CAMBRIDGESHIRE GARDENS TRUST

NEWSLETTER No. 7 November 1999

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CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

This year the Trust has been represented at the Bucken Flower Show, The East Anglian Flower Show, The Gransden Show and The Plough Day at Ramsey. Visitors have been impressed by the displays we have mounted. Gentlemen seem to be very interested in old maps and the ladies take much pleasure in looking at pictures of old houses and the garden layouts. Recently a display has been mounted in Newmarket Library, which is actually in Suffolk. If you would like us to set up a display in your local library would you please let me know.

Our research has continued apace and we now have over 400 sites on our files and this work is now concentrating on gardens in Cambridge. With the help of Baker's map of 1830 and the detailed survey of the city of Cambridge produced by the Ordnance Survey in 1886 we are looking in great detail at private gardens and Victorian allotments which are clearly indicated. By the time you receive the newsletter I will have lectured to the U3A in Cambridge about researching garden in the city. We need to hear from residents who lived where, and what their gardens were like. With this in hand the City of Cambridge Planning Department has been very helpful in suggesting further gardens that should be researched. The Landscape Department has given the Trust maps, and plans of the open spaces and parks in Cambridge, which are their responsibility to maintain. The Trust has agreed to assist the City Council with further research into these areas. It is encouraging to hear that the City Council has assisted in the conservation of a garden structure in the Kite area. Moreover it is pleasing that residents in the city are concerned that their gardens should be conserved and protected. The Trust has undertaken to inform the City Planners when they discover such an historic garden in their research. The Trust has decided to include all the sites in Cambridgeshire into one Gazetteer. This will mean there will be a short delay before the Gazetteer is published.

During the summer months a team of members and local residents in Ramsey have been making inroads through the blackberry brambles in the walled kitchen garden at Ramsey Abbey School. In some places the growth is over 10 feet high and impenetrable. At last the original paths have emerged and we have been able to see how the metal hurdles have become part of the apple tree trunks. This work has been carried out on alternate Wednesday evenings and will continue during the winter months at weekends. Over 300 box cuttings have been taken and have now rooted. The box hedges either side of the main path have been drastically cut back and at last the view through the gate gives the impression that the garden is again being maintained. Some evenings the work has had to stop, because of torrential downpours. As yet I am unable to report that a lease with the County Council has been signed.

During the past year I have received favourable comments about the programme of events which was arranged for members. The Trust was allowed to visit parks and gardens which are normally not open to the public, and I would like to record the Trust's grateful thanks to the owners who made us so welcome.

We have been fortunate to have been able to have office accommodation at Barleycroft Nursery in Bluntisham, and the Trust would like to thank Anglia Alpines for their support during the formation of the Trust. **Correspondence and membership renewals should now be sent to The Cambridgeshire Gardens Trust, The Grange, Easton, Huntingdon**

The Management Committee would like to thank all members who have helped during the course of the year. Next year the Trust has a more ambitious programme and will need more help manning displays at county shows and a team is required to organise the Garden Open Day at Abbots Ripton Hall Garden where all the profit made from that day comes to the Trust to support the work at Ramsey Abbey Walled Garden. PLEASE HELP US IF YOU CAN.

John Drake Chairman

‘A GARDEN OF OUR OWN’ A TALK GIVEN BY JANE BROWN TO LAUNCH HER HISTORY OF GIRTON COLLEGE GARDEN BOOK

It would be a wasted opportunity for me, here, to simply repeat what is in ‘A Garden of Our Own’, for I hope you will find pleasure in reading it for yourselves: what I would like to do is to explore, and perhaps explain, some of the underlying themes that have arisen in researching and writing the garden histories of both Newnham and Girton. It was about thirteen years ago that Patricia Jaffe asked me to write the Newnham history, so to renew the experience, researching in this other place, on Girton, has been doubly interesting. These themes have, as a consequence, been running in my mind while I have been doing other things, writing other books, and today – and on the debut of ‘A Garden of Our Own’ – they seem to deserve an airing, and perhaps constitute a chapter closing.

