CAMBRIDGESHIRE GARDENS TRUST

NEWSLETTER No. 13 October 2002

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

First I would like to thank Mr Christopher and Lady Linda Vane Percy for arranging this year's fund-raising event for the Trust's project at the Walled Kitchen Garden at Ramsey Abbey School. Over £900 was raised from the purchase of tickets and donations. Although we were not blessed by a sunny evening everyone was able to enjoy the fine garden that has been created at Island Hall in Godmanchester. Our thanks to our hosts for their enthusiasm and support which made the evening so enjoyable.

We have received many favourable comments about the standard of our newsletters but the Trust would like to point out that the contents of our newsletters are the copyright of the Trust. Recently I noticed at a photocopying store in Cambridge that a lady was copying several pages from our Gazetteer; I mentioned to this person that I was pleased that she had obtained a copy of our publication and was she going to acknowledge the Trust in whatever she was involved with. She replied that she had not considered this. So in future please note that the Trust expects to be acknowledged when either the Gazetteer or our newsletters are copied.

Some organisations have consulted us in the proper manner – the National Trust wrote enquiring if the Gardens Trust had knowledge of any canals in private gardens in the county. In replying to the National Trust we also consulted the garden owner about such an enquiry and the owner is now replying directly to the National Trust.

The Garden History Society has become very interested in the research work we are involved with in West Cambridge Gardens. So much so that an article on *Pleasure Gardens* has been accepted by their Journal and we look forward to seeing it in print. We have been given permission by Jane Brown to reproduce the introduction to the lengthy article in this newsletter. I hope it will whet your appetite as it will be some time before all our extensive research on this project is published.

Recently the Trust has been approached by the Huntingdon Branch of the National Association of Decorative and Fine Art Societies (NADFAS). Two of our members have spoken to representatives of their organisation and it is planned that a small research team will concentrate on researching parks, gardens, nurseries, etc. in the parishes on both sides of the Great Ouse between Huntingdon and St Ives. We look forward to working with another organisation and to the results of their research.

The Trust has been invited by King's College, Cambridge to take part in the discussions about the felling of the alder trees around the oaks at Clare Pieces along the Backs. A panel has been set up including City Councillors, City Planning Officer, English Heritage and the College Garden Committee. Sometime ago the Trust was invited to comment on the plane tree in the Fellows' Garden at Emmanuel College where low branches of this magnificent tree were re-rooting in the lawn and establishing vigorous new trunks.

The Trust has written opposing the development in a Grade II park in the county at the request of the owner, and has been informed that this application has been refused. We have recently been informed that English Heritage has decided to add the Peterborough Precincts to the Register of Parks and Gardens as a Grade II site. Members will remember the article about the Precincts in an earlier newsletter and the informative talks by John DeJardin.

Although the Trust has not moved quickly in the education field we were recently asked to visit Bottisham Village College to meet the staff involved in a charity called *Turn the Red Lights Green* which has been set up to encourage disabled children to become involved in gardening. The Trust has decided to support this charity and will be making a donation to help them on their way. At their recent opening event the Trust was invited to exhibit their work and projects, and new contacts were made. When speaking to the Warden we were informed that the college had a large number of boxes filled with photographs, many of the gardens and grounds, which needed cataloguing and the Trust has undertaken to help if this becomes a student project.

I list these in some detail to inform members of some of the work that is carried out by the Council of Management during the year. These have happened because the Trust has set out to give well-balanced views based on in-depth research and sensible attitudes to conservation. This has been a lengthy process which has at last been appreciated by other organisations.

Members will be interested that a committee has been set up to move forward the plan for the Walled Kitchen Garden at Ramsey Abbey School. This committee has formerly requested

a 25-year lease from the County Council and with the help of the Ramsey Museum has proposed a new access to the Walled Garden from the Museum site. Applications for felling the large trees in the garden have been approved by the Local District Council and we all patiently await to hear that the lease has been granted. In the meantime our researchers have been very busy in researching the history of Wood and Ingram, the famous Huntingdonshire nursery that lasted for 200 years, the history of Unwin's sweet peas, and Smedley's canning and preserving factory in Wisbech. The volunteers at the Walled Garden had a good day at Brogdale Horticultural Trust near Faversham in Kent, and you will find an article about this in the newsletter.

By the time you get the newsletter Ramsey Museum Plough Day will be over. Under David Cozens' enthusiastic guidance we are mounting a large display to attract more interest in our Walled Garden Project at this event. The display will consist of photographs showing the work that has been carried out in the Walled Garden, and illustrations of the history of Wood and Ingram's Nursery which have only recently been discovered in private ownership. We will assemble this display again for our Annual General Meeting for those who were unable to see it at the Plough Day.

This now gives me an opportunity of thanking everyone who has helped the Trust in its work. As you can see, we are involved in a wide range of projects and it would be marvellous if we could increase our membership. Could I ask everyone to see if they could interest a friend to join the Trust and enable us to give more support to our projects?

John Drake
Chairman

VISIT TO BUCKDEN TOWERS

11th MAY 2002

Buckden Towers, formerly Buckden Palace, was the site of the home and estate of the Bishops of Lincoln from the eleventh century until 1842.

We were met in the Outer Court by our guide Pat Huff. Pat is responsible for the organisation of the volunteers. Her intimate knowledge and personal involvement in Buckden Towers added to our enjoyment of our visit.

Our tour of the grounds began by crossing the line of the original moat to enter the Inner Court. On one side rose the massive Great Tower, with its four octagonal corner turrets, built in the 1470s by Richard Rotherham in brick, the status material of the time. John Leland in the early sixteenth century recorded: "Rotherham Bisshop of Lincoln buildid a new brike towr at Buckden. He clene translatid the haul (hall), and did much coste there beside."

On our other side was the substantial family house designed by Robert Edis for Arthur Marshall, the son of the co-founder of the firm "Marshall and Snelgrove". Possibly certain other architects of the Victorian period such as Buckler or Street might have risen better to the challenge of a design for a house in this dramatic setting. Edis chose a similar brick colour and attempted to echo some features of the earlier buildings, but the single slender castellated tower at the entrance of the house gives its design a lack of coherence.

It is ironic that at a period when others built fake ruins in their grounds as follies to create a romantic atmosphere, Marshall demolished the ruins of Bishop Grosseteste's thirteenth-century Hall to make way for his house and gardens, and filled in the remaining section of the medieval moat.

While the benefits of Marshall's developments are debatable, Buckden Towers is certainly blessed in its present owners, the Claretian Missionaries, whose sensitive work has recreated the glory of the grounds and buildings.

Beyond the lawns we walked down an avenue of young limes *Tilia europea*, the hybrid variety used in the sixteenth century, pleached in the traditional style. Beside this the site of the medieval orchard has been replanted with varieties of medlar, mulberry, quince and other fruit trees familiar by the sixteenth century.

Along the further side of the lake we followed the line of the raised Walk, constructed around the perimeter of the Park by Bishop Williams, after he retired from his post as Keeper of the Great Seal in 1625. From here we enjoyed splendid views over the lake. The Walk is shaded by trees, mainly of native deciduous species. We were amused by our unexpected difficulty in identifying some of them from their unfamiliar first spring foliage.

The grounds, like the buildings, have elements from various periods. The lake was formed in the seventeenth century by joining together the four medieval fishponds, and further refinements were made to its landscaping by Marshall. Of the medieval viewing mounds, one is now an island in the lake. The mound at the north-east corner of the Walk is graced by a large London plane, probably planted by Bishop Robert Sanderson, who restored the palace and grounds after the restoration of the monarchy in 1660.

Many trees were cut down in the Commonwealth period, but one huge oak in the Park dates to 1603, marking the accession of James I. The giant Californian Redwood, *Sequoiadendron giganteum*, or Wellingtonia, in the Outer Courtyard is a typical Victorian planting.

At the end of our circuit of the Park, we returned to the bridge in front of the archway of the Inner Gatehouse. Pat described how this section of the moat has been re-excavated recently and planted with the creeping plant *Ajuga reptans* to simulate the surface of water.

