CAMBRIDGESHIRE GARDENS TRUST

NEWSLETTER No. 48 May 2020

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

MY FIRST THOUGHT is with you, the Trust's members. I hope that you're keeping safe and well and are able, in some shape or form, to enjoy the glorious spring weather that we are having at the moment (I am writing in early April). It lifts the spirits. You will find my idea for how the Trust can come together in these days of confinement and uncertainty at the end of this letter. Details of how the Covid-19 virus restrictions are affecting the Trust's programme of events and activities can be found on the website. When we can we will reorganise and reschedule for an exciting programme ahead. We will keep you informed.

Liz Whittle on a Gardens Trust tour of Sicily, long before coronavirus arrived.

I should introduce myself, as I have only been Chairman of the Trust since the AGM in November 2019. I am a garden historian, as you might expect, with a particular interest in the Tudor and Jacobean periods. My association with Cambridgeshire began a long time ago, when I was an undergraduate at Newnham College. I am now settled in the county, living in Wilburton. For many (nearly 30!) years I was the Inspector of Historic Parks and Gardens for Wales and latterly President (now Council member) of the Welsh Historic Gardens Trust. My long involvement with Welsh historic parks and gardens also led to a book about them (*The Historic Gardens of Wales*, 1994) and to becoming a trustee of the National Botanic Garden of Wales. I have had a long-standing involvement with the Garden History Society, latterly the Gardens Trust, holding various positions – Joint Editor of *Garden History*, Council member and chairman and currently member of the Conservation Committee. Finally, closer to home, I am a trustee of the Hobson's Conduit Trust. Now I am delighted and humbled to have been asked to be your chairman. I hope to be able to serve the Trust in any way I can and am greatly looking forward to it.

Despite the virus-induced hiatus I am giving thought to goals for the Trust in the future. First I want to support the Trust's vibrant and enthusiastic work in its chosen fields of endeavour – research, education and conservation. None of this work would be possible without the tireless input of our members, and in particular our Council of Management members. I would like to thank you all and encourage you to keep going!

These are some of my ideas. First, we should have a goal to increase membership. At present there are about 150 members. My aim would be to reach 200 by the next AGM. We can all play a part in encouraging friends, neighbours, professionals in related fields, to join us.

Secondly, I would like to see closer ties with the Gardens Trust, which has so much to offer in terms of expertise, initiatives and education. To take two of those strands, the Trust is currently launching an initiative, to run until 2022, called 'Unforgettable Gardens' and is encouraging county trusts to join in. The project will raise awareness of lost gardens, gardens at risk and gardens with special features. I'm sure Cambridgeshire has some. On the education front David Marsh's Grapevine project, comprising courses in all sorts of aspects of garden history, could be brought to our doorstep. These are projects to watch out for and to join in during the coming years.

Another idea is to strengthen ties with neighbouring gardens trusts – Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Beds, Northants – through joint activities. Parks and gardens take no notice of county boundaries! Some even straddle them. We have already taken one step in this direction by charging members of other gardens trusts the same as our own members for our events and visits.

I hope that you find the contents of this Newsletter interesting and stimulating. Since becoming Chairman we have had two very good events: the Christmas lecture on the secret life of the Georgian garden, by Dr Kate Feluś, and the Study Day 'How Green Was My City' in March. Kate entertained us with tales of mock rusticity, like fancy dress hay making. At the Study Day the speakers gave us great insights into urban landscapes and landscaping. Sir Roderick Floud explained the costs, sometimes astonishingly high, of parks and gardens, and their maintenance. Sue France's tour de force on pictorial meadows in Sheffield made us wish that Cambridgeshire would follow suit.

One aspect of the Trust's work, devolved from the Gardens Trust, is commenting on planning applications that affect the county's historic parks and gardens and their settings. As you are all well aware, parts of the county of Cambridgeshire are being altered out of all recognition, with the building of new campuses, business parks, large housing areas and new infrastructure. One of the Trust's main aims is the conservation of historic parks and gardens so we should be vigilant, aware that development proposals might have a damaging effect on these precious county assets. Proposals for future development, such as increased housing in south Cambridgeshire, new busways, Cambridge South station and the East-West Rail Link should all be monitored and, if necessary, commented on in the planning process if they potentially affect parks and gardens and their settings.

Finally, I come back to my idea of how we, as a community of garden, landscape and nature lovers can come together to gladden hearts in this strange and unsettling time. We want you to go outside, take photos and send them (one or two only per person please!) to the Trust's website, where a special page for the display of your photos is being set up by Phil Christie. Send the photos by email to Phil (phil.christie@ntlworld.com). Please add a short caption to each, with information like where the photo was taken, the date, the plant (if relevant), bird etc. You can add your name or remain anonymous, as you wish. There are so many possibilities – your gardens, flowers, trees (for instance oldest, largest, most unusual), wildflowers, landscapes, fauna in gardens (as I write there is a cock pheasant on the bird table!). We'd just like Trust members to be able to come together to celebrate something that is uplifting. Spring is in the air. The good times will return.

Liz Whittle

VISIT TO THE DAVID PARR HOUSE, 17 FEBRUARY 2020

AS A GP IN CAMBRIDGE from the early 1980s, I sometimes visited Victorian terraced houses whose residents had lived there for decades or even generations. They were unreconstructed time capsules with dilapidated fittings and decoration from an earlier age. But none had the treasure of Arts and Crafts style that was all but hidden from view behind the façade of 186 Gwydir Street (Fig. 1) until it was rescued in 2014 on the death of its last resident by Tamsin Wimhurst of the Museum of Cambridge (formerly the Folk Museum). I was privileged to join a group of Trust members on a guided tour of the house, as a proxy for my wife Gin, who was unable to attend.

David Parr joined the Cambridge interior decoration firm of F. R. Leach & Sons in 1871 at the age of 17, as an apprentice, and spent all his working life there as a decorative artist. The firm collaborated with William Morris and the architect George Bodley, among others, and specialised in the Neo-Gothic Arts and Crafts style of decorative painting, wood and plaster-work, stained glass and fixtures & fittings. At least ten buildings in Cambridge, notably All Saints Church and Queens' College Chapel and Hall, contain their work. They were also renowned throughout Britain for the interiors of several churches, St James's Palace and stately homes, but also the houses of the increasingly prosperous middle class. In 1886 David Parr bought the Gwydir Street house and lived there until his death in 1927. House purchase was rare among artisans at that time, and it may be that he deliberately wished to have free rein to bring to bear on his own humble home the extraordinary decorative and design skills that he was using on prestigious buildings all over the country. The project occupied much of his 40 years in the house.

On David's death, his 12-year-old grand-daughter Elsie came to live in the house as a companion for his widow Mary-Jane and lived there for the next 85 years. Apart from minor changes to bring the house slightly more up-to-date, she and her goods-train guard husband Alfred kept David's decoration substantially intact, although battling against the damp that had afflicted the structure from the very beginning. They also preserved the book in which he had kept meticulous and detailed notes of everything he did to the house. These listed all the decorative schemes, the paint colours he used, the alterations he made to the layout of the rooms and the fittings he installed, including an indoor lavatory in 1898, a universal range and a hot-air heating system for the main bedroom. This

Fig. 1. CGT members outside the David Parr house in Gwydir Street.

enabled the authentic restoration of this unique survivor of the Victorian era over two years from 2017 and it was opened for strictly limited guided tours last year.

We were shown round by dedicated volunteers. The front room is the showpiece, with a larger-than-life floral design of wall-painting, clearly inspired by William Morris, which one would normally expect to see only in much grander surroundings. Parr started with the ceiling and the area under the cornice, no doubt because he had three young children at the time and the oil paint took three days to dry. As they grew up, he gradually covered the walls, using the prick and pounce method, the marker dots of which are still visible. The first impression is that it is printed or stencilled, but you soon notice that no two motifs are actually identical and that it was all hand-painted. He decorated several other rooms in a similar way, including a frieze below the dining-room cornice whose pattern appeared in the Morris catalogue two years later, and may therefore have been David Parr's own design. He painted standard pine doors to look like mahogany and added elegant brass door furniture. He installed linenfold-pattern Lincrusta embossed wallcovering in the entrance hall, Anaglypta relief panels and, in 1910, linoleum of various patterns on the floors.

Fig. 2. Parr's Arts and Crafts detailing extended to the gutter brackets.

Fig. 3. The Bramley apple tree retains its central position in the garden, beside the original iron fencing.

Five thousand artefacts from every period of the family's occupation have been restored and retained in the house, including pictures, china, embroidery, curtains, toys, furniture, upright piano, kitchen equipment, sanitary ware, ironmongery and a 1970s record-player and portable radio. An archaeological dig in the back garden yielded finds from ancient times to the 1950s. It was returned to how it was in Elsie and Alfred's time, with its old Bramley apple tree and the iron fencing installed by David in 1902 along its southern boundary (Fig. 3). The Trust has recreated the small front garden (whose existence denotes that the house was intended for an artisan; workers' front doors opened directly onto the street) from his notes for the same year - terracotta tiles, box, gravel and Cordyline.

The charity has acquired and renovated the (grander) house next door as a Visitor Centre. They retrieved many of the fittings and artefacts from the F. R. Leach premises in City Road a fortnight before it was demolished in 2014 and these are on display. Sadly, the company archives had been destroyed in a fire in 1970.

Visitors are not allowed to take photographs of the interior but some may be seen, along with more information about the history of the house and the people involved, at the Trust's website: davidparrhouse.org. Many other images can be found by searching online.

Antony Warren
February 2020

RESEARCH REPORT

THE RESEARCH GROUP and Liz Whittle met for a jolly pub lunch (remember those?)… No, no, no! The lunch was incidental: we met (February 27, before lockdown) to plan how we were going to continue with the Productive Walled Garden (PWG) project. But The Old Crown in Girton was indeed a good place to convene.

We had a visit planned to the newly re-opened Cambridgeshire (as opposed to Huntingdonshire) part of the Cambridgeshire County Archive in Ely: that's now pencilled in with them for September 21. We also looked over the list of who was going to gather moderately detailed information on each of the 98 PWGs for the 'directory'. At the meeting, we confirmed continued willingness to do 'our' PWGs and reallocated a few. On Liz' advice, we have emailed the Historic Environment Record to ask whether the list of information fields we plan to collect is optimal. We asked them to add additional fields which would make our output more useful to them. No reply yet (as of April 3) so I've chivvied them. When we do know exactly what info we should sleuth for on each PWG, we can get online and see how much is in the public domain within reach from our homes.

It seems apt that the Research Group should share some history with you and, as we have no garden history to offer, here are some snippets about Girton. Before metal pen nibs came into use, Girton did a crisp trade in trapping and denuding geese of their feathers to make into quills for sale to scholars. It was a seasonal activity: the geese were apparently released in the hopes they would return to "donate" subsequent plumage.

Goose feathers, suitable for making scholars' quills. No goose was hurt in their acquisition: they were picked up on the banks of the Cam.

Thinking of scholarship, the parish is, of course, home to the first UK residential institution for the higher education of women, founded by suffragists in 1869, in Hitchin. The buildings of Girton College we see today were begun in 1873. Other Girton buildings include the almshouses of the Girton Town Charity, endowed in 1521 by William Collyn. This wealthy charity does many good things for Girton, including public art such as the Sculpture Railings: *Created by artist Matthew Lane Sanderson, the design of the Sculpture Railings incorporates the geese and quills historically associated with Girton when flocks of domestic geese provided quills for the University, as well as a tree of life using the Fibonacci sequence to define the proportion of panels and post settings.* The Sculpture Railings are by the church, and an image can be found on the charity's website at girtontowncharity.co.uk/about/sculpture-railings.html. There we are: full circle, or ellipse as the case may be.

Gin Warren, April 2020

VISIT TO THE PRODUCTIVE WALLED GARDEN AT BURGHLEY HOUSE: 5 NOVEMBER 2019

THE RESEARCH GROUP always enjoys a good productive walled garden (PWG), even when they have to survive biblical November rain on the Great North Road to get there. But we got lucky, both on the roads (no crashes) and in the rain drying up pretty much as we parked to rendezvous with the Deputy Head Gardener who was kindly going to show us round. We formed up in procession and were led to the distant PWG where, on getting out of our cars, we discovered the functional ha-ha. It circles the garden, some way beyond the wall. Apparently, the estate was anxious to use the outside surfaces of the walls for fruit trees and to keep them safe from animals grazing in the park. It is interesting to contrast this arrangement of wall and ha-ha with the double walls at Middleton Hall, near Carmarthen (Fig. 1). The Burghley arrangement could only be an aesthetic ha-ha if the Exeters and their friends and relatives were in the habit of viewing the PWG using telescopes, because it is a long way off from the House. Dr Feluś (author of *The Secret Life of the Georgian Garden* and CGT Christmas Lecturer, see page 12) assured us that telescopes were used in naumachias (*ibid*. Fig. 21) – but from all round a PWG? Really? Imagine the dialogue: 'It's a lovely morning! Anyone fancy joining me in lugging the telescope to a mile on the far side of the walled garden to look

Fig. 1. Another unusual PWG: the double walls at what is now the National Botanic Garden of Wales, established some 20 years ago. Photo by Antony Warren in Dyfed, June 2019.

at the other wall?' Doesn't ring true, does it? You'd risk getting a reputation as an odd host, and you certainly wouldn't be competing with those who were saying, 'How about coming up onto the roof to watch the naumachia? The telescope's already up there!'[1]

So, we crossed the bridge and went inside the PWG. It is huge: over nine acres within the walls and almost twelve acres within the ha-ha. Warren Bloodworth, Joe Whitehead's deputy, gave us each a copy of a booklet which had been specially prepared by the Burghley House Curator, Jon Culverhouse. The PWG was first established in 1778 and the ha-ha completed in 1798. Three men were paid £58 14s 0d for digging the stone for the ha-ha wall: using the value conversion graph on page xxiii of Sir Roderick Floud's *An Economic History of the English Garden* (see page 22) shows how serious they were about using the outside of the 14-ft (4.3-m) walls - the Marquess paid the equivalent of £64k at today's values, and then paid one of the men more to build the ha-ha wall from the dug stone. We also learned that Burghley used to specialise in 'Royal Sovereign' strawberries and prided itself in the immediate post-WWII years in rushing the first ones to Buckingham Palace. The gardens also had a serious reputation for cyclamen and tomatoes. Excess fruit and veg was sold in Stamford and Peterborough, and at Covent Garden Market, but the PWG is now used mainly for glamping during the Horse Trials.