The founders of both Girton and Newnham colleges had primarily education on their minds, but it is important to emphasize that both the buildings and their surroundings were seen as wholly relevant to their aims. If strong-minded people differ in their opinions over education and architecture, you may be sure that a garden will arouse their fiercest animosities: a garden is usually a close personal experience, so that everyone feels an expert. Emily Davies saw, but feared Girton, could not afford, a rather grand setting that would give status to the red brick Gothic buildings in the manner of the old colleges: Alfred Waterhouse, her architect, sketched in 1886 the conventional landscape approach of a perimeter belt of woodland surrounding the college and its courts, in a parkland setting of groves and shrubberies. This was in direct line of succession to Brown, Eames, Repton and Loudon, with a path wandering through the perimeter plantation allowing the longest possible views of the acres that were owned, as well as the occasional outward ‘borrowed’ views of those that were not. At Newnham, the intentions of Anne Jemima Clough and the Sidgwicks were on a different scale, epitomized by the “gracious sweetness” of Basil Champneys’ buildings (and that Champneys also built Board Schools – the “lighthouses” – “Beacons of the future” according to Sherlock Holmes). (1) The Newnham philosophy was the avant-garde ‘Queen Anne’ revival that would become Arts and Crafts gardens in Gertrude Jekyll’s hands – direct gravel paths, yew hedges, pergolas, and a softening of old fashioned scented roses and perennial flowers – comfortable, easy-going country gardens of liberal intellectual households. Miss Davies’ co-founder, Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon, on the other hand, was equally up-to-date, and even more radical, with her taste for the wild, for minimal intervention into her woods at Scalands in Sussex, where glades were cleared for a picnic or reading party, with perhaps a ‘flowery incident’ of lilies or sunflowers set to catch the light at the margin of the wood, but little more. Madame Bodichon was one of the earliest followers of William Robinson’s ‘The Wild Garden’, when it was published in 1870, and this book was to have a deep influence on Girton’s garden.

The remarkable thing was that all the founders’ dreams were fulfilled: Newnham has its ideal Arts and Crafts garden, and Girton was to be large enough to have the entrance avenue and sweeping lawns, as well as the Pond and Honeysuckle Walk and the wilder parts. It is perhaps worth pondering whether Girton’s garden was meant to be so large? The intended site was 17 acres in the fork of the Huntingdon and Girton roads, but the owner, Miss Philadelphia Cotton (denying her name) would not sell for ‘a Ladies College’, so the adjacent plot of 16 acres along the Huntingdon road was bought. Revenge being well with Emily Davies’ capabilities, the entrance drive was placed right at the boundary (where it is today) and building started on the second plot (where we are today): when Miss Cotton died, the first plot was immediately acquired, in 1886, and so Girton had almost 34 acres, when perhaps it only needed half that amount.

At Newnham the garden was really made by Blanche Athena Clough, and the redoubtable Fred Blows, who gardened there for fifty years: at Girton, the creator was Elizabeth Welsh, who became Garden Steward in 1883 and Mistress in 1885: she planned the Home Garden, made the Pond and planted the Old Orchard, and is said to have climbed the tower as soon as she was allowed by the builders in order to plan from on high. Miss Welsh gave garden parties and there were flowers for everyone: I have tried to pay her a suitable tribute in ‘A Garden of Our Own’ – I would very much like to have met her – and of course her portrait, by Sir John Lavery, gazes down on Girtonians dining. Miss Welsh and Lady Stanley of Alderley, who sent hampers of plants from her garden at Penrhos near Holyhead to Girton, are credited by Professor Bradbrook with bringing the aura of an Irish country house to Girton’s ‘castle of defiance’ reputation. The castle of defiance is irresistible – in the college song to the tune of ‘The Vicar of Bray’ (sir),

Yet stranger sight for don or Ped-
Agogue was never seen, sir,
That Girton’s buildings blushing red,
Behind their veil of green, sir. (2)

The GREEN was very important. My title, as I should have mentioned, is unashamedly purloined from Virginia Woolf’s ‘A Room of One’s Own’, where the room was necessary for sleeping and writing, but it was on a Cambridge, or Oxford, lawn that she fell foul of the Beadle “protecting three hundred years of privilege”. And as a writer, as Hermione Lee’s biography effectively recognises, Virginia Woolf always needed to think outdoors, beneath the canopy of the sky. (3) Both gardens, Newnham and Girton, provided a very real green refuge for those early generations of students, a place to be at peace with oneself, or one’s friends, safe from the undoubted hostilities of the outside world.