Queen Katherine's garden. Photo: Mr. D. Fage.

The final item of our tour was "Queen Katherine's Garden", on the site of the original walled vegetable garden. This is a reconstruction, started in 1994, of a typical Tudor knot garden. It was dedicated to Queen Katherine of Aragon, in memory of the time she spent in Buckden Palace after the annulment of her marriage to Henry VIII. The garden was designed by William Dawson, who has also done extensive research on the Buckden estate.

"Queen Katherine's Garden" has four knot beds based on original Renaissance designs around a fountain, and two smaller beds with heraldic designs: one, the fleur-de-lys of the Bishops of Lincoln, and the other, the arms of Bishop Russell, which are also set in the brickwork of the gable of the Inner Gatehouse overlooking the garden. The variety of colours in the patterns is produced by the use of various traditional plants which can be clipped into shape like box: blue-green from rue and a silvery hue from santolina. The gold of the Russell arms is golden marjoram. The Renaissance fashion of patterns created from different coloured gravels is now an easy one to follow, using the bags of coloured stone chippings available from garden centres.

Enclosure was an essential feature of the Tudor garden. As in the Middle Ages, the garden was a place of repose, an ordered area secluded from the wilderness of nature; but the boundary was now more likely to be decorative trellis with climbing plants, than a wall. The arboured walk, around the sides of "Queen Katherine's Garden", planted with clematis, vines, honeysuckle and hops is typical. At one corner is a viewing mound with an open trellis-work summer house. Herbs used in the sixteenth century for medical and culinary purposes are grown on the terraced beds.

Many of the plants for this garden have been donated and much of the work done by a dedicated team of volunteers. Several were hard at work on the day of our visit.

We had a delicious afternoon tea in the idyllic setting of the terrace overlooking the knot garden, and sheltered by the gable wall of the Inner Gatehouse. This is a superb example of the fine brickwork of the late fifteenth century in East Anglia. Features such as the corbelling of the oriol window, the specially moulded bricks of the window mullions, and the diaper patterns of the dark, heavily fired bricks may be compared with Oxburgh Hall and Gestingthorpe church tower.

Our tour over, we had time for a visit to the Church of St Hugh of Lincoln, built by the Claretian Missionaries in 1959, and serving as the church of the large rural Catholic parish. A statue of St Hugh with his swan stands in front of the Church. He stayed at Buckden several times while Bishop of Lincoln in the twelfth century. The Church and cloister fill in the circle of the Inner Courtyard between the house and the Great Tower. The imaginative touch of decorating the facade of the Church with the diaper pattern of dark bricks, similar to that of the Gatehouse opposite, helps this modern building blend with its setting.

The Lady Chapel is built on the site of the original Bishops' Chapel which Marshall demolished. The Lady Chapel and the St Claret Chapel, added in 1985 in the form of an undercroft, have brilliantly coloured, contemporary, stained-glass windows by Paul Quail.

The need for the Catholic Church to build churches in Britain in the twentieth century has tended to place them in the forefront of innovative movements in church design. The Church of St Hugh of Lincoln is no exception. The western gallery was originally designed for the choir, in order to bring the main body of the congregation closer to the altar: a trend influenced by the aims of the Liturgical Movement in church architecture.

One of the joys of a visit to Buckden Towers is that these superb ancient grounds and buildings are so well used for such an appropriate purpose, rather than treated as a museum: and there is still the added bonus that the grounds are open to the public to visit.

Jeanette Fage

THE GARDENS AT EASTON LODGE
VISIT ON 20th JUNE 2002

Those of us who had had our appetites whetted by Brian Creasey's talk on Easton Lodge and its gardens were not disappointed when on a perfect June afternoon some twenty of us met him there by the 'Peto' Pavilion to hear a short history of the site, its buildings and people, before being led by him on a tour of the extensive grounds. Our interests had also been sharpened by John Drake's article about Daisy Maynard and her gardening plans in the April/May Newsletter.

Little Easton, situated in north-west Essex, has had a Deer Park since 1302, and the settlement of Estaines Parva is entered in the Domesday Book. In 1348 Lady Eleanor de Louvain inherited land here, later marrying Sir William Bourchier. The estate passed from the Bourchiers to the Throckmortons, finally being given to the Church in 1558, the year of Elizabeth the First's accession. No visit to Easton is complete without a visit to the Parish Church to see the magnificent Bourchier and Maynard tombs. It is believed that Elizabeth granted the Manor of Estaines to Henry Maynard, William Cecil's private secretary, in 1590, and in 1597 Maynard began to build his Elizabethan 'H' ground-plan house, similar externally to Blickling Hall in Norfolk, but on a smaller scale. The grounds were developed during the 17th century, pasture was taken in to form a goose-foot or *patte d'oie*, three avenues of trees radiating from a central point, a bosquet was planted, now a delight in spring, a ha-ha constructed, a dovecot built, and at the end of the l8th century an ice-house excavated.

In l847 most of the Elizabethan house was destroyed by fire, to be rebuilt by the architect Thomas Hopper in Victorian Gothic style at a cost of £12,000. In 1868 the estate was inherited by the three-year old 'Daisy' Maynard, who married Lord Brooke in 1881, eventually to become Countess of Warwick, and the architect William Young was employed to carry out alterations to the house, in particular to the West Wing, including the addition of the now notorious 'Edward Steps' leading to Daisy's boudoir. In 1902 Daisy commissioned Harold Peto to begin work on what was to become one of the most talked-about gardens in England – not only in regard to matters horticultural. After a second fire in 1918 Philip Tilden was employed to rebuild, the West Wing becoming a separate house, the home of the Creaseys since 1971.

The starting-point of our tour, the 'Peto' Pavilion, was restored in 1995 with the help of a grant from Essex County Council. It is a handsome garden room in the Peto style, with a rectangular pool in front, and beyond that colourful rose and mixed flower-borders looking particularly well. It was hard to believe, had one not seen the slides shown by Mr Creasey at his lecture, that the whole area had for some 40 years been covered with trees, scrub, and brambles. Crossing the South Lawn, we admired roses – Paul's Himalayan Musk rambler, Sea Gull and Félicité and Pérpétue cascading over trees – on our way to the Millennium Project. This is a re-

creation of the box and yew 'living' sundial at Stone Hall, Daisy's hideaway cottage, now demolished. Nearby is the Shakespeare Border, featuring all the plants mentioned by the Bard, again copied from Stone Hall. Returning through the rose borders northwards we mounted the steps to the seven reconstructed Peto Terrace Beds. These would have been immediately in front of the house; to our right a section of the surviving Ham Hill stone balustrading led down to the Pavilion. Ahead of us a cool glade of silver birch demarcated the main portion of the house, planted by Maynard Greville in 1950 after he pulled down his mother's home to allow him to start planting a vast arboretum which virtually 'planted out' his mother's, and Peto's, romantic French, Italian, and

Peto's sunken Italian garden. Photo: Mrs. T. Harding.

Japanese gardens. Passing through the birches we came to the North Lawn with its eight rectangular beds, four edged with Ham Stone (1902), four with concrete (1920). Stone columns, now sadly disappeared, rose from the centre of each bed, topped with an urn. These beds now supply seasonal colour. On our left was to be seen a fine cedar of Lebanon, some 250 years old. Crossing the parallel Green Walk, where the yew hedges are being cut back to rejuvenate, we came to the sunken croquet lawn, where on the east and west sides there once stood the magnificent wooden pergolas, which sadly collapsed in 1922 under the weight of snow settling on the hessian covering which supported the climbing plants. These imposing structures, in a late 16th-century style, were made by Whites of Bedford at a cost of £150 each and were considered the finest examples of treillage work in England. (Photographs can be seen in vol.III of 'Gardens Old and New', ed. A. Tipping, Country Life 1907.)