There are multiple walled compartments within the outer wall of the PWG, sadly now rather bare. So, too, is the inside of the sizeable fruit and vegetable store. But the glory is the mushroom house - double decker troughs, with beautifully finished brickwork, lovely curved arches to access each compartment, and rounded bricks on the edges (Fig. 2). Something you would be proud to show anyone but, amazingly, seen by almost no-one. It is now disused, but Messrs Whitehead and Bloodworth have hopes of putting together a business plan to relaunch it, and of having that plan approved. They also have ambitions to plant fruit trees with local links, such as Barnack Beauty and Lord Burghley apples.

And there are the remains of a heated wall with a brickwork pattern reminiscent of a saltire (Fig. 3). I percussed the wall carefully, as if it were a patient's chest, and discovered that the diagonals of the Scottish flag are the route of the hollow channels through which the hot air flowed. They are visible because the bricks from which they are formed are Wilkes' Gobs (or someone else's copy or identical idea). Brick tax had been introduced in 1784 to help pay for the American War of Independence. Wikipedia[2] tells us that the tax was initially 2/6d per thousand bricks (about £175 at current value; thank you, Sir Roderick) and gobs were a way of paying less because they were bigger than normal bricks, so you got more wall for your tax. Many big estates have had Scottish head gardeners over the centuries (viz. the fictional Angus McAllister of *Blandings Castle*, by PG Wodehouse and now a TV series) – were the Exeters among them during the era of the mushroom house, and might their gardener have been a particularly patriotic Scot?

Fig. 2. Impression of the beautiful brickwork and necessary Stygian gloom inside the mushroom house. Watercolour by Gin Warren, June 2019.

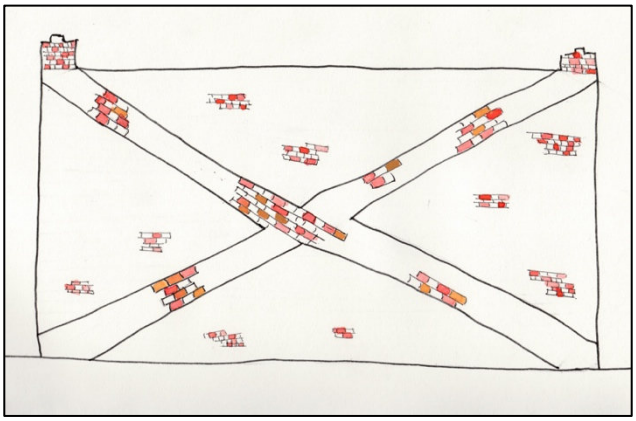


Fig. 3. The author's impression of the saltire shape to the hot-air channels in the walls of the mushroom house.

And then it started pelting down with rain again, so we all legged it to our cars. The whole group showed a fine turn of speed: obviously the Horse Trial competitors could have overtaken us had they been there, but not many other middle-aged women!

Gin Warren, March 2020

ONE MAN WENT TO MOW… A POINT OF VIEW

We hope this opinion piece will stimulate discussion and further letters to the Editor, which we shall be pleased to publish.

A CHILDHOOD DITTY familiar to all of us, conjuring up images of past times in a bucolic countryside. Those pictures of hay wains and straw-sucking yokels resting beneath a hedge in a flower-strewn meadow immediately spring to mind. Most would agree that this a vanished view of our countryside today.

The glories and virtues of flower meadows have been well recognised for many years and there are now a number of organisations set up to promote and protect them, such as 'Save our Magnificent Meadows', an initiative led by Plantlife[3] and supported by the National Trust. There is even a National Meadows Day although I have to confess, I was unaware of this

[1] cdn.staffordshire.gov.uk/pasttrack/45/43/WaterMark/7193-0.jpg
[2] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Wilkes#Brick_making
[3] https://www.plantlife.org.uk/uk

until I started to browse the web for information. Perhaps this is because there is a dearth of named sites in our part of the country where intensive cereal cropping has resulted in our county having fewest trees and very little uncultivated land.

Our mechanised world has resulted in an increasingly tidy landscape which has now led to our landowners being paid to relax standards of maintenance in a quest for a more sustainable environment. New buzz-words are emerging; conservation and preservation are no longer enough; we must move on and encompass concepts such as re-wilding. Our naturalists are convinced this is the way forward but are we really ready to accept the consequences of such an approach in our historic landscapes? The acres of vapid green eulogised by our great landscape designers of the past would once have been a far richer mix without recourse to mechanised mowing but are we ready and willing to appreciate a return to what some may see as untidy and unkept?

Fifty years ago, I wrote a PhD thesis on the *Public Use of Private Land for Outdoor Recreation* and at the end I concluded that in fifty years' time our children would have to visit a nature reserve to see native wild flowers that were commonplace then. I am sad to say that my forecast has a ring of truth. I was researching at a time when Government was paying big grants to landowners for drainage schemes and hedgerow removal despite outcries about these policies at the time. Seventy-five thousand miles of hedgerow were grubbed, and drainage with plastic pipes improved the productivity of poorly drained land but which we now appreciate was previously slowing down the rate at which heavy rainfall was reaching water courses.

The economies of scale offered by the widespread introduction of large machinery could not be maximised in small hedged fields and it was argued that removing the hedgerows would restore the landscape to its pre-enclosure appearance. Naturalists deplored the loss of corridors for the migration of insects and nesting sites for birds. Professor Max Hooper[4] campaigned vigorously for the retention of the species-rich, pre-enclosure hedges but to little avail. Others warned about these policies at the time but they were largely ignored: the deep-seated promises to protect our agricultural industry following the war were too ingrained to be over-ridden.

Is the current outcry about our sterile landscape the backlash? Are we willing to accept that ring-fencing a few areas of countryside devoted to maintaining diversity of wild flowers is a good enough solution? Are there not many more opportunities to relax incessant mowing so that the daisies, buttercups, cornflowers and a host of other wild flowers could re-emerge and sustain our much-needed insect populations?

I was intrigued to read of the National Trust proudly promoting their contribution to the meadow heritage but I suspect this may well be on areas of agricultural land they own rather than the immediate environs of so many of the great historic landscapes of which they are custodians. How would we feel, as visitors to these sites, to find the grass uncut and possibly looking rather untidy? Presumably these areas would previously have been grazed rather than immaculately mown. Certainly, there are little hooks on the pillars in front of Moggerhanger where chains were attached to keep the cattle

Constable's Wheat Field: aside from the allusion to mowing, to what extent are our ideas of the ideal landscape conditioned by images such as this?

from taking shelter under the portico (and leaving the inevitable mess behind). A great feature of Brown's designs was to grass right up to the stately home. There was sometimes a ha-ha to prevent cattle and deer from coming too close, so presumably these areas would have been mown rather than grazed. The access required by today's visitors to these sites would make it difficult to utilise animals as they were in the past but is mechanical mowing the only alternative? I would like to suggest that in future we must consider relaxing our attitudes to being tidy and embrace a more ragged look to the landscape.

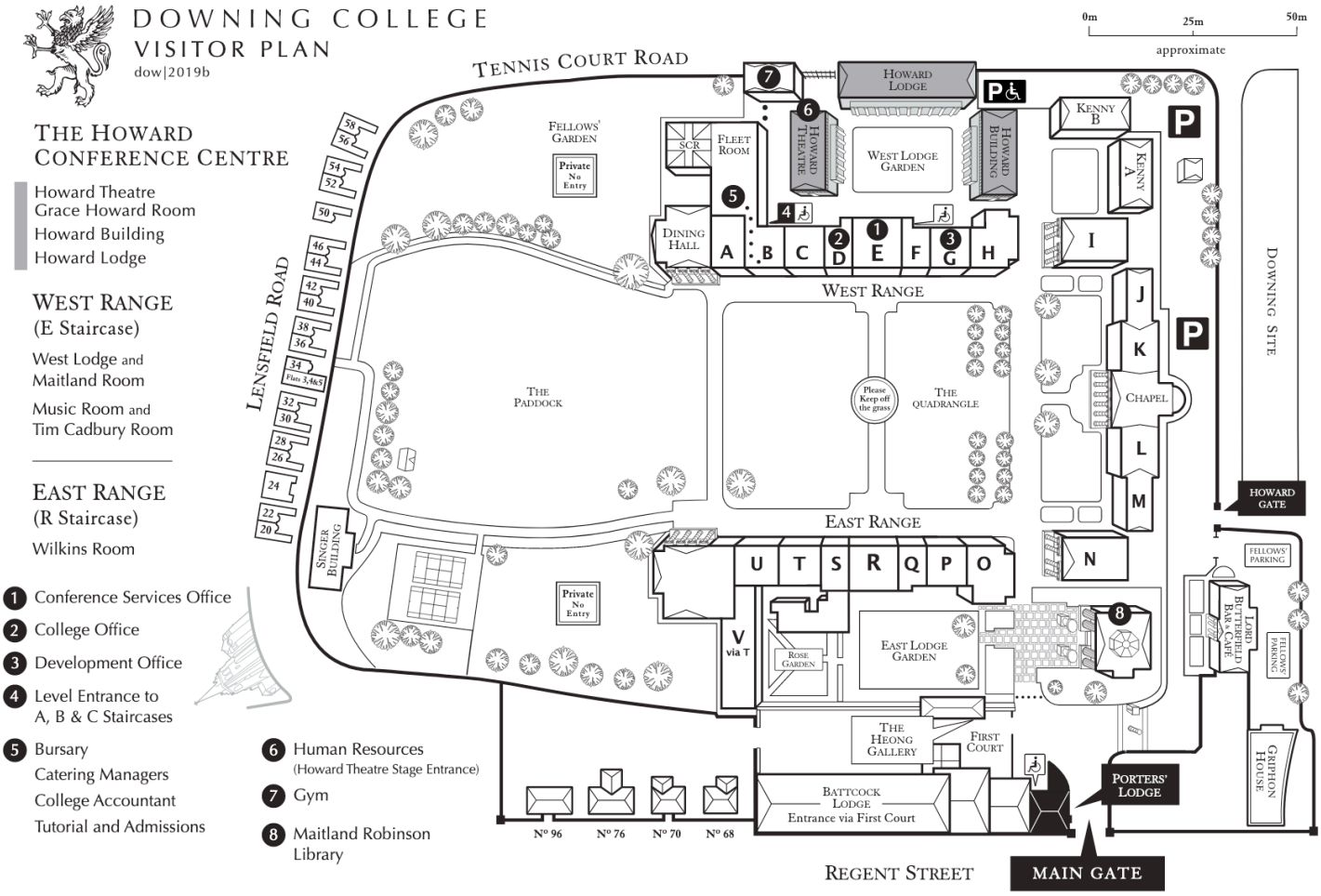
As garden historians we are all well aware that many of the historic landscapes we treasure today come to us as a result of the great leap in the 18C when Walpole saw that all nature was a garden. Where would he and his followers stand in this debate if they were here today? Did they anticipate that the grounds they designed to look natural (but we all know how contrived that was) would be so carefully manicured 300 hundred years later? Just how 'natural' did they want them to look? The Knepp Castle Estate experiment, run by Isabella Tree author of *Wilding: The Return of Nature to a British Farm*, has shown us where re-wilding can lead. It is an exciting prospect but, just as in the past we were reluctant to lose our enclosure hedges to return to a landscape with open fields in an albeit more wooded countryside, are we now willing to encompass the equally radical changes that less grass-cutting would bring?

The fascinating talk by Sue France at the recent CGT Study Day (see page 16) has fully explored the new concept of Pictorial Meadows. We have yet to discover just what the plans for a 'Meadow' in front of The Gibbs building in King's College will entail. Will it be a pictorial meadow, with its attendant complex management, or merely a relaxation of mowing to see what emerges, a step to encourage pollinating insects but not a reversal to re-wilding? It will be an opportunity for visitors to Cambridge to see the effect of such a regime alongside a classical building and perhaps re-educate our accustomed view of historic landscape management. The question is should we, as an organisation with a vested interest in this issue, have a policy about it?

Judy Rossiter
April 2020

[4] Max Dorien Hooper, biologist and historian, b. 20 Nov. 1934; d. 10 Feb. 2017. cf obituary *The Guardian,* 9 Apr 2017.

THE DOMUS OF DOWNING COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE



Present-day map of Downing College. NB: north is to the right. © Master, Fellows and Scholars of Downing College, Cambridge.

THE FAMILY OF DOWNING acquired its wealth from service initially to Oliver Cromwell and then to the Crown. In 1749 Sir George Downing, 3rd baronet of Gamlingay Park, died leaving a complex Will. Four male heirs were named but, should the male line fail, his wealth should be used to found a college in the University of Cambridge. The last living heir, Sir Jacob Downing, died in 1764 but the Will was contested by his widow Margaret and, after her death in 1778, by her second husband. A Bill of Chancery was issued on behalf of the College's foundation in 1764 but only after a rancorous family litigation did a court decide in favour of the college in 1800.