Researches at Girton also brought the multi-talented Gertrude Jekyll into focus as a constant influence on both colleges: Jekyll and Barbara Bodichon were, I knew, friends, but Pam Hirsch’s biography of Bodichon (the subject of last year’s lecture) has contributed to the piecing together of events showing Jekyll to have been interested in Girton for some forty years before she was officially commissioned for advice. (4) They met in 1872, Jekyll was sixteen years Madame’s junior, but they had many friends in common, and visited the Blumenthals’ Chalet in Sonziers in the Alps the following year, travelling together via Italy to the Bodichons’ winter home in Algiers. Here Gertrude Jekyll celebrated her 30th birthday, in November 1873, and stayed through until the following spring: her collection of Algerian textiles was eventually given to the Victoria & Albert Museum, her first garden article was written about flowers in Algiers, and the sun-loving Mediterranean shrubs – “the incense-laden brakes of cistus”, rosemary, thymes, myrtles (and the Algerian iris) were always to be her favourite plants. (5) Their shared enthusiasm for Robinson’s ‘The Wild Garden’ undoubtedly contributed to

Gertrude Jekyll's gardening tastes, and her first garden, made for her mother at Munstead House in the late 1870s, was admired for the melding of garden into heathland, as a beautiful if radical "loosening-off" of planting ideas, rather in the way of the discarded corsets and loose-flowing gowns of the "drab" – as Gwen Raverat called them – Newnham girls in Jane Morris-style greens and browns. (6)

During the 1880s Gertrude Jekyll had quite a reputation as (what we would call) an interior decorator, and surely both interiors and exteriors at Girton, were discussed? For Madame Bodichon, writes Hirsch, her friendship and painting companionship with the younger woman was one of "the great joys" of the later part of her life. As Madame died in the summer 1891 the thought arises that there is a coincidence with the beginning of Gertrude Jekyll's architectural friendship with the young Edwin Lutyens, and their garden-making partnership together, which suggests she may have needed another, but different shared interest. (7)

(1) Mark Girouard *'Sweetness and Light, the Queen Anne Movement 1860-1900'* (1977) 1984, ed. p64

(2) M C Bradbrook *'That Infidel Place'*, a short history of Girton College 1869-1969 (1969), p54

(3) Hermione Lee *'Virginia Woolf'* (1996)

(4) Pam Hirsch *'Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon'* (1998)

(5) Gertrude Jekyll *'Wood & Garden'* (1899) 1981, rep. pp318-9

(6) Gwen Raverat *'Period Piece"* (1952). 1987 ed. p45

(7) Jekyll and Lutyens met in 1889 but they began spending time together, exploring the vernacular architecture in Surrey in the early 1890s: see my '*Garden of a Golden Afternoon'*, the story of their partnership, 1982, 1995

To be concluded in the next newsletter.

We are indebted to Jane Brown for allowing us to print the text of her lecture given at Girton College on Saturday, 10th July 1999, to launch the history of the college garden – of that title – commissioned and published by the Friends of the Garden.

BOOK REVIEW

Jane Brown, A Garden of Our Own: A History of Girton College Garden (Friends of the Garden, College, Cambridge CB3 OJG, 1999) , 56 pp, col and B/W illus. Price £5

This is the second study Jane Brown has made of a Cambridge College garden. Both are vital stimulating aids to understanding the development and present appearance of first Newnham (1988) and now Girton College gardens. A visit helps to bring the matter into focus.

I went on a bright October afternoon when there were just two College undergraduates, one of each gender, in 'the garden of their own'. They were talking freely in the Fellow's Garden, designed by Penelope Hobhouse (an Old Girtonian) in 1992. The only area of the grounds at Girton the world of exteriors would recognise as styled and which you could call intimate rather than stolen or furtive. The undergraduate had relaxed herself informally out along the Lutyens bench – a posture of self-ease Manet would have observed for a perplexed Emily Davies (Founding Mistress) in the Salons of the 1860s had she not been so busy pressing the case for women's education.

Privacy was the founding generation's principal demands of the grounds – hence the boscage along Huntingdon and Girton Roads. The privacy conceived of, was for the whole community rather than for the individual within, and is reflected in the openness of the enclosed landscape. Relaxation, recreation and produce also determined the grounds' character. It was, however the parkscape plus flower beds pressed hard against the college walls which determine the Girton garden style. Not much different from (say) Shrublands, Suffolk garden.