Next came the partly restored sunken Italian Garden, Peto's masterpiece, which was looking beautiful, with many of the twenty varieties of replaced water-lilies blooming in the 100-foot canal as they enjoyed the heat reflected from the remaining stonework, most of which had been sold off 'for a song' in 1960. Eighty-four trees had to be removed from this site before restoration could begin. This gem is again under threat, and work has had to be halted, let us hope only temporarily. Then on to Peto's Tree House, or rather the remains of it, in a vast old oak, surrounded by limes, which would have been pleached to allow those within to see out and over the gardens. Next the Glade, a particularly restful spot, formerly the Japanese Garden, where rescued inebriates spent a chilly winter shifting huge amounts of earth to form the gently rolling grounds leading down to the lake and tea-house, now replaced by a Tenboudai or viewing platform. Returning to the house we passed on the right the RAF Stirling Walk, a memorial to the men of 190 and 620 Squadrons stationed here in World War II. Ahead of us was the Shelley Pavilion, originally the West Porch of Maresfield Park, Sussex. Finally back to the Peto Courtyard, beside the Creaseys' home, for a delicious tea. The Courtyard is a delightful sheltered spot, with exuberant roses and – if you are lucky – two fine brown cats. Herringbone brick paving and variegated cobbles were discovered here beneath concrete, and amazingly the Ham Stone fountain had remained intact and now tinkles gently.

The afternoon was rounded off by a visit to the exhibition in the late 17th-century Dovecot. One could easily spend half a day viewing this mass of well researched material, both written and pictorial, on this important place and the people associated with it. I strongly urge members of the Trust and their friends, if they care at all about preserving gardens, to visit Easton. English Heritage has listed the gardens – though sadly not the house –Grade II. It would be a crime if the Peto garden were to be lost to us, to say nothing of the immense amount of time, labour and sheer hard cash that the Creaseys have spent over the last thirty years in nurturing and restoring it.

G. Anne Kenney

DEATH OF AN HISTORIC GARDEN – THE GARDENS OF EASTON LODGE

Towards the end of September I heard reports on the radio of the proposed extra runway and roads which were to improve Stansted Airport. This was followed by a letter from Brian Creasey informing friends of the Gardens at Easton Lodge that the Gardens, now 400 years old, were threatened by expansion plans for Stansted Airport.

He states that if the proposed runway expansion to the airport goes ahead, the first new runway to be built will be less than one mile from the Gardens of Easton Lodge, and the new link road from the M11 will be less than 200 yards away. This will devastate an historic site of national significance and a long established haven for local wildlife. The proposed runway and road developments would isolate the Gardens, and the current wildlife patterns and populations would be unsustainable. The noise and pollution would lead to the closure of the Gardens to the public, and their famous peace and tranquillity destroyed forever.

What would be lost if the Gardens are forced to close:-

An important tourist attraction and valued local centre for cultural and leisure activities.

Internationally significant work by leading Edwardian garden designer, Harold Peto.

A rare tranquil haven for local wildlife.

30 years of careful restoration work will be lost amidst the noise and pollution of aircraft and traffic.

A nationally important location with associations with leading figures and events from the early 1880s until the Great War of 1914-18.

A peaceful living tree lined memorial to the WWII RAF crews, donated by the veterans and their families.

An important educational resource for local schools and the community.

As Brian wished objections to be returned by October 27th, the Trust will have sent its objections, and I have asked him to send forms to some of those who visited the Gardens on that lovely sunny day in summer with the Trust.

John Drake

THE SWISS GARDEN
THE TRUST'S VISIT TO THE SHUTTLEWORTH ESTATE AT OLD WARDEN, BEDFORDSHIRE
11th JULY 2002

The Swiss Garden is part of the Old Warden Estate. On the site of a former monastery this estate was owned by the Ongley family between 1695 and 1872. It was then sold to the Shuttleworths who rebuilt the main house and whose family name accounts for the title of the whole site today.

The Swiss Garden was the creation of the third Lord Ongley (1803-77). He inherited the whole estate and park, and about 1825 added this new garden to the existing formal arrangements. It was to be a completely separate and secluded compartment covering about nine acres and was laid out in the then fashionable picturesque style. Although the Shuttleworths made some alterations in a more formal manner after 1872 they did not change the overall character of the garden, which therefore remains one of the best examples of a small-scale picturesque and rustic garden to survive from this period.

Maintenance declined after the Second World War and the garden deteriorated until the County Council took over the management of the site in 1976. They have been engaged in restoration work since then and it is now back to its former glory. They kindly arranged our visit and provided an excellent guide for our tour.

The basic idea of the picturesque as applied here was that the garden would not be designed formally but as a walk that would provide constantly changing views with every so often a specially contrived scene that would stop the visitor in his or her tracks. This garden only covers about nine acres but, because the paths wind so frequently and intricately among the grass and trees and shrubs, there are said to be as many as sixty particular views. It is fascinating to see how much has been fitted into a small space.

The views are created in a variety of ways. In many cases landscaping is important. This includes the provision of lakes and islands and cascades and bridges. It also includes the construction of artificial cliffs which are features in their own right, but also on occasions serve to frame views. Other focal points are provided by specimen trees or small flower beds.

However the key elements are provided by a series of small buildings or structures. These generally have a rustic nature which was so fashionable at this time. It is this which may account for the name "Swiss" Garden as there was a vogue for all things Swiss at the time the garden was being created. These buildings include an "Indian" kiosk, a chapel and a thatched tree-seat. Especially significant is the Swiss Chalet which is the central feature and acts both as a focal point for views and also as a look-out point from which views can be had. It probably also served as a place for refreshment and entertainment where the family could enjoy their surroundings.

Another important structure is the grotto. It is in the form of a glass house which itself is an early use of cast iron. Inside this, tufa stone has been used to imitate a rock face and a Fernery established. This has recently been refurbished and is now a magnificent feature.

This garden becomes all the more significant when it is put into context, for at the same time that he was creating the garden Lord Ongley was transforming the nearby village of Old Warden. Moreover he was doing it along the same picturesque and rustic lines. The total result is one of the best examples of picturesque place- making in England.

About twenty members thoroughly enjoyed a sunny afternoon and their tour, and were very grateful to the organisers for such a pleasant occasion.

David Bond

VISIT TO NORTHBOROUGH MANOR
15th AUGUST 2002

On the warmest of afternoons our party received the warmest of welcomes from John and Jane Trevor, the present owners. We assembled in the Great Hall where our hosts outlined the history of the manor house, the adjacent gatehouse range (once a cowhouse) and gardens.

The manor, which dates from 1334, was built of Barnack stone by Roger de Norburgh, a powerful nobleman and Lord High Treasurer of England under Edward III. His other appointments included Chancellor of Cambridge University. In 1572 James Claypole, a Puritan landowner, bought the property for £500 and in the same year erected a stable block adjacent to the gatehouse. The impressive dovecot also dates from this year. In 1646 his great-grandson John Claypole married Elizabeth Cromwell (Oliver's favourite daughter), and took up residence at the manor. We were told that Oliver Cromwell visited and stayed in the gatehouse, which at some stage may have had three storeys and been crenellated. The exterior wall incorporates provision for musketry defence via small loopholes (now glazed). Elizabeth died at Hampton Court in 1659, ten days before her father. John Claypole brought Cromwell's widow to Northborough where she lived until her death in 1665. The manor has strong American links, especially to the State of Pennsylvania (the State flag hangs in the Great Hall) as a result of emigration by many members of the Claypole family. Present-day descendants of the Claypoles often visit the manor house, sometimes with little or no notice!

The principal local landowners (the Fitzwilliams) leased the surrounding land to tenant farmers for a period of 180 years to 1960 when a waterway access to the south of the property was drained.

In 1960 Roy Genders, a former King's School, Ely, pupil rented the manor for a peppercorn rent and began a major, and virtually single-handed, restoration project, himself living in the gatehouse (now listed as an Ancient Monument). Roy Genders was an authority on roses and a prolific writer on garden subjects. The layout of the garden immediately to the south of the Great Hall is Genders' design. His planting included rows of willows either side of the ditch/ha-ha and flowering cherries, sadly now gone. After Mr Genders' departure the property was a restaurant for about two years.