In that year the body of Trustees received a Charter from King George III establishing a college 'for the encouragement of the study of Law and Medicine and of the other cognate subjects of Moral and Natural Science'. The costs of litigation and a period of neglect had depleted the family wealth and the new college had poor prospects.

THE SITE

Between 1801 and 1807 the Trustees searched for a suitable space. Helped by the Enclosure Act of the Barnwell or Town Fields, they purchased some 30 acres (12 ha) of small fields, buying out 11 owners at a cost of £5,451 8s 1d. The area was bounded to the east by Hadstock Way, now Regent Street; to the south by Deepway, now Lensfield Road; to the west by Tennis Court Road, and to the north by Birdbolt lane, now Downing Street. These fields, along the line of a former river course, were part of a poorly drained depression between the higher terrace levels of Trumpington and Regent Streets. They were variously named Swinecroft, St Thomas or Pembroke Leys; marshland referred to by Woodwardian Professor of Geology, Thomas Hughes, in 1892 as 'where the base of the gravel is full of water'. In 1915, the Rev Henry Stokes wrote of 'the town's end beyond Emmanuel College with Parker's Piece to the east' and 'on the west St Thomas's Leys and the Marsh (where Downing College now stands).' In 1655 Fuller referred to the Leys, 'formerly the Campus Martius of the Scholars here exercising themselves, sometimes too violently; lately disused, either because young Scholars now have less valour, or more civility.' Frederick W. Maitland, Downing's Professor of Law, 1888-1906 and the major authority of the history of the Borough's fields wrote about two old balks between Furlongs 74 and 75 of the Ford Field, 'still marked by old thorn trees.' These were photographed on the museum site of Downing Street (Fig. 1); as Maitland noted 'soon to be destroyed'.

THE PLAN

William Wilkins (1775-1839), one of the most important architects of the early 19C, was commissioned to draw up a plan for the Domus (estate), 1807-12, on this unpromising site. Wilkins' plan was one of space with buildings set in a landscape

Fig. 1. The thorn trees, mentioned by F. W. Maitland, marking the course of a Way-balk between the Geological and Botanical Museums.

(Fig. 2). These buildings were among the first of the Greek revival employing Doric and Ionic Orders. Wilkins' intention was to disperse buildings around a large expanse of grass forming a court 300 ft (91 m) square with four ranges and a formal, grand entrance to the north entering from Downing Street at the southern end of the Borough. Wilkins referred to 'one large stone-faced quadrangle more spacious than that of Trinity College'. It is the earliest example of a campus layout, a break from the traditional enclosed monastic courts of earlier foundations (Fig. 3).

Fig. 2. Downing College, with livestock grazing in the Great Meadow. Aquatint engraving by William Westall, 1814.

The Royal Commission on Historical Monuments reported, 'By spacious planning, involving broad expanses of verdure, and the use of the Greek style for the buildings, Wilkins contrived something of an idyllic scene. Although his scheme was not completed and the court is now closed towards the north and opened to the south, thus reversing the original intention, sufficient of the effect was achieved and survives to make it possible to appreciate the architect's intention.'

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COLLEGE, 1807-1929

Downing is the 17th foundation of colleges, planned after a gap of 203 years and often referred to as 'the newest of the old and oldest of the new'. Financial constraints restricted Wilkins' intentions; only the East and West Ranges, mostly of Ketton stone, were built. Each range originally had free-standing houses for the Professors of Law and Medicine, later connected

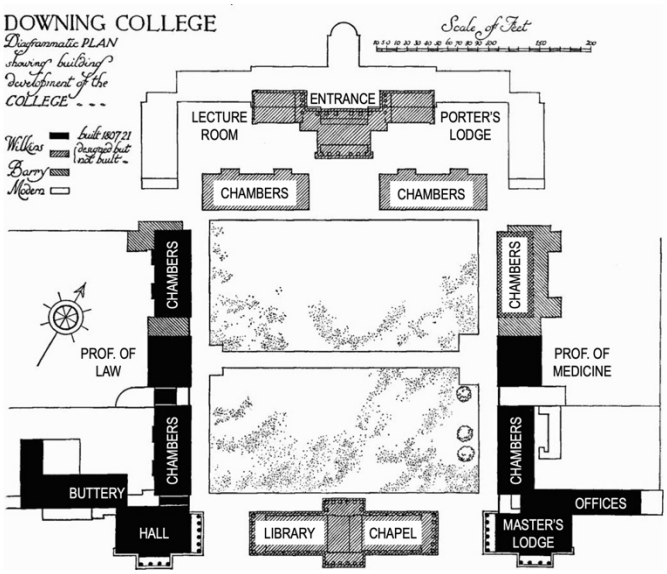


Fig. 3. Plan of Downing College showing Wilkins' designs built (black) and not built (left diagonal hachures). Later additions by Barry and modern buildings are also shown. After a plan of Downing College by British History Online.

to their respective ranges (Fig. 3). To the south of each range and opposite one another are the structures of the Master's Lodge in the east matched by the Hall on the west. Both buildings were connected by false fronts to chamber blocks, simulating completed ranges from their fronts.

The Master's Lodge, 1807, (Fig. 4) was the first building, 'an elegant specimen of the Ionic Order' affording a view of the

Fig. 4. The Master's Lodge. Coloured 19C sketch by Kersey.

Fig. 5. View towards Downing from Hills Road, 1820. Engraving by W. Mason.

Great Meadow to the south (Fig. 5). In the 19C, Masters developed kitchen and fruit gardens; foundations of a hot-house have been found recently. Some of their wives kept livestock on the adjacent pasture (Fig. 2). This pasture was an attractive venue for pleasurable activities involving both dons and townsmen. Joseph Romilly, Fellow of Trinity, wrote in his diary, August 1840, 'Lucy went to the School Feast of the Barnwell and Newtown Sunday Schools in Downing Gardens,' which was followed by sports with 500 pupils competing. In June 1845 he noted that the British Association organized 'a very good horticultural exhibition in Downing' and there was 'an imitation of the Round Church, a Lilliputian garden and fountain - there was a collection of electro-type flowers'. Again in 1847, 'I went to the Horticultural: thousands of people there, no doubt to witness the attendance of Queen Victoria'. In 1825 the west part of the Great Meadow had been designated as the Fellows' Garden and a variety of trees had been planted.

The East and West Ranges: the East Range was built in 1807-12, followed by the West Range 1818-21. The Cambridge Guide, 1823, stated, 'Considerable progress has been made in laying out the grounds. The plantations are in a flourishing condition and the whole begins to assume a beautiful and imposing appearance. A broad belt of trees surrounded most of the domus with only part of the southern boundary (Deepway) left open'. Some plots along the Regent Street boundary were leased from Downing College. Baker's 1844 map (Fig. 6), shows the Great Court between the ranges with two rectangular lawns divided by a central path; to the south is the Great Meadow and crossing the lawn is an avenue of trees reaching Downing Street. This avenue was intended to lead from a grand entrance (Fig. 7) proposed by Wilkins, which eventually was abandoned; so too was the matching South Range, sketched by Le Keux, 1841 (Fig. 8). From 1873-76, E. M. Barry designed buildings to complete both ranges north of the professorial houses to create continuous and matching East and West Ranges, a further modification to Wilkins' plan (Fig. 3).

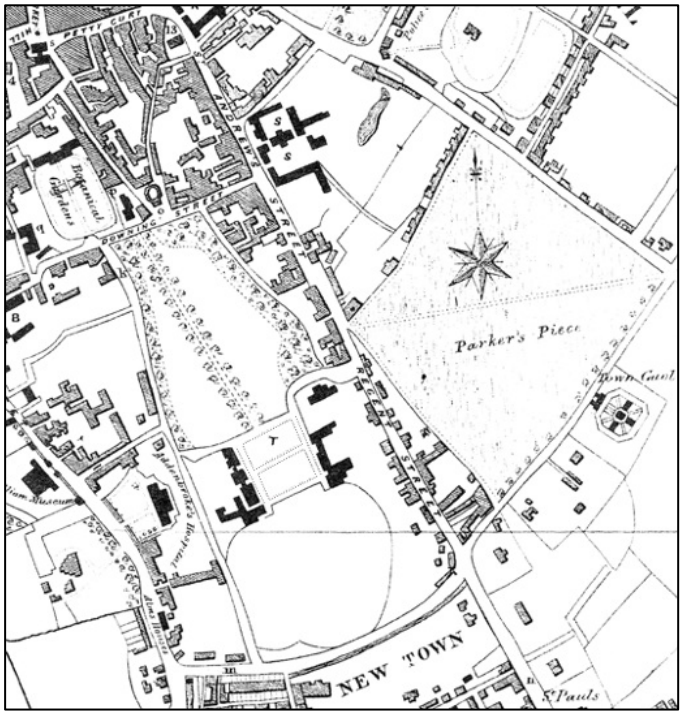


Fig. 6. Map of Cambridge by Baker, 1844, showing Downing College (marked 'T', SW of Parker's Piece), its lawns and the avenue leading from Downing Street in the north.

Fig. 7. Wilkins' grand entrance to Downing, never built. Drawn by R.B. Harraden and etched by E. Byrne, 1809. Downing College Archives DCAR/1/2/2/1/1/183.

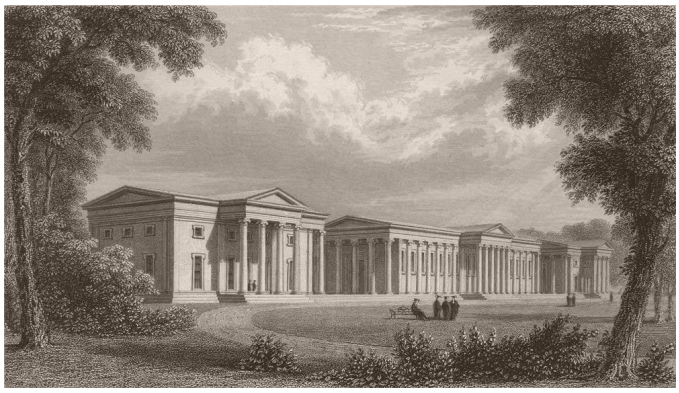


Fig. 8. The South Range, planned by Wilkins but never realised. Engraving by Le Keux, 1841.

The Porter's Lodge and entrance were built in 1834 leading from Regent Street. It became the main entrance with 'the erection of iron gates and railings calculated for the admission of carriages and foot passengers,' and stables added to the NE end of the (unfinished) East Range. In 1902 these stables were demolished and replaced by a block adjacent to the Porter's Lodge. A wall was built along Tennis Court Road, named in 1807 possibly for a tennis court on the Pembroke side.

To raise funds, the College sold to the University in 1895 two acres (0.8 ha) on its northern boundary, and substantially more land in 1896-1902. These lands today are covered by the Downing and Museum's Site on Downing Street. A terrace of red brick houses were built on the College's southern boundary of Lensfield Road and let on a 99-year lease.

DEVELOPMENTS AFTER 1929

The North Range was built in two stages. Sir Herbert Baker's two wings of the range, aligned with the East and West Ranges, were built with the help of the Graystone Bequest 1929-1932. The central space was filled by A. T. Scott and V. Helbing's Chapel, 1951-53, in Palladian style to finish the North Range, faced by two lawns, and screening off the Downing Street site.

In 1932 the Kenny Gates gave access to Tennis Court Road. The NW corner of the domus was completed by Scott and Helbing's Kenny Court, providing another small garden. Quinlan Terry's award-winning Maitland Robinson Library, on the site of the old stables, completed the northern boundary. Terry also designed the Howard Building and Lodge which, with his Theatre, created the sunken West Lodge Garden.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

From 2014-16, modifications were made to buildings on Regent Street adjacent to the Porter's Lodge. The former offices of Parker's House now provide accommodation as Battcock Lodge. There had been other rebuilding above commercial developments in this street. Access to these is through a new pedestrian court, First Court, which is partially enclosed by the conversion of the Edwardian stables into the Heong Gallery used for exhibitions of art. In 2000, accommodation for postgraduates was provided in the new Singer Building at the southeast corner of the Paddock.

THE GARDENS TODAY

After the 19C sales, 20 acres (8 ha) remained to be planted with a diversity of herbaceous borders and gardens, lawns and trees. Dame Silvia Crowe was consulted in 1968 and most recently landscape architect Alice Foxley produced a new master plan.

Fig. 9. First Court features black alders set in a paved area.

First Court is entered to the left of the Porter's Lodge; this paved area in front of the new Heong Gallery has a sandstone feature, under-planted with ferns, crocus, iris and martagon lilies. There is also a small group of black alders (Fig. 9).

East Lodge Garden, originally that of the Professor of Medicine, was developed by Dame Sylvia and contained a miniature arboretum of Indian bean, snake-bark maple, yellow birch, Tibetan cherry and a now-diseased cedar of Lebanon. Yew hedges offer a structure and there is a Barbara Hepworth sculpture (Fig. 10). Through an archway is a 'secret garden', the Rose Garden, replacing the Master's former kitchen garden. Ann Mathias, the then Master's wife, was its inspiration in 1988. These two gardens are sheltered by the East Range. Roses on trellis and a pergola are interlaced with clematis and frame a central pool (Fig. 11). Here are pillar crab trees and irises.

Fig. 10. East Lodge Garden has Hepworth's Two Forms.

Fig. 11. The Rose Garden with arched roses framing the pool.