The book includes a proper plan (National Trust, please note), its scale 1 inch to 100 yards. Would there were more garden histories of this kind.

Mansel Spratling.

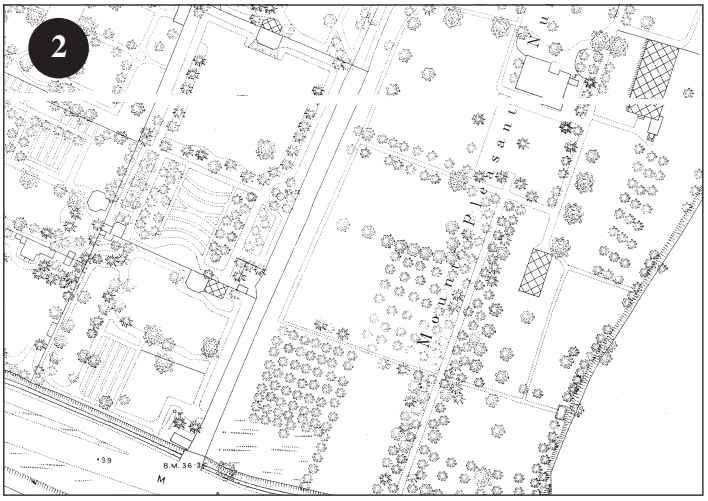
GUIDED WALK AT TYRELLS HALL, SHEPRETH

On Thursday, 27th May, on a perfect summer evening, 28 members and their friends had a most enjoyable guided tour around the beautiful park and gardens of Tyrells Hall by the owners, Mr and Mrs Kendrick. Mrs Kendrick told us that the original moated manor house had been held in 1428 by the Tyrell family and the present Hall, built in the early part of the 18th century, had been the home of the Woodham family for 200 years. They themselves had been at Tyrells for about three years, and during that time Mrs Kendrick had undertaken her own research into the site and had kindly given a copy of the history to the Cambridgeshire Gardens Trust.

What a joy the park and gardens were. From the Hall we passed by a wild flower bank and then through some ancient woodland to part of the moat with a ruined castellated folly alongside it. The clear chalk bottomed Shep stream flowed through the park and garden, and was the home of much wildlife, including kingfishers and otters. The remains of a rather spartan Victorian bath house was the next port of call, and then across more moats and streams to a butterfly meadow. A recently restored walled garden full of delicate mauve and pink geraniums, roses and other sun loving plants was a delight. When walking through the park we were told that the original entrance to Tyrells was off the Royston Road where the Motel now stands, and that the drive passed through the park crossing a bridge over the moat in front of the Hall. This bridge has recently been restored. In the park one shrub – Viburnum x bodnantense – has been flowering in the winter. How did it get there, we wondered? Passing by Jacob sheep, Silkey hens, a lively mare and an even more lively foal giving us a fine display of synchronised galloping, ponies and a couple of donkeys in the park rounded up a great evening.

Audrey Osborne

Examples of the 1888 Ordnance S



Can you guess w

Answers on

SIR MICHAEL FOSTER (1836-1907)

"A friend of mine is fond of calling Horticulture a "pious occupation", giving as his reason the old saying of the ancients: "The gods rejoice when they see a good man struggling with adversity", and, indeed, I imagine that you are all ready to admit both that gardeners are good men, and that their occupation leads them to struggle with adversity. I, too, in my gardening, have had to struggle with adversity, and today I feel that the struggle is especially severe".

It was with these words that Sir Michael Foster began his address to the Royal Horticultural Society on the 14th May 1889 on the subject of irises. The weather had been very cold and wet, and the irises that should have been in bloom were still tightly shut. This lecture was described in the 'Gardeners' Chronicle' of the 18th May 1889 as one of the best and raciest lectures yet given before the Royal Horticultural Society. He described the large number of different kinds of irises and stated that each existed by being adapted to special conditions and that gardeners should study these conditions as a preliminary to cultivating them in a garden.

Sir Michael Foster was an eminent Professor of Physiology at Cambridge and Secretary of the Royal Society, which career brought him a knighthood. He was among the first to receive the prestigious Victoria Medal of Honour from the RHS. He lived at Ninewells, Great Shelford, and in his garden he grew about 200 species of iris obtained from many parts of the world. He kept meticulous details and drawings in notebooks, which still exist, of this study of irises, and was the first to publish descriptions of a number of species, for example Iris bucharica, many of which are not uncommon today.