John and Jane Trevor purchased the property with listed planning consent 14 years ago and have completed major restoration and maintenance of the buildings. Jane Trevor has carried out sympathetic garden alterations, largely in keeping with Roy Genders' plan and planting. Today, the formal layout of the south garden has attractive lavender and santolina hedges defining three spaces with a central feature. This is a stone galleon on a stone water table and balustrade originating from an earlier Waterloo Bridge, London. A line of

pollarded weeping willows forms an avenue leading to a live willow seat. A croquet lawn is edged with willow screens and box hedges. There is access to the vegetable garden and cutting borders. The east garden features timber trellis and pergola for vines. Original yews topiarised as bells are gone but adjacent to the dovecot is a yew topiarised to a pineapple shape.

Having toured the gardens we returned to the magnificent Great Hall for tea and cakes. Here, Val Hepworth, Secretary of the Yorkshire Gardens Trust and Chairman-designate of the National Association of Garden Trusts gave a short presentation on the work of the Association, its funding and research, and on current projects in Yorkshire. Finally, our hosts were congratulated on the success of their work on the manor buildings and gardens, and thanked for a most enjoyable and memorable afternoon.

Alan Brown

VISIT TO THE PARK IN NORTH PETERBOROUGH

15th AUGUST 2002

On a bright sunny morning a group of members visited the Central Park in north Peterborough for a tour of the park, and the small cemetery that lies close by, between Broadway and Eastfield Road. Not only did we have an enjoyable tour, but also an interesting discussion on early town-planning and local history.

The park and cemetery were part of a 200-acre site speculatively laid out in 1876 by the Peterborough Land Company to attract people to the north part of Peterborough. The development was possibly the first scheme of town-planning in the city and was based on Park Road, Broadway and Park Crescent, and included various grades of housing around a central park designed in the shape of a scallop shell, which was for the private use of the tenants.

The park was officially opened in 1879 with a good selection of music played by a military band in the bandstand, and an early form of 'war games' to entertain the public. The bandstand no longer exists, but originally occupied a central position in the park, and was designed in a rustic style. The park was some 22 acres, and originally included a miniature lake with swans, and facilities for lawn tennis, archery, cricket and a large plot for football and other games. The cross paths were planted on either side with conifers with shrubs beneath. The perimeter planting has mixed conifers and deciduous trees, sometimes beside a raised perimeter path. All these paths exist today, including the serpentine route of the perimeter path, but the miniature lake appears to have become a sunken garden. The original timber-framed aviary also still survives.

The Peterborough Land Company offered to sell the park to the Corporation in 1893 for £5000, but the offer was declined. However it was later acquired by the Corporation on a 999-year lease and opened to the public in 1908.

The park has changed over the years of public ownership, but still retains its basic scallop-shell shape and the original avenues and serpentine walk. A residents' survey was carried out in 1996 in preparation for a grant from the National Lottery associated with the restoration of Victorian parks. Some of the changes being considered are the re-creation of the original features, i.e. bandstand, pond, scented garden and formal ornamental areas.

Following the tour of the park we visited the small cemetery between Broadway and Eastfield Road. This cemetery was one of the new cemeteries required in the 1850s and was laid out on a series of rectangular spaces connected by a central broad road from the two lodges on the eastern boundary. This separated the consecrated from the non-Conformist portions. There were two chapels for the Church of England and Non-Conformists which unfortunately were demolished in 1960. A peaceful place in the city with a wide range of trees, and now planted with a variety of spring flowers.

Bill Emmerson

THE CASTELLO d'ACQUA IN WIMPOLE HALL PARK

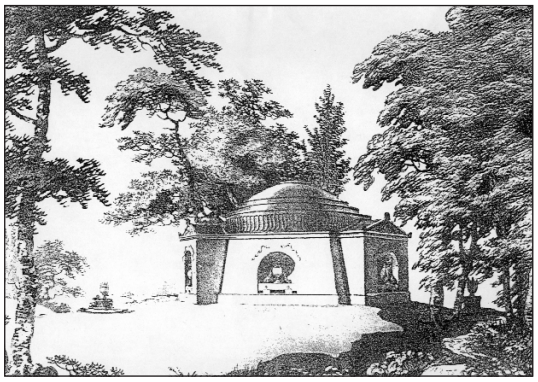
In the summer of 2002 excavations in the grounds of Wimpole Hall revealed the foundations of Sir John Soane's Castello d'Acqua. This exciting discovery prompted a visit to the Library of Sir John Soane's Museum in Lincoln's Inn Fields, London, to find out more about the history of this building.

The story began in May 1790 when Philip Yorke of Hamels Park inherited Wimpole Hall and became the 3rd Earl of Hardwicke. Less than a month after his arrival at Wimpole he called in John Soane (later Sir John Soane) to make some alterations to the house and park. Soane, perhaps best remembered as the architect of the Bank of England, was responsible over sixteen years for the design of the magnificent glasshouses at Wimpole as well as interiors in the Hall, a lodge and gatescreen, and the model farm, including the Great Barn, at Home Farm. Yorke had met Soane on the 28th January 1779 appropriately among the massive ruined columns of ancient Paestrum where Soane was making measured drawings and Yorke was visiting the site while on the Grand Tour. Yorke was the first member of his family to go on the Grand Tour, and had a keen interest in architecture.

The Castello d'Acqua, a reservoir, supplied water to the plunge pool. It stood a short distance away from the house on a wooded hill to the north east, and replaced an earlier less efficient conduit head. The structure was designed to resemble a Roman mausoleum set in an Arcadian landscape.

Its design 'synthesised together two ideal projects invented in Italy in 1779, the classical dog kennel for the Earl-Bishop of Derry and the Castello d'Acqua designed for the Palma Academy Competition, each of which combined centralised geometrical planning with monumental classical forms. The water was contained in a circular chamber placed on a triangular base, and its shallow stepped dome was modelled on that of the Pantheon in Rome. The three pedimented frontispieces contained cinerary urns reinforcing the structure's sepulchal character' to quote Margaret Richardson and Mary Anne Stevens in *John Soane, Architect, Master of Space and Light,* 1999.

The plunge pool held 2200 gallons of water. It dates from 1792 and is at ground-floor level on the servants' staircase. It



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was heated at one time by a boiler in the basement and was pressure-fed from the Castello d'Acqua. A fireplace in an antechamber kept bathers warm before and after their dip. Soane rose to the occasion and designed a skylit chamber to house the indoor bath, providing grandeur in miniature. A double staircase sweeps round to a central plinth which once may have held a statue of a bathing Venus or Diana. Two further flights of stairs with curved ends lead down from this to a gracefully shaped bath.

Yorke and Soane clearly tried to recapture the golden age of classical antiquity that they had seen in Italy in their Castello d'Acqua. It was sadly demolished in the nineteenth century.

Our thanks go to Philip Whaites, Head Gardener at Wimpole Hall, for informing us of this find.

Audrey Osborne

HISTORY OF THE CARROT

I thought that following a recent newsflash on my TV where a purple carrot was being introduced I must find out more about this vegetable. Timing couldn't be better because Jill Cremer and myself have been using the library at NIAB along the Huntingdon Road in Cambridge for researching Victorian fruit, vegetable and plant catalogues for the Walled Kitchen Garden at Ramsey Abbey School.

The cultivated carrot belongs to the genus *Daucus L*. This genus contains a great variety of wild forms. These grow mostly in the Mediterranean areas and in south west Asia, but are also found in tropical Africa, Australia, New Zealand and the American continents. Early Roman instruction books for schools – Hermeneutata – and afterwards periodically copied by successive generations of monks, contain lists of names in Greek and Latin of *pastinaca, stafilinos, karota* and *daukas*. But they do not tell us what kind of root crops are indicated by these names. Two inventories of gardens at the time of Charlemagne (800 A.D) have been saved. They contain several names of vegetables but nothing remotely similar to the word carrot. The Capitulare de Villis Imperialibus of Charlemagne is also known and mentions *carvitas* and *pastinacas*. It is only assumed that these names mean carrot and parsnip respectively. It is unlikely that there is any evidence that our cultivated carrot was known to the Romans, or to the Europeans at the time of Charlemagne.