The Master's Garden has a lawn edged with specimen trees: a holm oak and a Turkey oak; handkerchief, Judas, walnut and sorbus trees, together with lime and maples under-planted with bulbs. Its southern border has crocosmia, sedum, acanthus and pampas grass. The Master's Lodge faces the Paddock, formerly the Great Meadow. In summer, there is a cricket pitch on this large area of pasture but it no longer has grazing animals. The elms along the Lensfield boundary were lost in 1974 but limes, maples and a dawn redwood remain. Some poplars and beeches have been lost in gales. There is also a hazel spinney and a wild flower habitat. This large open space offers a splendid view of the Catholic Church beyond the trees (Fig. 12). Originally, iron railings separated the Paddock from the formal manicured lawns of the Quadrangle, but they were sold in 1940 as part of the war effort and never replaced.

Fig. 12. View across The Paddock to the Catholic Church.

To the west of the Paddock the Little Meadow, now the Fellows' Garden, is screened by a holly hedge and a pleached lime avenue. Lensfield Road is obscured by trees around its winding perimeter path: a pair of London planes, copper beech, walnut, holm and Turkey oaks and cedar. The extensive lawn has a crab apple tree as the central feature; its grass flows into the trees. The Tennis Court Road boundary and buildings of Old Addenbrooke's are hidden by a row of pines.

The north-south avenue to Wilkins' putative entrance in Downing Street (Figs. 6 & 7), was lost in the 1895-1902 land sales and the final trees were removed for the Chapel. On the advice of Sylvia Crowe, the Quadrangle (formerly the Great Court) acquired an east-west double avenue of limes and hornbeams, under-planted with bulbs. A low wall to the Paddock was removed in 1968. Paths still bisect the large lawn and join a perimeter walk between the East and West Ranges.

Fig. 13. West Lodge Garden has a sunken lawn with borders.

Fig. 14. The Paulownia in Kenny Court. Photo courtesy of Downing College.

The Howard Buildings behind the West Range have created a new court and structure for the West Lodge Garden (Fig. 13). Its sunken lawn, bordered by narrow rectangular flowerbeds with euphorbia and epimedium, is a popular venue for wedding receptions. Kenny Court has a lawn, shrubs and a Paulownia (Fig. 14). Fronting the Chapel is a large lawn divided by its entry path. On the lawn are three old plane trees. Dame Sylvia Crowe had proposed the construction of a large rectangular pond in front of the Chapel, but her advice was not followed. As part of the 2016 exhibition for the opening of the Heong Gallery, Ai Weiwei's sculptured trees were placed temporarily on this lawn (Fig. 15). At the northern end of the East Range a wide mixed border, planted with hellebores, achilleas and fuchsias under viburnum bodnantense and philadelphus, enhances the College's entrance.

The new Library, opposite the Lodge, had two blue urns (now black and relocated) on pedestals providing a changing display of flowers surrounded by clipped evergreens. The

Fig. 15. Ai Weiwei's sculptured trees in front of the Chapel.

Fig. 16. Re-paved Agora and border landscaping in front of the Library. Photo courtesy of Downing College.

recently re-paved Agora in front of the Library (Fig. 16) is part of the continuing landscaping of the Library, East Lodge and Rose Gardens to Alice Foxley's design. Behind the Library is a garden planted with shade-loving ferns, evergreens, hydrangeas and brunnera. The northern boundary of the domus has yews, beeches, sycamores, birches and limes as a screen from the Downing Site. Nearby is the Lord Butterfield bar and café, also part of Quinlan Terry's designs.

The Head Gardener, Jack Sharp, and his team follow environmentally friendly practice with their meadows, wild flower habitats, gardens and diverse planting. Their efforts won the Wild Life Trust's award, *Wild Life at Work* in 2019 and Trust manager Sue Barnard, said, 'It's been wonderful to see the great combinations that are being put into place to help wild life'.

Charles Malyon, March 2020

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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THE CGT CHRISTMAS LECTURE, 3 DECEMBER 2019: THE SECRET LIFE OF THE GEORGIAN GARDEN BY KATE FELUŚ

DID YOU HAPPEN to visit Canons Ashby (National Trust) in Northamptonshire a few years ago while they had the exhibition running from the Shoe Collection of Northampton Museum and Art Gallery? They pointed out that you can very rarely see people's feet in portraits let alone in other paintings, so the Museum had loaned pairs of shoes of the appropriate era and style to have been being worn by the subjects of the paintings in each room of the house. The exhibition was great fun, and it came to mind both while Dr Feluś was giving her lecture and when the research group met to discuss the book in early February. I know Canons Ashby is Tudor, but the point is that Georgian ladies were obliged - or obliged themselves by wishing to be fashionable - to wear delicate silk shoes. So that meant that garden designers had to provide them with nice firm, dry, wide paths in the pleasure grounds for their sociable outings to view the naumachia, or the thoughtfully bred prize cattle or whatever. Walking with your friends and guests was important to the Georgians, and you had to be able to do it alongside them, with clean shoes on dry feet.

Image © Museum of London

This woman's shoe from around 1720-50 has been made from re-used materials. The embroidered sections have come from fabric dating to the 1620s (possibly old shoes) and the various elements have been tailored to reflect contemporary fashions. Off-cuts of white kid form the ill-fitting and slightly mis-matched linings. Museum of London ID no. A5999.

Dr Feluś shared with us some of her extensive knowledge of what people were doing in Georgian gardens, and with what 'props' they were using to do it. Garden buildings were obviously hugely important, both for companionable meals, and for solitude. She made the point firstly that hosts and hostesses would offer a particular course of a meal, often the dessert, in one of the pavilions, casinos, eyecatchers, grottoes or whatever in the garden (we noted that the timing of the main meal got steadily later and later in the day through the 18C). Alternatively, the duty of hospitality meant that houses were often heaving with people the family hardly knew and possibly didn't much like, so having a remote, calm garden building to which to retreat to write letters, or do some needlework, or read, or just catch your breath was a boon.

Naumachia! A new word for me when I first heard it at the beginning of Advent. It means a staged, mock naval battle conducted on a landscaped lake, with your very own battleships. Golly, those lakes must have silted up in the 250-

A 1771 naumachia in Newstead Abbey, owned by Lord Byron, showing a battery and ships. Image from Kate Feluś' book.

odd years since they were created. When you look at the size and height of the vessels used (it was a splendidly illustrated talk, and Kate's book, *The Secret Life of the Georgian Garden,* is also generously supplied), they must have drawn a fair bit of water. The practice, apparently, was a way that (well-off) boys who lived inland but who were destined for a career in the Royal Navy could gain some familiarity with fighting ships and using telescopes to spot them. Is one allowed to suggest that it might also have been a case of boys' toys for their fathers?

We've mentioned the duty of hospitality for individual house guests: there was a similar duty to the entire neighbourhood. There was an expectation that every so often the Big House would put on a huge and splendid party. Any excuse was valid, but strong contenders were your heir reaching his 21st birthday, or the Royal Navy or Army winning some hostile engagement. The Research Group boggled at the idea of co-ordinating and running an event at which one fed and amused thousands of people for several hours. One easy step was to select the day/night of a full moon in the summer months, so the roads were likely to be passable and people could see to get home after the fireworks. The rest must have been incredibly difficult given that invitations and replies had to be done by pen and paper or word of mouth, and that animals had to be raised, slaughtered and butchered in great numbers and to be fresh on the day, vegetables and fruit had to be *à point*, and so on. Then you had get your servants and tenants practising their instruments to a tolerable standard and learning the specific music, sort out the seating and marquee(s), and string the lanterns through the trees… Epic. Assuming that suppliers of goods and services were paid for them, it must have been a way in which prosperity trickled down the social strata.

If we had a quibble with Dr Feluś' excellent lecture/book it was about the structure she had used to present the information. We could see the case for dividing activities in the garden into those happening in daylight (archery, boating, bowls, carriage driving, cricket, fishing, haymaking, picnicking...) from those happening in darkness (fireworks, lanterns), but frankly we couldn't see the case for dissecting out morning, afternoon and dusk. Maybe we need to read more Jane Austen.

Gin Warren, February 2020

AND THE WINNER IS…

CHRISTOPHER VANE PERCY! Did you spot our competition on the back page of the November 2019 Newsletter? We showed a 1990 newspaper photo of John Drake standing in front of a building covered with scaffolding and we asked readers to identify the country house. Christopher won a bottle of Prosecco by correctly identifying Thorpe Hall, Peterborough, perhaps the most significant house to be built during the Commonwealth in Cambridgeshire.

Christopher Van Percy: winner of our quiz question from issue 47.

John, as CGT Chair, had been spearheading the restoration of the grounds which had remained largely neglected since their second world wartime requisitioning for a hospital. John and his team, which included Jane Furse now of Yorkshire Gardens Trust, researched the history of Cromwellian-supporter Oliver St. John's home. Two fine plans included here show the extent of the 17C design (Fig. 1) and a plan of the important redevelopment of the garden under the Rev. William Strong, whose diaries inform us of his contribution. In the 1920s, owner Edgar Jesse Meaker added perimeter walks and herbaceous borders. The gardens can still be visited but while the website highlights the Victorian era, John was very keen that the special lay-out of the Commonwealth garden should be preserved.

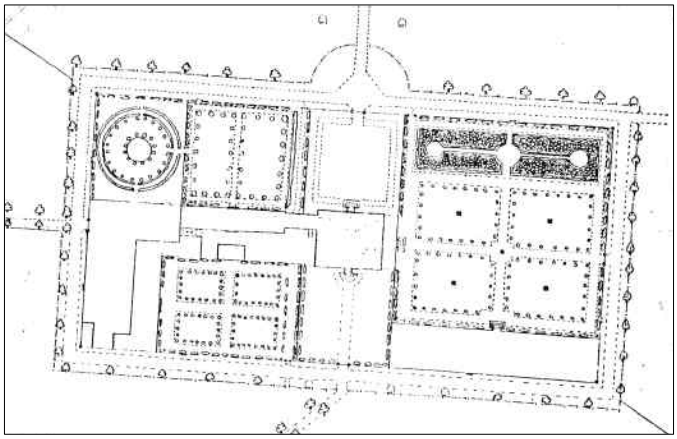


Fig. 1. Sketch by John Drake of the interpreted layout of the Commonwealth house and gardens at Thorpe Hall. The perimeter wall forms a rectangle 211 m x 102 m. North is up.

In the mid-17C, Oliver St. John had laid out nine formal gardens within a high perimeter wall and separated by stone walls, some ballustraded and surmounted by large urns. The gardens had a possibly unique feature in that access to the adjoining garden was solely by returning through the house or exiting through its perimeter gate and re-entering the next garden from beyond the perimeter wall by its separate entrance. The stone walls would have served both for security and for sheltering newly acquired fruit trees. John noted that the original access was to the South Court from the River Nene and mused whether inspiration may have derived from the canal houses and gardens of the Low Countries and The Hague which St. John had visited. No expense had been spared. Over the years, many of the garden-dividing walls were removed together with their ornamentation and when the Rev. William Strong purchased the estate, 200 years after the hall had been built, the fashion was for large, stone-edged parterres (reflecting the Renaissance gardens of the Medicis). They were planted twice a year with a winter display of ericas and conifers, and calceolarias, pelargoniums and heliotropes in the summer. The young, newly imported cedars and other conifers have now grown to over 70 ft (21 m). They presented a challenge to garden restoration in the 1980s both from overcrowding and from the drop of the water table, not to mention disease and gale damage. The great South Court garden, planted with bulbs, perennials and shrubs, connected to the children's garden with its swimming pool (now home to the great crested newt); it, the rockery and the summer house were also the work of Rev. Strong. The Meaker family, who bought the property in 1927 after the First World War, improved the water supply and laid out more areas to flowers by removing the vegetable plots. They created a beautiful rose garden around the pool.

John's vision was that while the original structure of the gardens should be maintained (missing walls replaced by hornbeam hedges clipped to the height of the balustrading), each section should have certain features introduced by earlier owners. After nearly fifteen years, it would be interesting to make a return visit to see how this unique landscape survives.

So why did we choose Thorpe Hall for our competition? Our research group, in addition to other activities, is looking into the productive walled gardens (PWGs) of Cambridgeshire. Thorpe Hall estate has, over four centuries, probably included at least two. The location of the later, Victorian, of the two PWGs is described in the EH Record as follows (see Fig. 2 overleaf):

> *In the SE corner of the garden, set into the east wall, is an 18C stone summerhouse. This marks the eastern end of an axis established in the 1850s which runs east/west across the gardens south of the Hall. An arch saved from the old south wing's central doorway was placed to form the continuation of a line with the gateways in the east and west walls of the then new kitchen garden.*

The walls of the Victorian garden, PWG2 in Figure 2, are interpreted by John to have been built from stone re-used from the demolished barn previously sited outside the western wall to the estate. They are faced with local red brick on the inside to facilitate fruit ripening.