Between 1880 and 1890 Sir Michael Foster acquired the four Eastern species, Iris cypriana, I. trojana, I. amas and I. kashmiriana, from which the modern bearded iris evolved. During the period 1878 to 1901 Foster made up to 100 crosses a year, keeping detailed records of each. This information he made available to William Rickatson Dykes (1877-1925) who went on to produce the important monograph 'The Genus Iris' in 1913. In 1896 or 1897 another of his colleagues, George Yeld (1845-1938) bred the modern bearded iris 'Sir Michael', using Foster's new Eastern species in England, and Amos Perry (1871-1953), a nurseryman at Winchmore Hill between 1900 and the early 1930s, besides growing many iris species, was involved with the marketing of Sir Michael Foster's irises. Sir Michael's influence in the iris world is commemorated in the Foster Memorial Plaque which the British Iris Society awards to individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to the genus Iris.

Refs:

Miles Hadfield *' A History of British Gardening'* 1960

Geoff Stebbings *'The Gardeners Guide to Growing Iris'* 1997

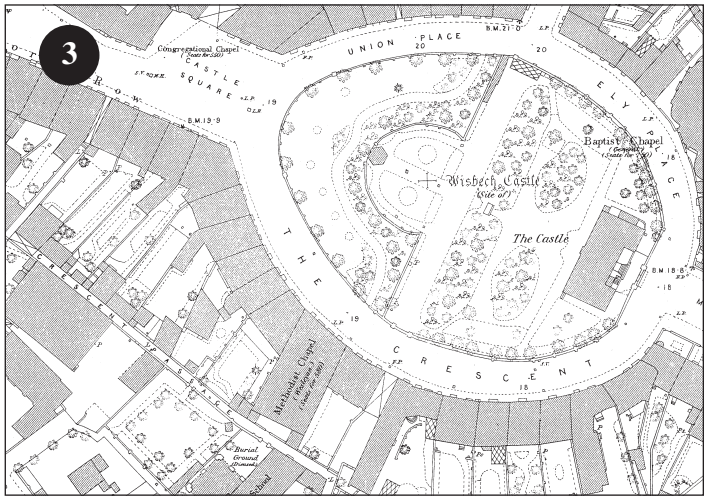
Ray Desmond *'Bibliography of British Gardens'*
Kellys Directory – Cambridgeshire 1896

Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society Vol 11 1889 *'On Irises'*
Prof Michael Foster

The Gardeners' Chronicle 18 May 1889

Audrey Osborne

urvey of Cities in Cambridgeshire



where they are?

back page.

VISIT TO BURGHLEY PARK

The afternoon of 14th July saw members of the Trust meeting under the lime avenues to the north of Burghley House. Fallow deer were in abundance inspecting the visitors.

In the orangery we were met by Philip Ling, the Agent of the Burghley Estates, and in turn introduced to Richard Allam, the head gardener, and Peter Glassey, the head forester. The Estate is run under the Burghley preservation Trust by 40 full time staff. The family still live in the house and are pleased to welcome visitors to the house and the North Park which is open to the public.

The park is the largest in Cambridgeshire and is one of Capability Brown's major landscape projects still intact, thanks mainly to his use of lime trees which luckily have not suffered from diseases during the last 200 years. He is held in great reverence by the staff and it would be easy to forget the work that preceded and followed him.

In 1700 London and Wise were requested to lay out avenues radiating from the house which overlooked formal terraces. This is indicated on the Haynes plan of 1750 (Montreal University). This provided a series of spaces to the north of the house which can still be appreciated today. The question of replacement of these trees in the near future is being considered by the forester. Kindly at our disposal was a tractor and trailer lined with straw bales. This was to convey us round the park to the Home Farm; its use was debated as heavy rain clouds were dropping their contents on the landscape. We decided to brave the rain and were driven to the walled enclosures to the east of the stables. We walked to the edge of the horseshoe lake climbing a steep bank. The private pleasure grounds which appear to be on an island can be seen across the lake. Mature trees conceal a temple.