However, the first clear description of carrots comes from the Arab countries after the spread of Islam. On the north-west fringe of Arabia, the Nabatheans, local farmers, are recorded growing carrots in the 12th century. The root of the plant is eaten but the foliage is not. They grew two kinds – a red one which is the most juicy and tasty and a green one blending to yellow and coarse. In the climate of Babylonia they are sown between August 26th and October 5th and grown during the winter period. The carrot is eaten with vinegar, salt, olive oil, and certain vegetables or cereals and commonly replaces bread. In Seville carrots were also grown during the winter.

Written documents record that carrots were grown in the 13th century in Italy, in the 14th century in France, Germany and the Netherlands, and in the 15th century in England. From the book of the Nabatheans, two types of carrots are described, a red one and a yellow one. From colour indications "brown-red", "blackish red", "atrorubens" or "atrorubente" (= dark red), and "redder than a red beet", it was evident that the carrots which were formerly called red, were indeed purple, like red beet and red cabbage. Later writings say that the purple carrot is tender, juicy and tasty.

Orange carrots appear at a much later date and were not known for their taste. In Egypt today they still grow carrots with "small purple roots which are sweet and tasty".

There is no mention that the purple carrot was grown in England by Gerard or Parkinson. The seed firm of Sutton & Son at Reading had the Long Purple carrot in their catalogue in 1872 and 1874, with the remark "French import"; Peter Lawson & Son Edinburgh, carried the Purple Carrot from 1854-1859, probably as a curiosity. It is illustrated by Vilmorin-Andrieux & Co, Paris, in their catalogue, and they classified the variety in 1904 with the forage carrots, where it was still found in 1925.

So what was being promoted has been available for several years. Offering seed of a 'new' variety is questionable, but perhaps you have to encourage the population to try something which to them is new.

Next time you visit the Fitzwilliam Museum or the National Gallery stop and look carefully at paintings by P.C. Van Rijck and Peter Aertsen to see what colour they have painted the carrots in their pictures of daily life in a kitchen!

I must record my appreciation to Mr Mike Day at NIAB for pointing out to me the lengthy illustrated article by O.Banga published in 1957 by the Institute Voor De Veredeling Van Tuinbouwgewassen Wagening – Holland on The Origin of the European Cultivated Carrot.

John Drake

WALLED KITCHEN GARDEN SEMINAR

27th APRIL 2002

This seminar was held at the headquarters of the Architectural Association, a very elegant town house in Bedford Square, London, and was attended by 32 interested persons from across the country. Susan Campbell, authority on walled kitchen gardens, introduced the meeting and described how the TV series 'The Victorian Kitchen Garden' with Harry Dobson had rekindled an interest in these. But what should kitchen gardens be used for now – car parks, adventure playgrounds, mazes, tennis courts, potagers, swimming pools, garden centres, Christmas tree plantations, housing? – for such is the situation today. Also, should all kitchen gardens be restored? How many were there in each county? The answer to this last question could perhaps be a task for each County Gardens Trust to count. However, not all counties have a Gardens Trust, eg. Bedfordshire. Should a nationwide database be set up? The University of York is interested but is unable to undertake the task at present.

Restoring kitchen gardens poses several problems – insufficient volunteers, necessity for toilets, lack of old records and accounts to name but a few. However, all is not doom and gloom. There have been several excellent restorations as we were about to hear.

Jeremy Miller spoke about the walled garden restoration at Tatton Park which commenced in 1985 with the aid of Lottery Funds. Samuel Wyatt had constructed a magnificent pinery in 1789 using early heating systems and this has now been restored to its former glory, as has the palm house, tomato house, vinery, fig house and vegetable garden.

After lunch Nick Hill spoke about the Audley End Kitchen Garden restored with the aid of English Heritage and the European Regional Development Fund, taking three years to complete. They were fortunate to have considerable archive material to draw on, an unusual documentary source being the diary of an undergardener there from March to September 1874. Oral history was provided by the 7th Lord Braybrooke's daughter, the Hon Mrs Catherine Ruck, she having worked in the garden during its final years at the beginning of World War II. One fascinating discovery was the boiler pit, filled in after the war. When excavated the deep pit was revealed as well as the lower parts of two l9th century boilers that had supplied heat to the whole range of glass-houses. The orchard house, back sheds, mushroom house, gardeners' bothies, potting sheds and peach house are now as good as new. The Henry Doubleday Research Association, guardians of the Heritage Seed Library, had been able to advise and source appropriate varieties of seed for the large central 'quarters' used for vegetable crops in rotation.

Jim Buckland, in charge of West Dean Kitchen Garden, had a different challenge. To achieve financial stability, a 10-year plan had been drawn up with very clear objectives. These were to run a large teaching house, an arts and crafts centre, to use volunteers where possible, arrange for school visits; an entrepreneurial streak was essential – tomato weekends (100 varieties grown), chilli weekends (150 varieties grown – who could eat the hottest!), an art gallery was housed in the mushroom shed; all shapes and colours of aubergines were grown, all colours of chard, heritage vegetables, the produce being sold in the Visitor Centre. In addition 16 pristine Victorian glasshouses and frames housed a variety of plants, orderly rows of vegetables were displayed and one mile of garden wall was covered with 200 varieties of fruit trees.

Liam Egerton summarised the outcome of the day, why restore walled gardens, who and what are the benefits. He reminded us of the present crisis in farming, and that walled gardens could again become part of a horticultural network. Walled kitchen gardens had in the past been gardens, horticultural factories, heritage sites and early supermarkets and could become a very useful link in the food chain in the future. He defined the most important points – ownership and tenure, defining objectives, funding and income, project management and a workplan, skills and expertise. He spoke about the conflicting roles of education, production, visitor attraction and heritage restoration and wished everybody success with their projects in the future.

Audrey Osborne

FRUIT GROWING IN CAMBRIDGESHIRE

As part of our on-going research into fruit and vegetables grown in Cambridgeshire, our researchers found the following extract in the Victoria County History, Cambridgeshire & Isle of Ely, Vol II, 1948, pp.363-364

"Cambridgeshire fruit-growing has long been famous, and in no district can the dangers of over-production during a good season have been more obvious. Fruit that could not find a market near by had to be left to rot where it stood, and the farmer had to face a loss owing to the lack of some method of preserving it on a large scale. It was likely to occur to some fruit-farmer of the neighbourhood that the JAM-MAKING carried on in every household might be conducted on a commercial scale, and Mr Stephen Chivers and his sons, about the year 1873, first decided to make the experiment with the surplus fruit of the small farm in Histon which had been held by the family since the beginning of the century. Previously their fruit had been taken to Covent Garden market – a two-days' journey in the days of horse-drawn transport.

"The first boiling of jam took place in a barn, which may still be seen on the Chivers' estate, though now dwarfed by the great Orchard Factory which was built as a result of their success. A Cambridge grocer, greatly daring, volunteered to dispose of the jam, and was apparently much surprised to find that it sold. In 1875 a small factory was built conveniently near the railway in case the venture justified a distribution to wider markets. Improvements in equipment were steadily made. The Galloway boiler was introduced about 1885, and the introduction of electric light enabled work to be carried on at all hours and the fruit made into jam immediately it was picked. At this time, 150 workmen were employed. Now, the Orchard Factory has between 2,000 and 3,000 employees, and estates covering 8,000 acres, and sends its goods all over the world. It is estimated that 100 tons of jam can be produced daily; and to this initial manufacture others – such as the jelly-tablet, custard and blancmange powers, mincemeat, and marmalade – have been added with the years. Thus an even pressure of employment is kept up throughout the year, and not only in the English fruit-season.