The earlier PWG, marked PWG1 in Figure 2, is in an interesting area to the north of the service wing within the original walls. Prior to 1820, this had been orchard with two garden divisions, possibly having been laid out as such from the 17C, according to the inset detail from the 1650 interpretation by John. Around 1820 both gardens were amalgamated into one productive garden and a glasshouse was later put up in the NW corner. Strong may have converted this to a 'Calcutta' or

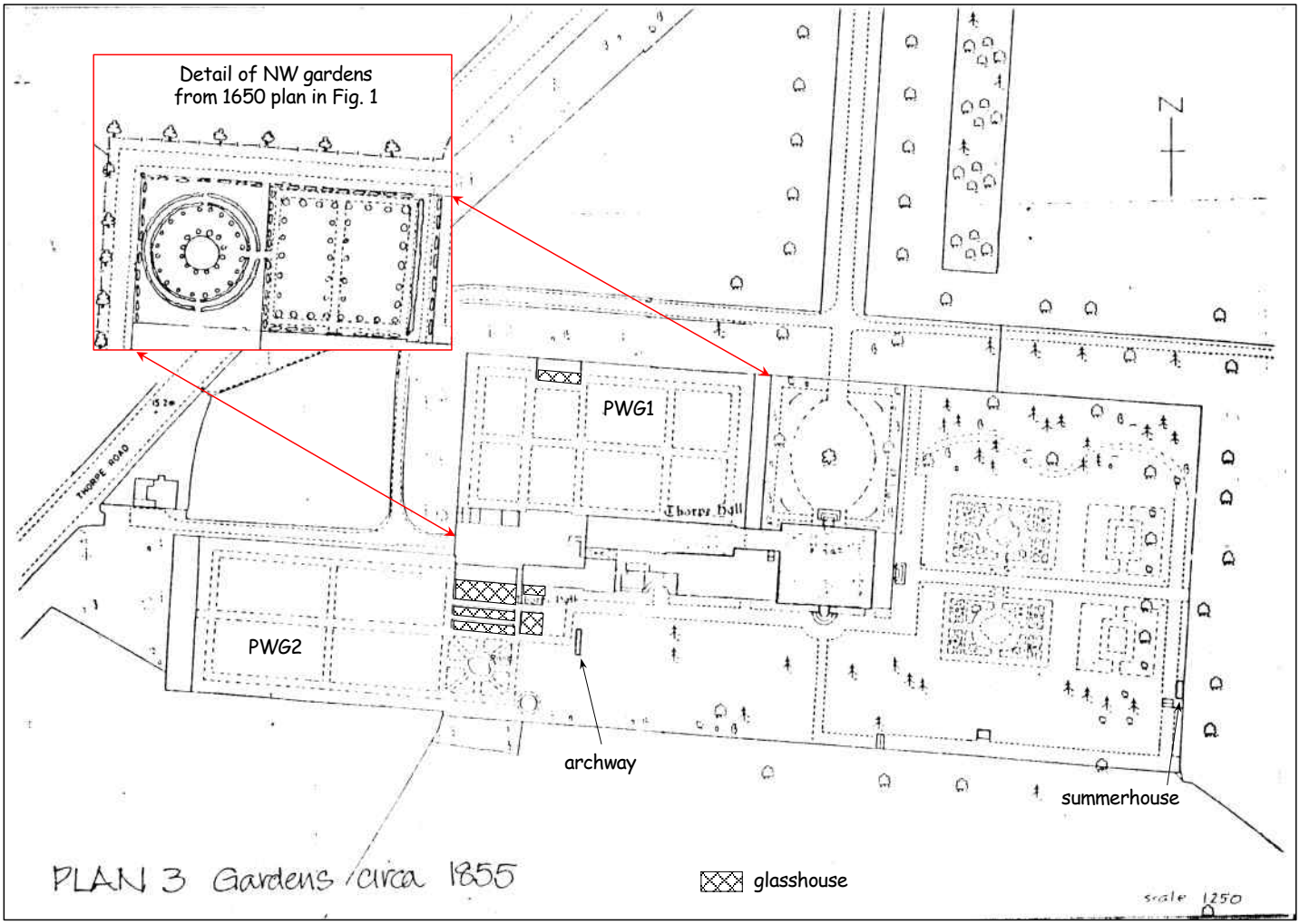


Fig. 2. Modified sketch by John Drake of the interpreted layout of the Thorpe Hall gardens around 1855. The glasshouses, indicated by cross-hatching added to buildings on John's map, are so marked on the 1885 25-inch OS map sheet Northamptonshire VIII.10.

hothouse, and installed other glasshouses in the SW area of the 1650 estate, including a two-section vinery, pineapple and tomato house, conservatory and fern house and cold frames (Fig. 2). In the 1850s he erected an inner bounary wall to the east of PWG1, separating the servants' entrance from the productive area and providing a brick face for ripening the fruit.

Sadly, when John met a small group of us at Thorpe Hall in 2005 it was not possible to visit the kitchen garden PWG1 as the area was leased to a Model Engineering Society. He hoped that orchard trees would be kept going and old varieties would be propagated and regenerated to represent those that would have been growing in Rev. Strong's time.

The good news is that further research into the 19C PWG is being undertaken by members of Northamptonshire Gardens Trust as part of their own PWG project; the records for Thorpe Hall being in the care of Northamptonshire Record Office. In return for access to John Drake's files they have promised us digital copies of all material that they have photographed so we very much look forward to hearing the results of their research in due course.

Judith Christie, April 2020

MORE QUIZ QUESTIONS TO BEAT THE COVID BLUES

WE HOPE YOU ENJOYED this little challenge to the memory cells. As this newsletter goes to press, we remain covid-bound to our homes and gardens, so we thought we'd offer you, as a distraction to get the juices going, a few more teasers, the answers to which may be found in the pages of this newsletter. All correct responses will be collated and one will be drawn from a hat at our AGM, so please send your answers by email to the editor, Phil Christie, at phil.christie@ntlworld.com. The winner will receive a bottle of the Wine Society's renowned claret.

1. What are Wilkes' Gobs and where might you find them?
2. Where was the Cambridge 'Campus Martius' and why was it so called?
3. What did Jane Webb stop practising when she married?
4. What might a 'Calcutta' be (as well as an Indian city)?
5. Which country had sovereignty over the Brough of Birsay in the time of Thorfinn Sigurdsson?

Good luck!

Phil Christie, April 2020

CAMBRIDGESHIRE GARDENS TRUST STUDY DAY 2020: HOW GREEN WAS MY CITY

THE GREEN SPACES of parks, gardens and landscapes that so many people enjoy have been left to us by the vision, dedication and skill of our forebears. A few are being created by contemporary designers and artists. However, with ever-increasing development, our designed green legacy can easily be nibbled away or lost entirely. The aim of the 2020 Study Day, paraphrasing Richard Llewellyn, was to examine the role, effectiveness and sustainability of green 'lungs' in an urban context and we had an outstanding set of speakers ready to address the topic. Or so the organisers thought but then, perhaps in a foretaste of our new reality, Nigel Dunnett advised us during the week before the event that he was unable to give his talk after all and, on the very morning of the Study Day, David Brown had to pull out with the norovirus.

Fortunately, Nigel had invited his colleague, Sue France, to stand in for him, which she did with tremendous flair, and our new chair, Liz Whittle, showed her talent for improvisation by arranging with Bridget Flanagan an impromptu discussion during David's slot. Now read on.

WHO THAT HAS REASON AND HIS SMELL; WOULD NOT AMONG ROSES AND JASMINE DWELL?

Dr Twigs Way, former CGT chair, set the scene for the day. Noting that the desire to import the countryside into the town had been a preoccupation of the Romans, who liked to differentiate between the formal and informal, controlled and wild, Twigs went on to cite the origin of her chosen title from the lines of *The Garden* by the 17C poet Abraham Cowley.

Who that has reason and his smell
Would not among roses and jasmine dwell,
Rather than all his spirits choke,
With exhalations of dirt and smoke,
And all the uncleanness which does drown
In pestilential clouds a populous town?
The earth itself breathes better perfumes here,
Than all the female men or women there,
Not without cause, about them bear.

Cowley was born in London in 1618 and, a child prodigy, went to Trinity College, Cambridge. He took the Royalist side in the Civil War and served the exiled Queen in Paris for 12 years before returning to London in 1656. By mid-life he despaired of the town with its smoke and bustle, preferring instead the joys of countryside and garden; as expressed in *The Garden*, it was Cain who made the cities. In 1666, Cowley dedicated *The Garden* to John Evelyn FRS, gardener and diarist, who had befriended Cowley and the two had exchanged plants and poetry. Evelyn shared Cowley's views and created one of the most influential gardens of the day at Sayes Court in Deptford, a surviving fragment of which forms Sayes Court Park in Lewisham.

In 1661 Evelyn addressed to Charles II *Fumifugium or the Inconveniencie of the AER and Smoak of London Dissipated* in which he identified the problems of smoke and smog being due to the burning of wet firewood and coal in a damp atmosphere. He also proposed solutions, including innovative town planning with a ring of sweet-smelling gardens and fields encircling the city. His planting scheme proposed trees and shrubs to include conifers and pines which would give off their scents in summer; no cabbages, however, because of their stink of rot and decay. The objective was to give relief, fresh air and a lift to the spirits but, of course, it never actually happened.

Figure 1. The March of Bricks and Mortar; 1829 caricature by George Cruikshank depicting robotic London builders invading the then Hampstead countryside.

Instead, urbanisation increased, things got worse and coal reigned supreme. George Cruikshank's 1829 caricature (Fig. 1) shows the march of bricks and mortar, accompanied by robotic builders and billows of black smoke, crossing Islington towards Hampstead. In the same year, John Claudius Loudon published in his *Gardener's Magazine* a proposal for green lungs around London and other cities. Loudon's scheme to bring fresh air to London proposed breathing zones comprising parks and planted cemeteries in the form of annular rings alternating radially with rings of urban development. Central London would occupy a circle of radius 1.5 miles (2.4 km) and each successive ring would be 0.5 miles (0.8 km) in width extending ultimately to the coast, with people being transported by steam bus. (In 1830 Loudon married Jane Webb, whose futuristic science fiction work, *The Mummy*, 1827, he had reviewed in the *Gardener's Magazine* in 1829.) In his proposals for cemeteries and parks, Loudon also sought to improve social education with an army of gardeners and keepers to avoid unruly behaviour. Trees were labelled with Latin names so as to educate the masses as well as providing them with better quality air. Such ideas were also taken up by others, such as Joseph Paxton in his design for Birkenhead Park.

Twigs then discussed Sir Ebenezer Howard OBE, founder of the garden city movement. In his publication *To-Morrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform* (1898), later republished in 1903 as *Garden Cities of Tomorrow,* he described a utopian city in which people lived harmoniously together with nature. Figure 2 illustrates his analysis of the three magnetic 'pulls' on people: town, country or town-country, listing the pros and cons of each

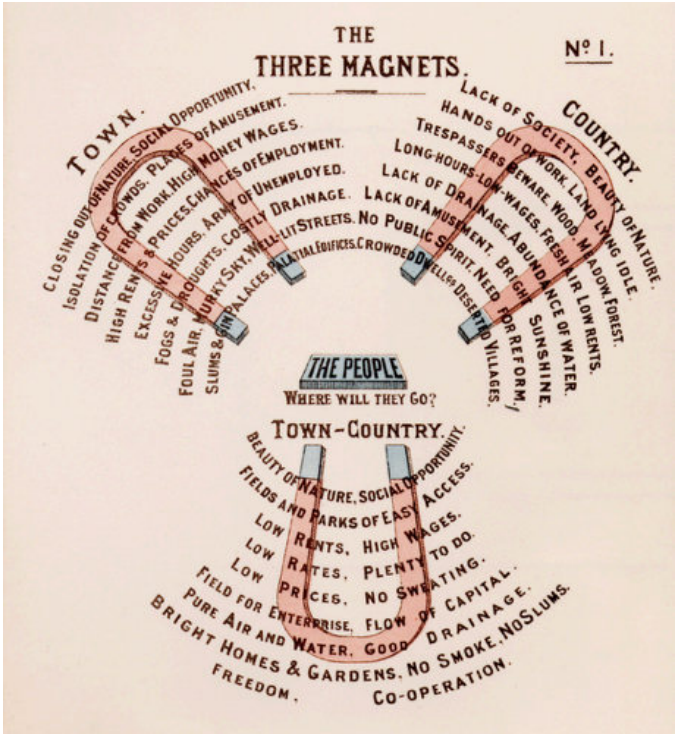


Figure 2. Ebenezer Howard's analysis of the problems and benefits of town and country living.

environment such as good wages but foul air in towns and beauty of nature but lack of drainage in the countryside. Town-country combines the best of both worlds. Again, Howard's concept was for concentric clusters of slum-less, smokeless cities (Fig. 3) linked by radial and circumferential railways, canals and boulevards, with allotments, town farms and even insane asylums. While many of Howard's ideas were stopped by the rise of commuterism, which meant the better-off could enjoy the outer suburbs while working in the city, his publications inspired the development of Letchworth and Welwyn Garden Cities. The key point is that a planned city is, in fact, an experiment in social engineering because it affects the way people live. Rules and regulations are applied to private

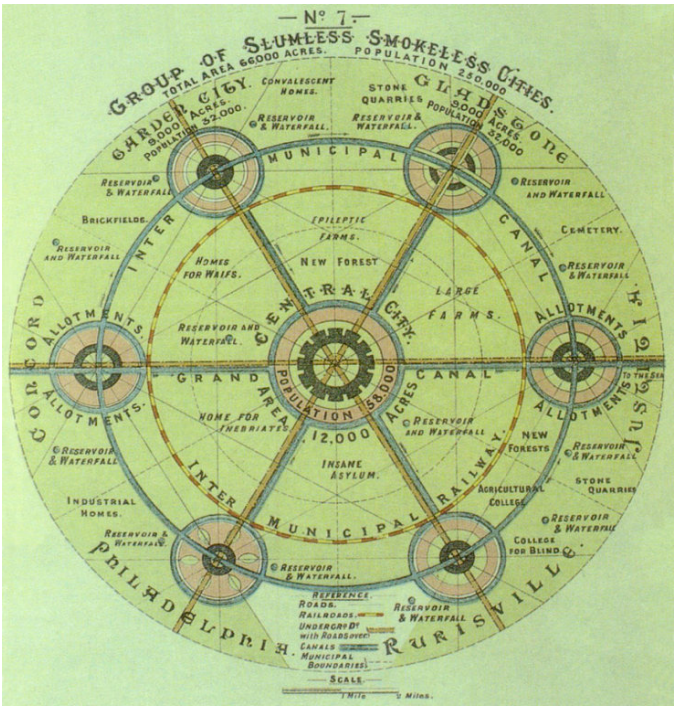


Figure 3. Howard's proposal for clustered cities that would be both slum-less and smokeless.

spaces and lives. Limits on hedge heights enabled people to talk across them. Howard perceived the need to encourage people to mix across economic and social class. He promoted the idea that front gardens, with low hedges, are for communal living while rear gardens were for privacy.

