org.uk

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Newsletter: edited by Gwen Miles & Clare Butler

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