"Messrs Chivers & Sons were also the pioneers of the CANNING industry in this country. The idea of it was French, not – as is sometimes supposed – American. The first inspiration was given by Napoleon (as in the case of sugar from beet-root), for in the days of the great wars he advertized for some method of preserving food for his armies, offering a substantial reward for a practicable scheme. A Parisian chef, M. Appert, produced the theory that since the action of gases in the air caused food to decay by vitalizing the bacteria, it should be feasible to keep it sound for any length of time by putting it into containers from which all air was excluded. Owing to mechanical difficulties his idea was not put into practice on any large scale, though there were several small and struggling canning factories in France and Britain. The establishment at the Orchard Factory of a canning department by Messrs. Chivers marked the first extensive application of the Appert theory in Britain, and since then British canned and bottled goods have been marketed on a huge scale. The first bottle of fruit was produced in 1890 at Histon and the first can in 1893. In 1931 a special factory was opened at Huntingdon to take over the canning of vegetables, the fruit being dealt with at Histon. The machinery of the new works is capable of turning out 30,000 cans of vegetables an hour. The statistics of Messrs. Chivers' output during the war of 1914-18 are some indication of the present scope of their business. During the four years of fighting they supplied to the War Office and canteens over 89 million pounds (40,000 tons) of foodstuffs, packed in containers made by the firm.

"The cans themselves are always made on the premises, and are lined with special substances to prevent corrosion by the acids in the juice, the action of each type of juice being analysed very carefully by chemists in the laboratories attached to the factory. Other containers, jam-pot covers, and boxes are made on the spot.

"Many subsidiary activities result from the main preserving and canning business of this firm, but since most of them are agricultural rather than industrial, few come within the scope of this article. The cultivation of fruit-trees and plants for supplying their own factory has led to the growth of scientifically reared plants for sale to nursery gardeners and ordinary retail seedsmen. The orchards also

afford good feeding-ground for poultry and pigs, and pedigree birds and stock are raised for sale. Since bees are useful for fertilizing the blossom, hives are kept, and the production of honey is another industry.

"The peculiarly high standard of Cambridgeshire fruit and vegetables – especially greengages, strawberries, potatoes, and pears – makes the county a great centre of the canning industry which Messrs Chivers first began there. A branch of Messrs. S. W. Smedley & Co.'s great firm has recently been established at Wisbech. Unlike that of Chivers, the Smedley system has regional factories rather than a large central one, each specializing in work connected with one or more types of fruit or vegetable flourishing particularly well in that region. The theory is that the produce should be canned within 5 miles of the place where it was grown, in order to avoid bruising in transit. The Wisbech branch was established chiefly for the sake of the strawberries for which the district is famous, and for the greengages and plums growing around Ely. Very little of the factory equipment is made on the premises as the firm looks to America for its machinery."

SMEDLEY'S IN WISBECH

The Wisbech factory was at the heart of Smedley's, and the history of the company is the story of the British canned and frozen fruit and vegetable industry. The company was founded by Samuel Wallace Smedley, a fruit merchant, born in 1876. On a visit to Canada and the U.S.A. made just after the first World War, his imagination was fired with the idea of opening an English fruit-canning factory. S.W. Smedley chose Wisbech because it was a recognised centre for growing top-quality fruit and vegetables. His firm, S.W. Smedley and Co. Ltd., started bottling and then canning locally grown fruit which was sold under the 'Wisbech' and 'Smedley's' brands.

Reproduced from 'History of Smedley's Ltd', 1975

In 1925 the firm changed its name to Wisbech Produce Canners and shortly afterwards, following his son's visit to America to learn more about the trade, S.W. Smedley introduced a complete line of modern American pea-canning machinery, the most important of which were the vining machines, the first of their kind in England, and probably in Europe. The private company, Wisbech Produce Canners Ltd, was floated in 1931 as a public company, National Canning Company Ltd, and in 1947 became Smedley's Ltd.

Smedley's pioneered the canning of carrots, celery hearts and macedoine, and the Lynn Road factory was extended by the addition of a pea factory and multi-storey warehouse next to the railway line. In 1937 Wisbech was the first factory in England to produce frozen peas and strawberries, followed a year later by raspberries, loganberries, cherries, broad beans, asparagus and even cucumber.

During the war there was a strong demand for canned foods for the forces. Then in 1945 quick-freezing was restarted in Wisbech and a few years later the factory produced the first mint-flavoured frozen peas. In 1957 the Hungarian uprising resulted in thousands fleeing to the west. Smedley's offered to house and feed about eighty Hungarians at the factory. One of these refugees was Joe Bugner, the boxer, (see *Gazetteer*, Wyton, River View, 27.5, p.142).

The 1960s was the time of 'take-overs' and in 1968 Smedley's accepted an offer, on condition they were allowed to continue expanding the business, from the Imperial Tobacco Company, who wanted to buy successful food companies to spread investment into areas outside tobacco. However, after a few years Imperial changed its policy and decided to break up Smedley's with disastrous results, closing factories one after the other until the only factory remaining open as a canning factory was at Wisbech.

S.W. Smedley, who lived at Sibald's Holme, Wisbech, (*Gazetteer* 30.8, p. 160), died in October 1961 and was buried in Wisbech in the cemetery at Mount Pleasant (*Gazetteer* 30.5, p.159).

Audrey Osborne

QUAY BREWERY WALLED GARDEN, ELY

Recently after one of the talks I gave to a local Horticultural Society, Herby Collen a member wrote to me with details of the above site. The Trust is greatly indebted to Mr Collen for providing such valuable information about a garden now lost. Members may be interested that Mr Collen was responsible for naming Buddleia '*Lady de Ramsey*' in 1972. He has kindly donated a plant for the walled garden at Ramsey.

You will see from the accompanying OS map 1st Edition 1880 that within what was once a 10 feet high wall the garden wrapped round the Quay Brewery to the south of Back Lane and was bordered by Broad Street to the west. To the south was a narrow alley called Little Lane. The numbers in the text refer to specific areas and glasshouses on the plan.

The Quay Brewery was owned by Hall, Cutlack and Harlick, and later amalgamated with the Huntingdon Brewery to become the East Anglian Breweries Ltd.

The walled garden is now developed with houses after a small Tesco supermarket abandoned the site in favour of larger premises to the south of Ely. The only remains of the walls is a short length along Broad Street which I noted when in Ely in February this year. Hopefully it still remains. The wall (1) supported a fan trained Morello cherry.

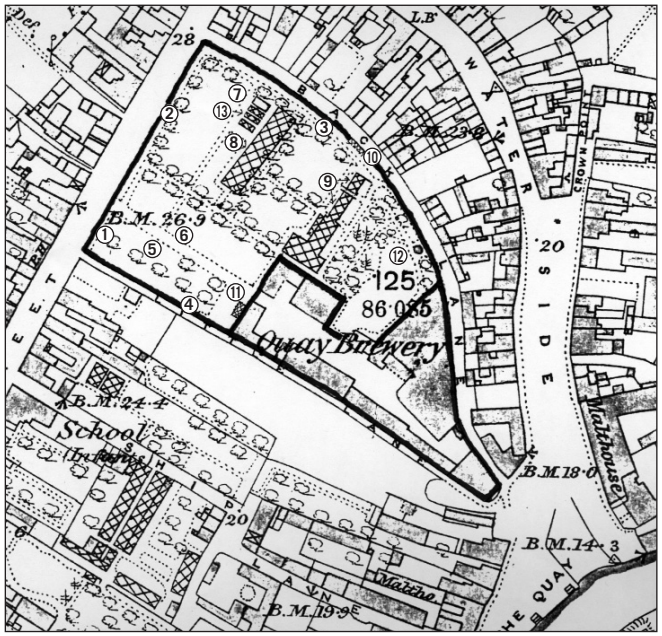
Further along the Broad Street wall (now lost) were (2) espalier '*Catillac*' pears. Espalier pear trees (3) were also planted all the way along Back Lane south facing wall. On the north facing well (4) along Little Lane were fan trained plums. Parallel and north of the Little Lane wall was an extensive

vegetable plot (5). To the north of the vegetable plot was the Apple Orchard (6) with paths edged with low box hedges.