Over the years, Metro-Land forged its way across the countryside, extending far from central London and bringing the gardening commuters. It enabled the metamorphosis of the better-off commuter from the daily businessman to the weekend gardener. Working classes were left in increasingly overcrowded inner cities. The railway companies bought up large tracts of land whose development brought the people who relied on the transport. Creeping infill left pocket parks after the larger villas sold off their land for development. Stranded bits of land were used for allotments but finally most disappeared in the 20C as intensification of development also manipulated social change.

Twigs concluded by noting that 350 years after Cowley railed against smoke and development we again need to look at the problem in our 21C context, especially as the coronavirus has starkly contrasted the situations of the locked-down flat-dweller denied access to what little green space is left and that of the commuting villager enjoying his 'gardening leave'.

THE WILDER CITY: A PICTORIAL APPROACH

Sue France has trained as a horticulturalist, educationalist, ecologist and landscape manager. With over 40 years' landscape experience, Sue is now CEO of Green Estate CIC and Director of Pictorial Meadows. A close colleague of Prof. Nigel Dunnett of Sheffield University, she gallantly stepped in to the breach when Nigel was unavoidably required elsewhere.

Sue opened by noting that while something that excites an ecologist may not always excite lay-people, a flower-rich environment was surely an exciting prospect to bring to any city. There is evidently something deep in the human psyche that brings people to places such as South Africa's Namaqualand to catch the intense, vivid colours of carpets of wild flowers in wild open spaces. But could such brilliant, intense flush of flower be brought into the city, so that those not fortunate enough to afford a flower safari could still appreciate the colour closer to home?

Flowers on hillsides drew people out of cities and brought them to an immersive landscape. By contrast, city landscapes had become sterile and devoid of excitement, particularly in some post-industrial, socially deprived areas. Might such areas, and especially the people living in them, benefit from the brightness and colour brought by wildflowers? Sue had studied ecology at Duchy College in Cornwall but had become bored with rhododendrons and arrived in Sheffield some 20 years ago where she met Nigel Dunnett of the University of Sheffield. Nigel is Professor of Planting Design and Urban Horticulture. He is a plantsman, designer and pioneer of the new ecological approach to planting gardens and public spaces. His work integrates ecology and horticulture to achieve low-input but high-impact landscapes that are dynamic, diverse, and tuned to nature. Nigel and Sue established Pictorial Meadows within the not-for-profit parent company, Green Estate, as a means to deliver Nigel's research into the public realm.

Traditional wildflower meadows require a starvation regime on low-fertility soils to out-compete grasses and domineering

weeds. Could a wildflower meadow be created which would thrive in normal-fertility soils? Furthermore, could a meadow planting scheme be found which provided for successional flowering from spring through to first frosts, instead of just two weeks of flowering? Nigel and Sue set out to address these two challenges by bringing together varietals, many from other countries, which are not usually found together in the wild. Small-scale experiments on a kitchen table led to designs and seed mixes to achieve a seeded landscape, with a cascade of sequential, long-flowering displays. Could the small-sale achievements be scaled up and rolled out on a city scale?

Nigel and Sue were given a chance to test their ideas at full-scale by Sheffield Council, who had a garden estate, developed in 1995, but which attracted socio-economic problems such as fly-tipping and anti-social behaviour. An initial 3-year strategy of transforming wasteland into inner-city, seed-sown meadows started in 2004 and has continued to this day. The first Sheffield project aimed to bring colour into the landscape on an expenditure of £400pa. Sue and Nigel convinced the council, laden with derelict areas, to make the investment. They sowed 100 ha; initially they were turned off sites by locals saying they wanted things other than flowers. But the flowers came, and the wasteland became magic meadows of colour (Fig. 4).

Figure 4. The results of taking a seed-sown pictorial meadow into the public realm in the city of Sheffield.

The flowers spread and so did the story – others began to follow. Rotherham, Bolton and Leeds, highways and verges; people started to see things they had never seen before in an urban environment. Seeded landscapes, which started out in places where nobody else dared to come, gradually penetrated into parks and other urban areas, and ultimately to the 2012 Olympic Park project. Profs Nigel Dunnett & James Hitchmough were appointed as meadow horticulture consultants. This was their first major commission that was going to be designed from scratch as an immersive seeded landscape. It was a nerve-wracking project but one which was ultimately successful, with displays designed to peak when the games were attracting visitors from all over the world and then to mature into landscapes which would create the legacy of the Olympic Park (see visit report in Newsletter 37, October 2014, p 16).

Other case studies included reseeding the Brown landscape in The Trentham Estate, where large areas of woodland and diseased rhododendrons were cleared in time for the

Figure 5. Four years of planning the meadows at the Olympic Park produced a spectacular display for visitors in 2012.

tercentenary celebrations in 2016; was this what Brown would have wanted? Approximately 9,000 square metres of open spaces were created by these clearances, re-opening lost views. The Pictorial Meadows Classic mix was sown in the spring of 2015 and soon filled the cleared area with 7000 m² of high-impact displays (Fig. 6) right through until the first frosts. Soil manipulation together with a wide range of species gives impressionistic images which received positive feedback but the idea of having self-seeding and dynamic change is quite a big thing for professionals to get used to.

Figure 6. The Trentham Estate replaced large areas of diseased rhododendrons with wildflowers in a Brown landscape.

Annuals produce lots of seed for creating seed mixes; they are relatively easy to grow and give good meadows with little or no maintenance or watering, but each meadow must be re-seeded every year to maintain the intensity of colour and diversity of planting. Self-seeding from year to year thins out diversity and reduces the flowering season duration. The original idea was to throw the lawnmower away and just have a few paths, so the group looked at perennials as a seed source for multi-year meadows but these are much more difficult to work with than annuals. Prof. James Hitchmough, a plant ecologist at Sheffield researching communities in the wild, came in to join Sue as practitioner and Nigel as theorist to help develop meadows of perennials. Most of the early seed was poor quality and the business was unregulated. It was also a challenge to grow 45 species together in Sheffield, battling slugs along the way, so the team endeavoured to gain

knowledge with plot trials of perennials such as ox-eye daisy, rib-wort, non-dominant grasses, primrose and others. It needed lots of trials, checking and following from year to year, looking at the impact of drought, water, cutting season height and frequency, but there were plenty of students to help with the field trials. Meadows are usually cut at some point in the year so the team was trying to find a blend of perennials that would outcompete thugs such as bramble or rosebay willow herb with minimal maintenance except for a little weed control and occasional irrigation. A mix of bulbs and seeds together brought the traditional herbaceous border into the meadow. As well as developing seed mixes, the team also produced flower turf, grown in a controlled environment, so that after 9 weeks it could be lifted and sold as instant meadow.

The perennials used run to around 350 species and they all perform differently, enabling different mixes to be put together according to light and shade, dry or moist soils. They can bring some bling to an urban landscape with meadows that look like herbaceous borders and thrive on good soils. Cut just once a year, they are high impact, robust, cheap, easy to plant and need minimal maintenance. Cost is a major factor for the public sector and perennials are an order of magnitude more expensive than annuals but they do provide long-lasting meadows. Laid turf makes a big difference with immediate impact; lay it and it flowers through spring and summer with both density and complexity. Of course, perennials do go brown in winter prior to the cut and collect but then they come up again the following year. People also tolerate the winter browns because they know the flowers will come back in spring for many seasons to come. Plots receive minimal maintenance and the species tend to adapt and sort themselves out so that the character of the meadow changes with time.

Is it environmentally positive? There was a lot of resistance from ecologists 25 years ago but now there is a lot of theory for getting the right solution in the right place. Everything can be good, even brambles, but one needs to get the context right. With 150 species in 1 m^2, there is huge bio-diversity and a long flowering season which are both excellent for pollinators.

One project in Liverpool planted a meadow on impoverished land, after the removal of a lot of soil, and it took 5 years to green up, but this avoided importing new topsoil. Such city rewilding can work in some places but may not be appropriate everywhere. For example, one cannot give local authorities the right not to manage; rewilding still needs occasional maintenance and it is quite a skilled job to hold a meadow project at a particular phase.

Over time, the team is building up seed banks in cities and is starting to get floral blooms with almost no maintenance at all. Nigel has a scheme at the Barbican in London, which aims to flower from March to September; it is not rewilding but it is bringing wildness in. Sheffield has a meadow to absorb more water runoff, so the landscape is becoming ecologically and environmentally friendly, with huge benefits for residents. Beauty in cities has the power to change social habits, and the meadow space has been transformed from being a no-go area to a place where people go to have lunch.

In closing, Sue stressed that 'pictorial meadows' are designed meadows and not native wildflower meadows. They are the product of ecological research and horticulture applied to the concept of a wildflower meadow to create a new form of landscape with greater variety, colour intensity and longer flowering season. Perhaps following Brown's managed creations of idealised natural landscapes, the pictorial meadow is also the application of scientific management to enhance natural wildflower meadows. And the experience of the Pictorial Meadows team in Sheffield has shown that if you build it then people will come and enjoy it.

IMPROMPTU DISCUSSION

The last-minute cancellation of the talk by David Brown gave an opportunity in the programme for a general discussion on urban planning led by Liz Whittle and Bridget Flanagan. This turned out to be a lively session, with plenty of input from the audience. Liz has a strong background in planning issues, having been a former chair and current member of the Gardens Trust's Conservation Committee while Bridget is also well known for her advocacy of a bid to create the Ouse Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Bridget's recent book, *A Commanding View: The Houses and Gardens of Houghton Hill*, describes the history of the area and why it was sought after by 19C entrepreneurs. Topics discussed included threats posed to parks, gardens and the wider landscape by large-scale development and new infrastructure, the quality of landscape design in and around Cambridge and how the Trust can play a role in decision-making through commenting on planning applications and Local Plans. The audience responded with enthusiasm and not a little passion, so it is likely that we shall cover more on this topic in the future.

PALACES, CEMETERIES, PARKS AND VILLAS: THE COST OF URBAN GARDENS

Prof. Sir Roderick Floud FBA is an economic historian and a leader in the field of anthropometric history, being one of the first to bring computational statistics to the study of economic history. A distinguished academic career at Oxford, UCL, Birkbeck, Stanford, London Metropolitan University and Gresham College has been followed by interest in a new field: the economic and social history of British gardening, culminating in his book published in November 2019 (see p 22). He opened by noting that gardens have always been important in town houses, even from Roman times: it is estimated that gardens comprised 15-20% of the land area of Pompeii, much the same as today's British towns. More's Utopia lays heavy emphasis on the delights and utility of city gardening for both pleasure and production, though one might wonder if even the denizens of Eden might have tired of continual horticultural shows. Certainly, the wealthy of Tudor London had large gardens, such as those of Thomas Gresham at Bishopsgate in the 16C, later the home of Gresham College. London had an extensive range of gardens, nurseries and market gardens (Fig. 7) to supply the capital with food and, of course, there were the royal parks and gardens whose purposes were more for leisure pursuits, entertainment and demonstrations of status. Even though he had plenty to do following his restoration to the throne in 1660, Charles II found time to improve St James' Park by digging a canal to link a series of ponds, neglected under the Protectorate. By the end of the 17C successive projects under Charles II, James II and William and Mary were undertaken at various royal locations, while the following centuries saw more works as each royal

Figure 7. Gardens, nurseries and market gardens in Southwark. Detail from 1658 map by Faithorne.

generation tried to outdo the one before: it cost a great deal of money. In 1701, William's ministers were so concerned at the level of spending that they asked the Office of Works to tell them how much the king had spent. They estimated Charles II spent about £20,000 a year on his palaces and gardens; James II a total of about £30,000, and William III some £45,000 annually. Sir Roderick brought these numbers to a modern equivalent by comparing them to average earnings of the day[1]. Average wages today are 2,160 times as high as they were in 1660, so the modern-day equivalent of Charles II's £20,000 pa is an eye-watering £43.2m pa. Disregarding the palace buildings and focusing on just the garden costs (estimated at one-third of the total), Sir Roderick totted up that the three monarchs spent £1.0bn-£1.5bn between 1660 and the accession of Queen Anne in 1702, most of which came from tax-payers.

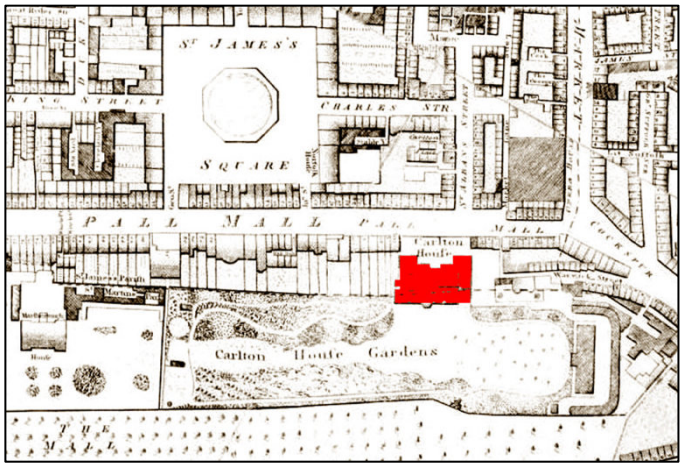


Figure 8. Carlton House (red) and its extensive garden, created by Prince Frederick and Augusta in the 1730s.