The kitchen gardens were removed to a site to the south of the park and the area vacated below the lake is now planted as an arboretum and the ice house has been restored. A sculpture park has been established here with Martin Barrett as the resident sculptor. Appropriately the stone grave to Tellemacus, a prize bull, still remains.

In 1984 the dam to the lake leaked and had to be plugged. Now the 1871 elegant boathouse along the edge of the lake is being restored. Above it and sheltered by mature trees is the family's mausoleum.

Once again we boarded the trailer, the bales having been turned for comfort, and drove across undulating parkland amongst cedars, oaks, limes and chestnuts. The view to the pleasure grounds was spectacular. The rain didn't want to stop and upon reaching the Home Farm we alighted and inspected the thatched barns and outbuildings between heavy showers. Sited on higher undulating ground this complex of farm buildings designed by Capability Brown affords views back to Burghley House which looked from afar like a tight stone village nesting in the landscape.

Then after inspecting the three day equestrian event course and jumps we were driven through the lake and saw the house once again framed by the central arch of Capability Brown's stone bridge surmounted by codestone lions. Then up to the large expanse of the North Park with trees stretching as far as the eyes could see. Luckily the rain eased and we were able to disembark safely and obtain tea in the orangery.

Our grateful thanks to the staff at Burghley who made our visit so interesting.

John Drake

VISIT TO HAMERTON AND STEEPLE GIDDING TO STUDY THE EVIDENCE OF EARTHWORKS FOR LOST GARDENS

We met in Hamerton under the shade of a massive plane tree on the driveway of the church, where we admired superb examples of dryad's saddle fungus. Inside 'All Saints, Hamerton' the sound of the organist practising gave the pleasing sense that this church was still a place of worship of a community, unlike the decommissioned Norman church of 'St Andrew, Steeple Gidding' which we were to visit later, which is a place of sanctuary only for rare bats. There the flag-stoned nave stripped of pews was evocative of a medieval church in which the congregation stood packed together throughout the services.

A large 19th century house 'The Old Rectory' stands on the site of Hamerton House. Monuments in Hamerton church commemorate members of the Bedell family who owned the estate in the 16th and early 17th centuries. Elizabeth Bedell sold her share to her sister who married Sir Francis Compton. He subsequently sold the house and garden in 1669 and the rest of the estate in 1683. Particulars of the sale of the gardens mention ponds, greater and lesser gardens and orchards beyond.

The earlier gardens extended far beyond those of the 'Old Rectory'. Immediately to the south of the gardens of the present house the outlines of walks and flower beds are just evident in relief, bounded by a scarp, and there is a large mound, too large for an ice-house, but presenting a splendid viewing point over rolling countryside. We speculated on the purpose of the mound without reaching a satisfactory conclusion.

Lower down an L-shaped pond, its outlines overgrown and blurred by reeds indicated the geometric canal feature of the 17th century gardens which here had the double function of drainage and echoing a fashion well established in French and Italian garden design. Purple sagittaria contrasted with wild yellow flowering marsh plants to give a hint of long lost gardens. To the east of this was a trapezoidal area of low-lying wet land with a similarly shaped island of higher ground set in it and there were indications of similar features beyond. Probably this was evidence of decorative 17th century water gardens. However we speculated on whether these might be survivals from earlier gardens and whether the enclosures within the water might have had some more practical purpose.

East of the Rectory gardens was an area of more confused relief, probably representing changes over successive periods and beyond that the earthworks formed by habitation platforms and sunken ways typical of abandoned settlement areas such as the deserted medieval village site which we saw on our earlier visit to Bottisham Park. More recent development at Hamerton has shifted closer to major roads, but a village centre close to manor and church was a common pattern of pre-enclosure times.

The village of Steepe Gidding was held throughout the medieval period by Ramsey Abbey and on the Dissolution the manor passed to the Crown, which at first leased it to the existing tenants, the Botons, but in 1590 granted it to the Cotton family. Sir Thomas Cotton who took over the manor in 1648 was responsible for the enclosure of the common fields and probably also for the rebuilding of the house and laying out the formal gardens and commissioning the 1648 map.

The population of Steeple Gidding fluctuated between Domesday and the 17th century. The 1843 Tithe Map shows only 5 remaining houses. Two new houses and a row of cottages were built in the late 19th century. The cottages were abandoned as substandard as population drifted to the towns and they were demolished about the middle of the 20th century. Now there is a wealth of earthworks indicating former occupation, but the only inhabitants are a farm on the outskirts of the village and the former rectory.