The glasshouses:- (7) This was probably used for growing melons; there were steps down into the glasshouse and the melons were grown either side of a central sunken path. The glazed roof consisted of English lights on runners. (8) This was probably the Fruit House very popular in the latter half of the 19th century (see *The Culture of Fruits in Pots* by J Brace, 1904). These houses were recommended to be 50 feet to 100 feet long, 24 feet wide and 12 feet high. This glasshouse was divided into two sections – that which contained a boiler and water tank was for an early crop, and the other section was for a follow-on crop. (9) This consists of three linked glasshouses. The northern part was devoted to growing orchids, the central part for chrysanthemums, and the third part was a grotto with imitation rocks fixed to the walls. A later addition to the glasshouses was a peach/vine house (10) along the north wall, and consisted of a narrow enclosed space with movable frames. (11) A further addition for storage of fruit was later constructed.

(12) This area was the private garden for the Director of the Brewery, and consisted of lawns and flower beds with several fruit trees. (13) Here were valuable cold frames for raising plants for the garden.

John Drake



Quay Brewery Garden, Broad Street, Ely

The following is the introduction to an article which has been accepted by the Garden History Society for publication in their Journal at a future date.

'WE SHALL HAVE VERY GREAT PLEASURE'
NINETEENTH CENTURY DETACHED LEISURE GARDENS IN WEST CAMBRIDGE

Audrey Osborne and Jane Brown

This paper is a first fruit of Cambridgeshire Gardens Trust's project to research and record the gardens of west Cambridge. We define west Cambridge as the area west of the Backs, bounded on the north by the ancient village of Chesterton, and on the south by the hamlet of Newnham. From the early sixteenth century (and in some cases even earlier) the Colleges ranged along the east bank of the River Cam guarded the paddocks and walks of the Backs as their private territories; beyond lay vast agricultural tracts known as the West Fields, former monastic holdings which had devolved to corporate and private landlords, principally St John's College, and were subjected to complex leasings and exchanges throughout the centuries, but remained as farmed fields. Baker's 1830 map of Cambridge shows only five prestigious incursions into these fields: The Grove, a house in a very large garden in Huntingdon Road, the University Observatory in Madingley Road built 1822-3, Trinity College land beside Burrell's Walk (now the Fellows' Garden), and to the south, two more houses with large gardens, Plas Dinas and Newnham Cottage. This control in the west forced the inevitable nineteenth century expansion of Cambridge in other directions, notably south easterly, with the opening of the Eastern Counties Railway station in 1845.

Our primary interest was therefore in these West Fields; they had been substantially re-organised by the 1802 Enclosure Act and allotted as potentially new building land. As they were locked into the ultra-conservative management regimes of the landlord colleges, for many subsequent decades nothing happened. During that time the numbers of student matriculations in the university began to rise steadily out of Cambridge's eighteenth century academic doldrums, reaching 440 in 1830 (and overtaking Oxford's 405), and rising steeply from 605 in 1870 to over 1,000 in 1900. University expansion brought reforms, most notably the abolition of the 'Tests' in 1882 which allowed Fellows to be married: the consequent demand for family houses with gardens coincided with the decline in farm rents due to the agricultural depression of the 1880s, and these two factors brought about the development of West Cambridge. This development, in Late Victorian Gothic and Arts & Crafts Styles, mainly built before the 1914-18 War, represents a vintage period of English Domestic design. Furthermore the gardens were made for and by a stream of botanists and other earth scientists, as well as 'gardeners' distinguished in other academic disciplines, which makes them worthy of record. Now, with the University's ever greater expansion into the 21st century, the circle is closing and many of these once large and lovely gardens are being claimed for building sites.

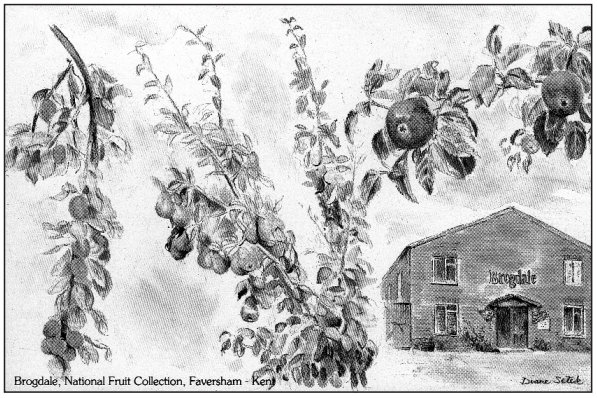
In pursuing this cycle of development Audrey Osborne's researches have revealed the existence of seven sets of Leisure Gardens, one hundred and ten gardens in all, which were in use for the major part of the nineteenth century. The earliest date that can be established for the start of this 'leisure gardening' is c.1830, when there was a flurry of horticultural activity which included the founding of the Cambridge Florists' Society: with the exception of the twelve Grange Road Gardens which survived until 1925, they were all taken for development by the turn of the twentieth century or very soon afterwards. Only one site, Old Grange Farm, had openly philanthropic purposes, and it would seem that despite their longevity, sometimes through two or three generations of owners, the gardens were transitional, part of the slow transformation of their contextual West Fields as described above. However, the revelation of these gardens, tenanted by a complete spectrum of 'town and gown' society, does suggest a new perspective on the growth and development of Cambridge, and on the lives behind the facades of the famous College courts and gardens.

BROGDALE VISIT
6th JULY 2002

On 6th July 2002 a group of Ramsey Walled Garden volunteers visited the home of the National Fruit Collection at Brogdale in Kent. The visit formed part of our research into the type of fruit which might have been growing in the Ramsey Gardens in Victorian times. We collected lists of trees from the period as well as varieties originally bred in Cambridgeshire which we could source from Brogdale.

We were shown round by volunteer guide Mike Ashton, a former farmer. He was very informative and had interesting stories to tell about many of the fruit trees. He had also kindly prepared lists of varieties of apple commonly available in Victorian times.

The fruit collection began at Brogdale in 1952 by bringing together several collections, supported by MAFF. MAFF ceased funding the trials in 1990 and the centre is now managed by the Brogdale Horticultural Trust. Defra still own the trees and help maintain the collection with a research commission held by Imperial College at Wye College, University of London and the Brogdale Horticultural Trust.



Postcard by Brogdale – National Fruit Collection, Faversham, Kent. Illustration by Diane Setek.

The collection is unique and of worldwide significance. There are some varieties which are unique to Brogdale but even so the collections comprise less than half of the varieties worldwide. The collection comprises 2,300 varieties of apple, 550 varieties of pear, 350 varieties of plum, 220 varieties of cherry, 10 varieties of apricot, 40 cobnuts, 5 varieties of medlar, 16 varieties of quince. Bush fruits include 200 varieties of gooseberry and 180 of currants. The raspberry and strawberry collections are now in Scotland.

Despite these large numbers of varieties, supermarkets rely on only about ten varieties of apple. The acreage of apple orchards in the UK has declined substantially in the last ten years.

The collection keeps two trees for each variety. One is pruned normally (in November for apples), the other is left so there is material for grafting. They are then pruned in April after all the orders for graft have been dealt with. The whole collection is re-propagated every 30 years. The old and new collections are run side by side for 6-7 years to ensure there are no losses.

The trees are sprayed every two weeks with spraying stopping in July. Studies have found that there are only a very limited number of varieties which are sufficiently disease resistant for organic production. They apply a foliar feed with the spray. The soil is tested every 3-4 years and re-dressed as necessary.

The orchards are surrounded by hedges which act as a windbreak raising spring temperatures by 2-3 degrees. Most hedges are alder which is not too dense, letting some wind through. Additionally, alder has leguminous nodules so takes less out of the ground than some other hedging trees.