More was to come: in the 1730s, Frederick, Prince of Wales, and his wife Augusta created the garden at Carlton House, between Pall Mall and the Mall (Fig. 8). Their landscape architect was William Kent, who had designed the garden at Rousham, and Frederick's household accounts reveal how much was spent on Carlton House in an 18C example of 'instant' gardening. Ground preparation of the 9-acre (3.6-ha) site cost £1.3m in modern money. Transplanting relatively mature trees and shrubs cost a further £2.2m; they included a 25-ft (7.6-m) tulip tree and an 18-ft (5.5-m) Virginia black walnut. Together with glasshouses, steam engines and irrigating systems at least £10.4m was spent in less than three years. It would be interesting to know how successful the gardens actually were: a later illustration of the 1811-12 gothic conservatory built of cast iron and stained glass shows no plants, at least partly because of the smoke pollution and lack of light which afflicted growing things in London.

By the 18C England had 300-400 estates with over 10,000 acres (4047 ha). Therefore, that number of extensive parks and gardens were also created. Designers and nurserymen had a great business for a while making and re-making gardens, as designs were often done away with every 30-40 years with changing tastes. About £35m was spent by Marlborough on the lake at Blenheim.

Following royal parks, the first large green urban spaces were landscaped cemeteries. Kensal Green, which opened in 1833, was the first true landscaped cemetery, designed by Henry Edward Kendall (1776-1875) and influenced both by Père Lachaise in Paris and the work of John Claudius Loudon (1783- 1843) in his *Encyclopaedia of Gardening and Gardeners Magazine* (1822). A private venture for local authorities, Kensal Green cost about £155m (today's money) to build. The plants alone were £232k but most of the cost was in the chapel construction and landscaping. Other 19C examples of municipal cemeteries were Bradford (1854, £8m) and Ilford (1858, £29m) which provided good commissions for designers such as Joseph Paxton and Thomas Mawson. Cemeteries provided green space and wild-life reserves in the 19C as well as fulfilling the function of burial.

Public pleasure gardens, such as the 1751 Vauxhall gardens on the south bank of the Thames, had been laid out in urban areas from the 18C and were emulated in other cities. Vauxhall gardens began as a highly fashionable paying attraction but descended to an open-air brothel, though it existed as a garden well into the 19C. Pleasure gardens were succeeded by public parks: an example of good design was Bath's Royal Victoria Park, designed as a private venture to attract tourists in the 1820s when Bath was declining in popularity and needed revitalising. But often both profit and philanthropic motives were at play, as people in carriages were charged for admission but the public could enter for free if they were of 'decent appearance and good behaviour.' Birkenhead Park, designed by Paxton and opened in 1847, cost £50m and was funded by retaining part of the land for development. By 1860, there were 20 such parks around the country and then a boom in park building by local authorities took place with a wider franchise. Their motives were to keep people out of pubs and to give them training in horticulture, space to exercise, cleaner air to breathe

[1] See the website www.measuringworth.com

and landscape to enjoy. In 1884 local authorities spent £63m on maintenance of parks and open spaces. By WWI £600m a year was being spent. By 1939 it was £1.5bn and by the 1970s over £4bn or 2.5% of local government expenditure. However, maintenance of parks and gardens was never a statutory duty on local authorities, so parks have really suffered during the later 20C and 21C. Thanks to Heritage Lottery funds and dedicated volunteers, Peasholm Park in Scarborough, still shows an echo of the landscape garden with mock naval battles, or naumachia, taking place on its lake.

Turning to the domestic garden, Sir Roderick described the 1791 garden of Francis Douce at Gower Street in London, planned by himself and his friend Richard Twiss. The garden was about 9 m x 34 m (30 ft x 110 ft) and included 42 poplars, an almond, two rhododendrons and 20 or more roses, with 36 perennials and 192 annuals. Twiss estimated that the plants, four loads of gravel and ten loads of manure would cost £25k, including labour, and 'would eclipse' the gardens of Douce's neighbours – competition is a fine thing in gardens.

The best source of garden expenditures comes from John Claudius Loudon[2] and his wife Jane who, as we have seen, wrote excellent science-fiction but gave up after marriage to write gardening books for ladies. Loudon is one of very few writers on gardens who will say, in his *The Suburban Gardener and Villa Companion* of 1838, how much a garden will cost. Can we trust Loudon? Well, everybody does, and he gives detailed prices of 30-40 vegetables sold in Covent Garden month by month, so he probably knows (the cost of) his onions.

Loudon presented two designs for his '4th-rate garden' of 1838. The plot is 500 yds^2 (418 m^2), with density of under 10 plots/acre (24 plots/ha; which is rather more generous than today's density of 12-15 plots/acre). This was a roughly typical garden for the 19C and early 20C. A small front garden was designed to be seen, then the house and a large back garden which Louden suggested could contain 48 trees and shrubs, with climbers against the walls. The front might have a circular bed planted with annuals and a flowering currant. Loudon thinks of gardens with different objectives; this one saves cost which he estimates at £9,300 in today's money. The alternative design has a greenhouse with an underground boiler-house to force fruit and flowers (but not to heat the house). Hot water or steam was delivered by pipes to melon beds with the aim of forcing flowers and exotic fruit such as pineapples and bananas. The capital cost was about £250k, with annual maintenance of about £150k of which half was for a full-time gardener. Evidently people were prepared to spend large sums on modest-sized gardens, even if the value of the produce would not cover half of the expense.

Loudon built his own house in Porchester Terrace (Fig. 9), Bayswater, effectively two semi-detached houses. He was a mad-keen gardener and had a reserve villa garden across a lane at the back, which he also used as a kitchen garden. The garden had 100 varieties of rose, 50 each of apples, pears, plums and cherries. There were 82 hot-house plants, 600 alpines and 300-400 bulb species. At one time there were some 2,000 species in the garden. The houses cost £4m to build, the glasshouses £250k, trees and shrubs were £80k. He had a full-time gardener

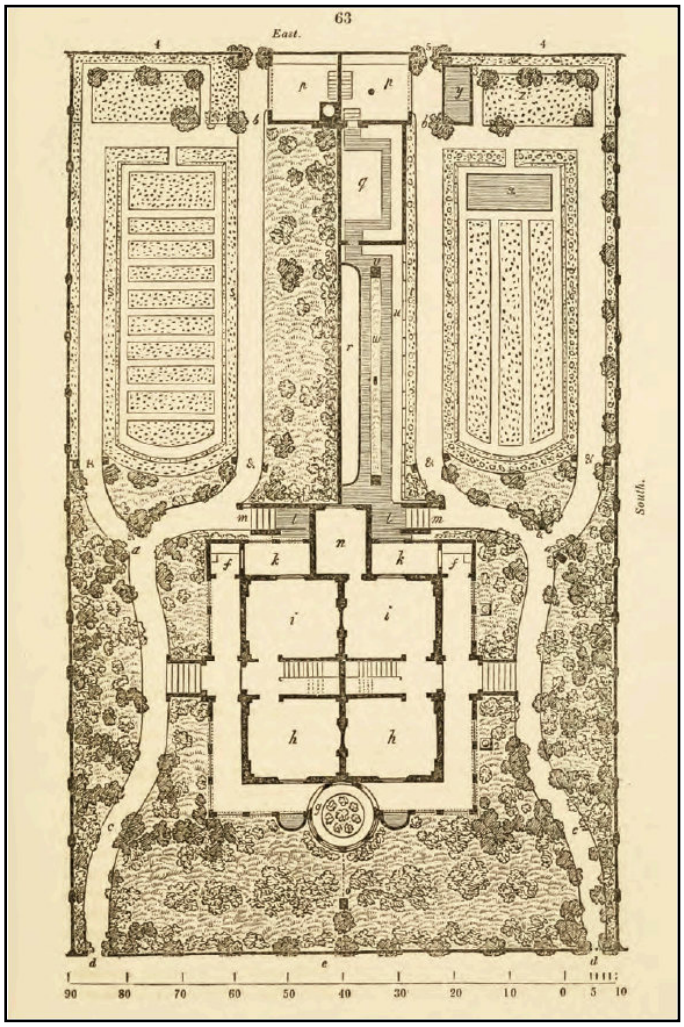


Figure 9. Plan of John and Jane Louden's 1830s semi-detached villa and garden at Porchester Terrace, Bayswater.

costing £100k pa (house provided) until, in later years, he dispensed with the gardener and did it all himself.

Loudon presents designs of more elaborate suburban houses going up to £4m and more for people with an income of £800k to £1m a year, and suggests the running costs would be about £250k or over 25% of gross income. By 1830-40 such villas surrounded other towns and cities as well as in London and from a simple calculation it is clear that a lot of money was being spent on both garden development and maintenance.

The suburban garden has often been derived as being vulgar and there is a delicious lampoon in Sellar and Yeatman's *Garden Rubbish and other Country Bumps* (1936) which shows a 'Modest Plot', with swimming pool, croquet lawn, monkey puzzle (in the pool) and a primrose path leading not to hell but to an 'everlasting bonfire'. The dreams and aspirations of gardeners and garden designers should not be under-estimated and no matter what their status in society, gardeners have always spent up to their means, and often beyond, in pursuit of such dreams.

CASE STUDY: A NEW GARDEN FOR SCHLUMBERGER

Dr Simon Bittleston and **Bridget Flanagan** jointly presented a case study on the development of a new corporate garden. Simon, Schlumberger vice-President for non-hydrocarbon

[2] See https://thegardenstrust.blog/2014/06/19/john-claudius-loudon-and-cemeteries/

research, was formerly Managing Director of Schlumberger's Cambridge research centre, housed in the striking 'tent', a grade II* listed building designed by Michael Hopkins and located on the West Cambridge campus. An applied mathematician, he created a new garden for the lab in 2011-12. Bridget is a social historian and author who, along with a dozen or so CGT members, visited the new garden in May 2012 and coordinated the report which appeared in the CGT Newsletter 33, November 2012.

Bridget opened by noting an event that Sue France would have appreciated, had she not been obliged to give a second talk elsewhere: the digging up of King's College immaculate Chapel lawn in preparation for its conversion to a wildflower meadow. After some 200 years of monoculture, characterised by 'Keep off the grass' signs, King's have decided to do more for the pollinators and invertebrates and provide a new look for passers-by with harebells, buttercups, poppies and cornflowers flowering from May to July. Eight years before, Simon Bittleston had also decided to do something radically new for another Cambridge body, the Schlumberger research centre on Madingley Road, so Bridget asked Simon to recount the motivation, implementation and evaluation of the new garden he had created.

Simon began with an overview of Schlumberger, how it had become an established leader in oilfield services through its focus on research and engineering, how it had made early stage investments in low carbon and renewable technology businesses, and how it was now building up capability in new (non-hydrocarbon) energy technology. The company has over 60 R&D labs world-wide and one of its two primary research labs is based in Cambridge. Founded in 1985, the lab has contributed 1300 patents to Schlumberger's technology portfolio. Built in two phases by Hopkins, the second in 1993, the buildings were connected by a rather austere, paved broadwalk flanked by uneven ground that featured weed-filled grass. Even though the separation between the buildings was just some 40 m, the rather unsightly space created barriers in the mind between the scientific communities in the two buildings. When it rained, people would run between them without thinking about what was there. In 2011 Simon decided to link the two buildings with a common garden which was intended to create the sense of a single site, provide a pleasant space for thinking and discussion, and develop feelings of wellbeing and motivation for staff and visitors.

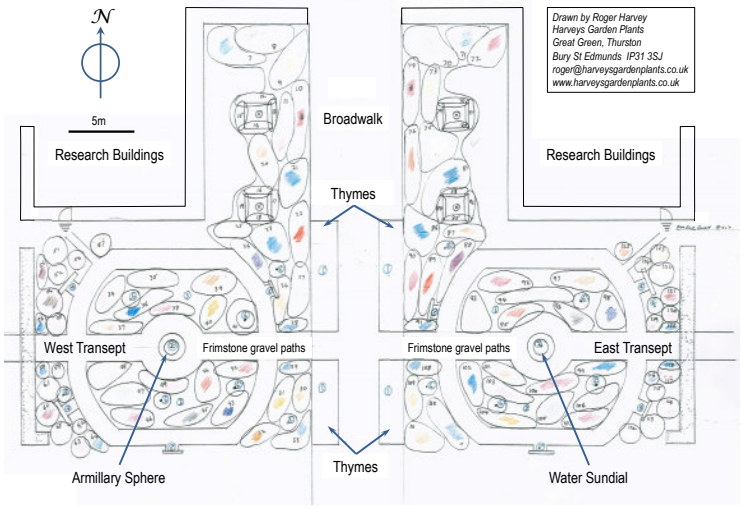


Figure 10. Sketch map of the garden, drawn by Roger Harvey.

To design and implement the new garden, Simon chose Roger Harvey of Suffolk, winner of eight RHS Gold Medals. His challenge was to create a garden between the two modernistic buildings, and to provide landscaping for the wider estate while retaining a clear sight of the building as required by Hopkins. Roger came up with a design which reflected his expertise as a plantsperson (Fig. 10). The broadwalk had to be retained as the connection between the buildings, so this strong N-S axis was complemented by an E-W transept crossing in local Frimstone gravel. Each transept has an oval walk with secluded seating accessible from the end doors of the research buildings. The space at the centre of each transept contains a David Harber feature: a water sundial on the east (Fig. 11) and an armillary sphere on the west (Fig. 12). The transept paths lead to the clipped conifer hedging that delimit the eastern and western edges of the hortus conclusus, and into which are inserted custom-made metal gates (Fig. 11) with circular apertures that reflect the circular forms of the Harber features.

Figure 11. Looking east towards the water sundial with circular-aperture gate behind.