As we sat on the grass in front of the decommissioned church and gazed southwards over the sites of the former manor houses and the demolished cottages, I wondered if this is the expectation for more remote villages with the increase in restriction on private car use and expense. I was reminded of a recent lecture to the Hertfordshire Architectural Association by the architect and planner Bryan Avery 'Wilderness City' in which he predicted the abandonment of the countryside to wilderness and the concentration of the population within enclosed cities as both cultivation and habitation of the countryside become less viable.

As we settled down to our picnic lunch we were surprised by the arrival of the organist from Hamerton, Mrs Holford. The Holfords live in the former Steeple Gidding rectory. Mr Holford and his dogs kindly escorted us round the site of the manor houses and gardens. The moated side of the earlier manor house, marked as 'The Orchard, Scite of House' on the 1648 map, was immediately opposite the church. South of this extended a large level platform, constructed presumably for Sir Thomas Cotton's new house, with a 2.5 metre scarp to form a terrace fashionable in 17th century gardens.

A series of ponds at various levels below the terrace had the appearance of a system of medieval fish ponds, but they are not as shown on the 1648 map it is more likely that there was a decorative feature of the gardens of the 17th or 18th century.

Mr Holford pointed out to us that an avenue of horse chestnut trees running down the side of the manor site continued on the other side of a brook to the boundary of the Cotton estate. This feature seems not to be recorded in any published authority.

Mr Holford kindly invited us into his house and showed us the aerial photographs which he had taken of this area which he had previously farmed. There was the added bonus that he showed us his classic red XK Jaguar and revved up the engine for us.

The day ended pleasantly with a visit to the church at Little Gidding, where Nicholas Ferrar set up a religious community in 1624, and tea in the house at Little Gidding which is now a residential house of retreat.

Jeanette Fage

VISIT TO KIRBY HALL AND LYVEDEN NEW BIELD ON THE 9TH OCTOBER

The final excursion to gardens was organised in conjunction with the Northamptonshire Gardens Trust.

A group from each Gardens Trust met at Kirby Hall, north of Corby. The Hall with its formal enclosed courtyard was one of the glories of Elizabethan England. Regular royal visitors were entertained here and the richness of the external architecture detail reveals the wealth of the Hatton family who built it in 1575. Today it is uninhabited – a major part of the roof missing and the site managed by English Heritage.

The gardens are of particular interest. The privy garden lies to the south between the house and the river. The great formal garden is to the west enclosed by raised walks and extends southwards across the landscape into the river valley, then beyond the canalised river and to the tree line on the brow of the hill. The humps and bumps of the deserted village lie on the sloping ground to the south east. The formal gardens have undergone several changes. That on the estate map was reworked in the 1930s with formal yew hedges enclosing rose gardens. After much deliberation Brian Dix was asked to carry out archeological excavations but much had been destroyed in the 1930s. Today the garden is a replica of a grass parterre with gravel paths punctuated with pots of yew and quercus ilex, then enclosed where required by alternating holly and yew similar to a layout at Longleat House.

After lunch our convoy proceeded to Lyveden New Bield. This remote property was the inspiration of Sir Thomas Tresham who was imprisoned following his association with members of the Gunpowder Plot. The site is owned by the National Trust and only during the recent years have the water gardens been restored under the careful eye of their custodian Mark Bradshaw who has revealed the magic of this amazing layout.

The manor is sited in a remote valley and the garden lies to the south on rising land to the brow of a hill. A series of formal terraces lead to an orchard (National Trust has just undertaken to manage this area) which stops against a 150 yard long grass raised terrace. At each end there is a truncated mount. These and the terrace afford magnificent views across the valley to woods and the village church of Lower Benefield.

Immediately above the terrace is a formal square garden – now a grass field with sheep and many ducks. The garden has a spiral or snail mount at the south east and south west corners and the whole is surrounded by a wide moat (sadly not completed) for boating. One mount has been almost cleared of trees and the grass contained many wild flowers.

To the south east is the summer house, a remarkable cross shaped stone building, not a ruin but an uncompleted residence, with layers of Catholic symbolism depicted on the external walls. This stands on a square grass plat surrounded by a dry moat. The summer house has a first floor viewing bay towards the Broad Wood which is divided to give access to the grounds.