We were shown the pear collections first which ranged widely from the familiar Williams and Conference to pears coloured deep red or purple. In Victorian times cooking pears were popular – originally there were only cooking pears. These could be stored in winter. Now with the development of dessert pears, cooking pears are fading away. There is a large area of Williams and mutations of Williams which originated in Britain but have now spread across the world. A Mr Bartlett bought a farm containing pear trees and as he did not know the name he named it after himself. He later started a canning business which was the origin of Bartlett pears, but they are really Williams. Rivers of Sawbridgeworth developed the Conference pear in 1890 – a parthenogenic pear which can produce fruit without pollination – these have no pips and are sausage shaped. Beurre pears were developed in the l8th century and are so called as they melt like butter in the mouth. The Comice pear was developed in 1850. Cattilac was a common cooking pear in Victorian gardens and goes pink on the table. Glowmorceau is another common Victorian variety which apparently tastes like a swede but is a good cropper. The keeping quality of the cooking pear was its most important feature. Warden pears, another cooker, was part of Edward II's wedding breakfast. The Black Worcestershire is another very old variety.

Brogdale has 2,300 varieties of apple ranging from ancient varieties known to the Romans to recently introduced varieties such as Pink Lady.

Costard varieties of apple go back to the 12th century and the word costermonger comes from this variety. Catshead apples also go back to at least the 12th century and are so called because it supposedly resembles a cat's head in shape. Both these varieties have ridges.

Calville Rouge and Calville Blanc d'Hiver were first brought to England in Henry VIII's time by his fruiterer Richard Harris. The King's orchards were near present day Faversham so this area has been the centre of the fruit industry for a long time. Henry VIII encouraged the propagation of trees for distribution across the country to reduce the dependence on European trees.

Well-known varieties such as Cox, Worcester, Bramley and Discovery all came originally from pips in people's gardens. The original Bramley came from a seed planted by Miss Elizabeth Brailsford in the 1830s. She died young and her mother kept the tree going. When her mother died, the house was bought by a Mr Bramley, a local butcher, who sold the apples in his shop. A nurseryman, Mr Merryweather liked these apples and asked for some wood for grafting and named the variety after the shop.

James Grieve was bred in Scotland in 1890; this crops well but has quite soft fruit so bruises easily and is therefore less commercially useful.

The Pine Golden Pippin is an interesting apple which, although small, has a lovely flavour resembling pineapple. This was grown in Victorian times.

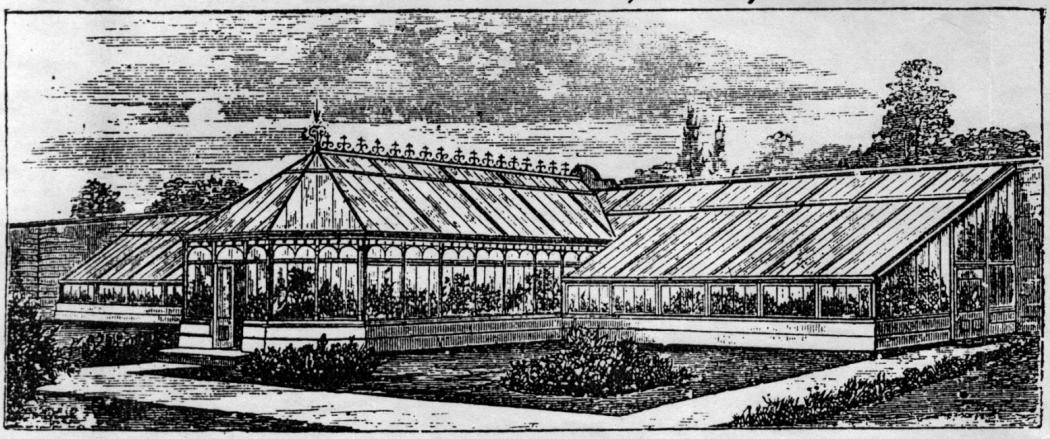
Brogdale organises a plum tasting weekend, a cider festival in September and an apple festival in October where visitors can sample a range of varieties.

Brogdale will graft trees to order, grafting the tree the customer wants onto suitable rootstock. Clients include the National Trust, community orchards and individuals wanting particular trees. There is a growing interest in regional orchards where local varieties are grown. In general, grafting is onto MM106 rootstock. The grafts are done in March and are ready in September with a cut off-date for orders in February. Brogdale can supply apples, pears, cherries, quinces and medlars, but are unable to supply plums due to a problem with a viral disease.

Our visit concluded with an excellent ploughman's lunch followed by fruit crumble.

Jane Sills

JAMES SENDALL & Co., Ltd., CAMBRIDGE.



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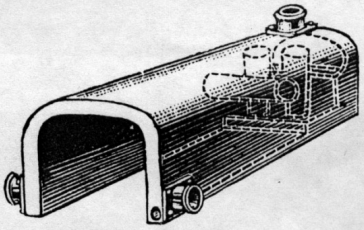

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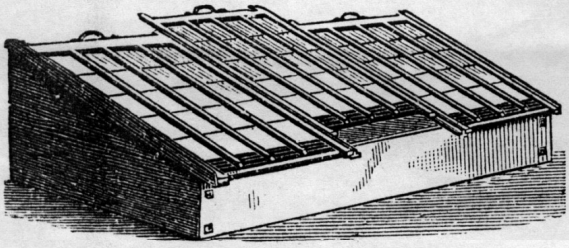

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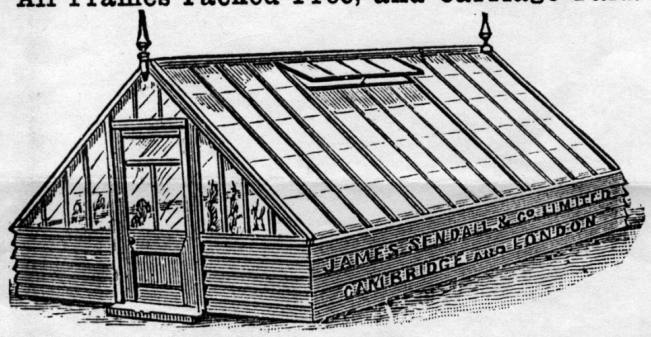
GARDEN FRAMES made and Stocked in all the most useful sizes. They are made of well-seasoned red-wood Deal, malleable iron-hinges, &c. PAINTED Three Coats of best Oil-Colour. GLAZED with 21-oz. English Glass. NEW LIST POST FREE.

All Frames Packed Free, and Carriage Paid.

Cheapest and most useful House made at the Price.

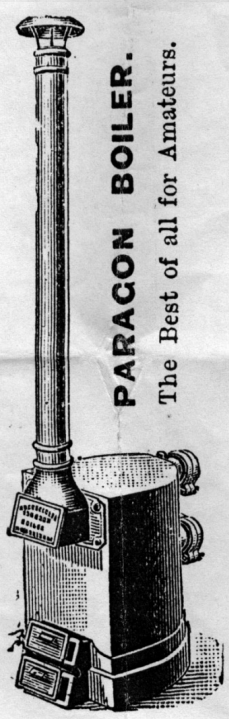


NEW ILLUSTRATED LISTS, POST FREE.

This is an EXACT VIEW of the No. 78—**SPAN-ROOF FORCING HOUSES**, 2 feet 9 inches high at the sides, Ventilators on both sides of the roof, door at one end, with lock and brass hinges, made of the best red deal, carefully fitted so that anyone can put it together IN ONE HOUR. 21-oz. ENGLISH MADE Glass cut to size. Painted twice.

PACKED FREE AND CARRIAGE PAID.

Length	*Width*	*Ridge*	*Price*
15 feet	8 feet	7 feet	£9 10 0
15 feet	10 feet	7 feet 6 in... ..	13 0 0
15 feet	12 feet	8 feet	15 0 0



PARAGON BOILER.

The Best of all for Amateurs.

James Sendall & Co. Ltd had a site near the Hills Road railway bridge in the 1920s. Does anybody know any more about this firm?

Cambridgeshire Gardens Trust
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