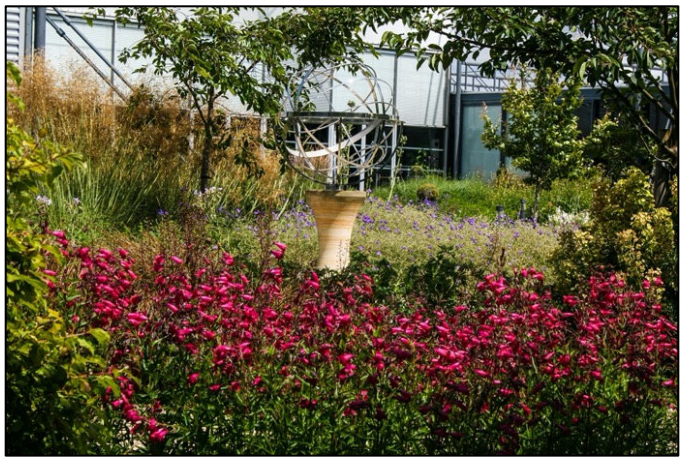


Figure 12. Looking north across a bed of flowering penstemon towards the armillary sphere in the west transept.

Mixed planting would make the garden look bitty so Roger went for block planting with staggered flowering so as to have things going on throughout the year. Matting was used to stop weeds, and irrigation is provided from a buried pipe network. This has proved problematic as the pipe has leaked and tends to rise to the surface. Tree planting included prunus, sorbus and malus. A tapestry of different sorts of thyme was planted through a membrane into gravel beds bordering the broadwalk. These looked well for the first season or two but a combination

Figure 13. The approach to the main entrance has been softened by raised-bed planting.

of shade from the southern building, and periods of either too much or too little water led to their demise.

Raised beds were erected in the car park at the southern entrance to the lab (Fig. 13) and the planting here softens the approach to the building. Outside the hortus conclusus, on the perimeter of the wider estate, semi-circular beds were created at fairly sparse intervals to include flowering trees and shrubs while preserving the view of the building from the High Cross approach road. The garden matured after a few seasons and sits well between the two buildings. Barbecues are held regularly in summer and more seating has been provided outside the gates in the wider estate, which has proved especially popular with students and summer interns.

Overall, the new garden has greatly improved the vista from the buildings that face onto it and provides visual stimulation to people in transit between the buildings. While staff still run between them when it rains, on a sunny day people divert into the transepts to enjoy the flowers and trees and have even sat down on the garden seats. Both staff and visitors have given very positive feedback about the impact of the garden.

Bridget asked Simon what lessons had been learned from the project. Firstly, better screening is needed for seated areas. Although staff are encouraged to use the outdoor benches and seating for discussions or reading, there is understandable reluctance when sightlines from office windows render the areas less private. When sitting in the garden, the noise of the M11 is noticeable and, unless the day is particularly still, the wind can also hinder enjoyment of the garden, so greater cover would have been useful in the design stage. More tables would also encourage people to sit together for outdoor meetings or simply to share lunch on a fine day. The waterlogged thyme was a mistake – the area is currently being upgraded – and a better maintenance programme in the early years should have been put in place. Now that the garden is maturing, a replanting scheme is needed as some of the contractor pruning is less than appropriate. Over the past few years, an ambitious plan was put together to develop more paths and private meeting areas in the wider estate but this is on hold during the current downturn in the market.

In a lively question period, Simon was asked what the wider Schlumberger group thought about the garden and whether it was a good use of shareholder money. He pointed out that Schlumberger has always encouraged good architecture and high-quality site landscaping, and the garden was a small cost compared to the research costs for the lab, so no prior permission or budget had been sought or needed. People do have a sense of ownership though few volunteers have come forward to help with the weeding. A permanent gardener would be ideal but the cost is too high at the present time in the business cycle.

After a very full and stimulating day, Liz Whittle observed that green lungs were just as important in the current times of high-density development as they ever have been since the start of the industrial revolution and the urbanisation of population. She concluded with a vote of thanks to all the speakers for an excellent set of presentations and to the attentive audience for their engaging questions and discussion.

Phil Christie
April 2020

ECONOMIC HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH GARDEN – A REVIEW

THERE WERE THREE key messages from Sir Roderick Floud's book and presentation to the Study Day on his *Economic History of the English Garden*. The first was don't, whatever you do, tot up how much you spend in a year on your garden because you will frighten yourself. The second was that you should not kid yourself that your fruit and vegetable growing contributes to your household economy because you could buy the produce more cheaply - you grow them for freshness, flavour and unusual varieties. And the third was that there are many estate and garden archives which are untapped from this point of view and just waiting for people to exploit them.

The book, currently a chunky hardback, is coming out in paperback and no one should be daunted by the title or size. Sir Roderick chose interesting material to explore, wrote in beautiful English, and explained concepts clearly. This is an accessible book. To illustrate two of these in one go, I'd like to tell you about the employment packages of 'Capability' Brown and Joseph Paxton. Both were in their early twenties when they got their first head gardener jobs, Brown at Stowe and Paxton at Chatsworth. Both got a salary and a house. There was approaching a century between the two appointments. Were they similarly rewarded? Using average earnings (Sir Roderick gives over a chapter to explaining why this is an appropriate metric to use and presents a useful graph to translate the value of £1 between different dates, while also pointing us to www.measuringworth.com) the answer turns out to be 'Yes, broadly speaking'. Their packages were around £66,000 in current money, with about a £2,000 difference in favour of Paxton. For context, there is an advert for a live-in head gardener on *The Lady* website, jobs.lady.co.uk, at the moment (mid-March). The 45-acre (18-ha), privately owned estate in

Hampshire, where assistant gardeners are employed, sounds impressive but not in the Stowe/Chatsworth league. The blurb says, 'The family Grade II listed property sits in formal gardens and parklands including expansive lawns, a large kitchen garden, mixed beds/borders, ornamental shrubberies and woodland walks along with other notable areas,' and the salary is £25k-£30k). The Prince of Wales is recruiting at Highgrove, but I can't find the salary, and it is only 15 acres (6 ha).

In tune with our theme of urban gardening, Sir Roderick had kindly angled his Study Day talk to gardens and parks in towns and cities. London dominated, and we heard about the considerable sums spent by the royal family from 1660 to about 1900. For instance, Frederick, Prince of Wales and his wife Augusta spent about £10.2m (present day equivalent) over two years in the mid-1730s to create an instant garden at Carlton House. Two London nurseries between them provided £2.2m worth of plants, which is an indication of the amazing stock levels they carried. In the 1750s a younger brother, the Duke of Cumberland, had part of a Roman temple transported from Leptis Magna (Fig. 1) on the Libyan coast in North Africa to provide a picturesque ruin at Fort Belvedere on the newly created Virginia Water in Surrey.

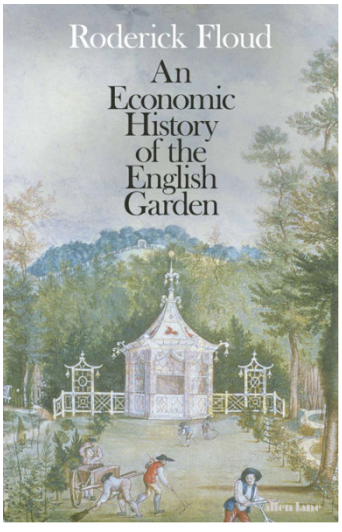
In the 19C the royal family were busy spending public money on Frogmore (no hint that they paid it back that time!) and Osbourne, Sandringham and Balmoral, but we turned to consider town parks and cemeteries. Earlier in the day, Twigs Way had mentioned Histon Road cemetery, featured in JC Loudon's 1843 book *On the Laying Out, Planting and Managing of Cemeteries and the Improvement of Churchyards*[3]. That was funded by local non-conformists who did not want to be buried in consecrated ground: the Lilleys, Sayles, Fosters and others had commissioned Loudon as designer. We don't know how much they paid (the archives are not with the County: possibly they are with the Friends). Sir Roderick did know that another Loudon cemetery project, Kensal Green, had cost £155m to establish. The plants alone had cost the equivalent of £232,500, which had been paid to Hugh Ronalds at his Brentford nursery.

The research group had read and discussed the book, and had been flattered to be asked to provide feedback to Prof. Floud as he prepares the paperback edition. A very small number of typos had leapt out at us, which we listed. We also pointed out that there isn't a Highbury Hall in Cambridgeshire, and mentioned that we felt that women were under-represented as garden owners, as gardeners and as technologists. Queen Mary, for instance, brought a considerable plant collection with her from the Netherlands in the late 1680s and had suitable provision made for them here. At a practical level the gardens and landscape at Chatsworth were often under Sarah Paxton's management because Joseph was away so much. Eleanor Coade's 'stone' has proved highly durable, but she was not mentioned while James Pulham's product got three mentions. Two extra quibbles that we offered were that it is highly unlikely that agricultural and garden labourers in the 18C and 19C would have been vitamin D deficient because they would have had plenty of sunlight and so been making vitamin D with their skins. We also suggested that 'central heating' didn't

Fig. 1. Roman remains still at Leptis Magna in 2008. Photo by Antony Warren.

disappear entirely between the end of Roman hypocausts and the development of systems for glasshouses and hot walls because there is a dwelling with sauna on the Brough of Birsay, a tidal island off the NW coast of Mainland Orkney, which has underfloor and underbench heating. It was probably built for Thorfinn Sigurdsson, also known as Thorfinn the Mighty, the Earl of Orkney, who lived from c.1009-65. If we were quibbling (which we were: it is a great book), Sir Roderick would be entitled to reply that Orkney has never been in England and wasn't even in Britain in the 11C, Earl Thorfinn owed allegiance to Norway.

Gin Warren
March 2020



Prof. Sir Roderick Floud's book is published by Allen Lane, ISBN-13 978-0241235577, 416pp. Also available as a Kindle book.

[3] See also the article by Charles Malyon in the 2015 May issue of the Newsletter, pp 6-7.

PROGRAMME OF VISITS & EVENTS 2020

Because of the covid-19 situation, all visits and events have either been cancelled or are under review for the time being. As and when government advice changes, we will update the website and circulate details by email and post. We hope restrictions will be relaxed later in the year enabling sites to re-open. If some measures remain we leave it to individual members to evaluate advice prevailing at the time and to consider whether participation in a given event is appropriate for them.

APRIL 2020	21 Tues **Cancelled**	11:00am	**Visit** to St Paul's Walden Bury, Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG4 8BP. 18C formal woodland garden with temples, statues, ponds, rhododendrons, magnolias, azaleas. This event was cancelled, and bookings refunded .
MAY 2020	26 Tues **Under review**	2:00pm	**Visit** to Abbots Ripton Hall, Abbots Ripton, Huntingdon PE28 2PQ. Some 8.5 acres of parkland with fine trees, a lake, a bog garden, lawns, borders, shrub roses and six follies designed by Peter Foster. Meet promptly at 2:00pm for a guided tour of the gardens by the Head Gardener, followed by tea/coffee and biscuits. Members £15, guests £17.
JUNE 2020	10 Wed **Postponed**	5:00pm	**Social evening** at The Manor, Hemingford Grey, Huntingdon PE28 9BN. House built 1130's. Gardens with moat, topiary, old roses, award-wining irises, herbaceous borders. Bring your friends and a picnic to enjoy in the grounds. Optional tour of house (numbers limited) at extra cost. **We hope to rearrange the event in June 2021 instead**.
JULY 2020	16 Thurs **Under review**	11:00am	**Visit** to Newnham College, Sidgwick Avenue, Cambridge CB3 9DF. Herbaceous borders, sunken rose garden, woodland nutwalk, knot garden, wildflower garden. Meet in the Iris Café of the college at 11:00am for own selection of tea/coffee etc, ready for a guided tour of the gardens by the Head Gardener at 11.30am. Further details to follow.
AUGUST 2020	25 Tues **Under review**	12:00 noon	**Visit** to Euston Hall, Thetford, Suffolk IP24 2QH. Palladian-style house in landscape gardens, ancient broadleaf woodland, pleasure grounds laid out by John Evelyn, later extended by Brown and Kent. Meet at 12:00 noon for guided tour of the house, followed by self-tour of the gardens. Refreshments/snacks available from W.I. Members and guests £14. **Euston Hall hope the tour can go ahead; deadline for bookings will be advised.**
SEPT. 2020	15 or 17 **To be confirmed**		**Visit** to Moggerhanger Park, Park Road, Moggerhanger, Bedford MK44 3RW. Tour of Sir John Soane-designed house and of 33 acres of parkland and woodland, extensively restored, originally landscaped by Repton, with Head Gardener Tim Kirk. Details to follow.
OCT. 2020	**To be confirmed**		**Visit** to The Gibberd Garden, Marsh Lane, Harlow, Essex CM17 0NA. Created by Sir Frederick Gibberd, who inspired Harlow New Town, between 1957 and 1984. Streams, pools, glades, lime avenue, wild garden, moated castle – fulfilling his ambition to create a work of art. Details to follow.
NOV 2020	7 Sat **To be confirmed**	10:15am-1:30pm	**AGM** Fen Drayton Village Hall, CB24 4SL. Coffee on arrival 10:15-10:45am, AGM from 10:45am. Confirmation of venue and further details to follow.

(For latest visit details please go to http://cambridgeshiregardenstrust.org.uk)

Tickets from / register with Alan Brown, Foxhollow, 239 High Street, Offord Cluny, St. Neots PE19 5RT. Tel.: 01480 811947.
E-mail: fox.239@btinternet.com **Please make cheques payable to Cambridgeshire Gardens Trust.**
Bookings may also be paid by BACS to Cambs. Gardens Trust (sort code 20-29-68, account number 30347639) using your name as reference; please confirm payment by phone or email to Alan.
To avoid disappointment (some venues limit numbers), please book at least 2 weeks before the visit.
Should you need to cancel a booking, please advise Alan as early as possible.