If you do have a chance to go, do, and your senses will be well rewarded.

John Drake

PROGRAMME OF EVENTS 2000

"IN PRAISE OF GARDENS"

Lecture Series at Cambridge University Botanic Garden, Gilmour Building.

1.	Tuesday	18th January at 2.15pm	**"Recording Gardens in Cambridgeshire"** John Drake and Audrey Osborne
2.	Tuesday	25th January at 2.15pm	**"Conserving the Historic Manor and Garden at Hemingford Grey"** Diana Boston **"Damage or Design in Historic Gardens"** Anthea Taigel
3.	Tuesday	1st February at 2.15pm	**"Recording Garden Archaeology"** Paul Pattison
4.	Tuesday	8th February at 2.15pm	**"Photographing Gardens"** Howard Rice
5.	Tuesday	15th February at 2.15pm	**"Writing about Gardens"** Jane Brown
6.	Tuesday	22nd February at 2.15pm	**"Researching the grounds of Babraham Hall"** Jill Cremer and John Drake

Tickets: Members £3 per lecture, £15 for all 6 lectures
Non Members £5 per lecture, £25 for all 6 lectures

Lecture Series at the Infirmarer's Hall, Peterborough Cathedral Precincts.

7. Tuesday	29th February at 2.15pm	**"Lost Gardens in Cambridgeshire"** Christopher Taylor
8. Tuesday	7th March at 2.15pm	**" Structures in North Cambridgeshire Gardens"** Mansel Spratling
9. Tuesday	14th March at 2.15pm	**"Recording Gardens in North Cambridgeshire"** John Drake and Audrey Osborne

Tickets: Members £3 per lecture, £8 for all 3 lectures
Non Members £5 per lecture, £10 for all 3 lectures
Tea and cakes will be available following the Peterborough lecture (extra charge)

10. Thursday	6th April at 6.00pm	**St. Johns College Gardens walk** led by the Head Gardener Mr Vaughn Crook.
Tickets:	Members £2, Non Members £3	
11. May	(date to be confirmed)	**Kirtling Towers (1530) walk around the grounds** led by Lord Fairhaven
Tickets;	Members £3, Non Members £5	
12. Thursday	1st June at 7.00pm	**Sculpture Exhibition, Hardwicke House,** Fen Ditton
Tickets:	Members £2, Non Members £2.50	
13. Thursday	22nd June at 2.30pm	**Walcot Hall (1678) Garden Walk** by the Owner
Tickets:	Members £3, Non Members £5	
14. Thursday	20th July at 6.00pm	**"Bloomsbury in Cambridge"** Walk by Jane Brown
Tickets:	Members £2, Non Members £3	
15. Sunday	23rd July 2.00pm -5.00pm	**Abbots Ripton Hall Garden** open in aid of the Cambridgeshire Gardens Trust by kind permission of Lady De Ramsey
Tickets:	Members £2, Non Members £3	
16. Saturday	12th August 10.30 am	**Visit to Wothorpe Towers**, the Dower House of Burghley House **Picnic** followed by afternoon visit to **Washingley** to find remains of the Garden
Tickets: Members £2. Non Members £3.		
17. Thursday	14th September at 6.00pm	**Robinson College, Cambridge tour of the Gardens** by the Head Gardener Mr Desmond O'Grady
18. Tuesday	10th October at 10.30am	**Visit with Hertfordshire Gardens Trust to see Youngsbury Park** (Capability Brown) followed in the afternoon by a visit to a nearby Historic Garden which is now a golf course.
Tickets:	Members £5, Non Members £8	

Tickets available from Daphne Pearce, 6 Church Lane, Gamlingay, Sandy, Beds SG19 3EU. Tel: 01767 650527.
Enquiries to Jane Trevor 01733 252134.
Please include a cheque made payable to Cambridgeshire Gardens Trust and an sae.

. . . AND THE ANSWERS TO THE LOCATIONS QUIZ

1. Eastbourne Villa Garden, Hills Road, Cambridge (now Highsett)
2. Mount Pleasant Nursery, Madingley Road, Cambridge (now 12 Madingley Road)
3. Wisbech Castle
4. Peterborough Cathedral Precinct

Cambridgeshire Gardens Trust
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