CAMBRIDGESHIRE GARDENS TRUST

NEWSLETTER No. 49 November 2020

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

WELCOME TO THIS AUTUMN'S Newsletter, which I hope you'll find interesting and informative. The last six months is a strange period to reflect on, but as you will see below we as a Trust have managed not only to keep going, but to achieve some notable successes, despite the restrictions. This is thanks to a great deal of planning and organisation, whether it be to move lectures online or to organise socially distanced visits and events. So thank you all, members of the Council of Management, for your tireless efforts.

Many of you, I know from your wonderful photo's now on the Trust's website, have been using the time caring for and enjoying your gardens. With so much time available I expect many of them have been gardened to within an inch of their lives. There probably have rarely been fewer weeds! Now it's picking bumper crops and endless jam and chutney-making, all life-affirming activities that have helped us through this strange summer. Autumn is now upon us so do please send in your autumnal garden and wildlife photos. They will give much pleasure, as those already on the website do.

Autumn's mellow fruitfulness has arrived at Wilburton.

The Trust has not been idle during this time of restrictions. Of the seven activities planned for this summer, two visits and one event went ahead. Those that didn't will be rescheduled for next year. The great landscape park of Euston Hall was ideally suited to these socially distanced times, so much so that we barely saw the other members who were there at the same time. A few people braved the weather to visit to the Gibberd Garden in Essex – well done them. I'm sure that it was well worth it.

The social event which was to have taken place at The Manor, Hemingford Grey (this has been postponed until next year) switched to Madingley Hall, where thirty or so members gathered for a meal and presentations, taking advantage of the eased restrictions in early September. This event is described in a separate article in the Newsletter, but was greatly enjoyed by all. How wonderful it was to have a social gathering at last and to see other members of the Trust. I felt privileged to be part of it.

We also put on our first two Zoom lectures by Sue Stuart-Smith and Tom Williamson, both of which turned out to be excellent. Sue's talk is written up elsewhere in the Newsletter, but I'd like to congratulate our Council members who managed to sign up two such eminent and powerful speakers. Sue Stuart-Smith spoke movingly about the power of gardens and nature to soothe, mend and inspire. She has just published a highly successful book, *The Well-Gardened Mind*, on the subject. Tom Williamson, the eminent historic landscape polymath, gave us very interesting insights into the landscaping of Humphry Repton, as part of his inaugural Margaret Helme Memorial Lecture. As a result we'll all see Repton's landscapes in a new and more interesting light.

On the goals that I mentioned in my last letter, sadly Coronavirus has shelved two of them – increasing membership and greater ties with neighbouring county trusts. But the third – closer links with the Gardens Trust (GT) – has been achieved. We now receive regular updates and remote learning packages, which Phil puts on the website for all to browse through. Most of the packages are related to planning matters but other topics are covered, such as David Marsh's lecture series. We are also giving thought to GT's 'Unforgettable Gardens' initiative, which seeks to highlight gardens and landscapes at risk. We have a possible candidate in some of the Cambridge cemeteries. Watch this space for further news on this front.

Looking to what we hope will be more normal times next year, we are working on a busy programme of visits, events and talks, which will be publicised on the website and through e-mail contact. As a community with shared interests in gardens, gardening, landscapes and nature generally we hope we can come together again next year in person to enjoy and be stimulated by these activities. I look forward to seeing you all!

Liz Whittle

PAT SPENCER (1930-2020) – AN APPRECIATION

PATRICIA MARY SPENCER died on 18th September 2020 at the age of 90. She was a long-standing, enthusiastic member of Cambridgeshire Gardens Trust and a keen and assiduous member of the Research Group, also known as the Garden Heritage Volunteers, a resource shared for many years between the Huntingdon branch of NADFAS (now the Arts Society) and CGT under John Drake.

Huntingdon DFAS was a formidable society at the end of the nineties; 'Trial by blue rinse and pearls,' as one lecturer put it. The poised chairman spoke with a French accent and members comported themselves with a certain hauteur. With no prior introductions who should the newest member dare to sit next to on the coach? My eye fell on a small, plump, bright-eyed lady with a mischievous smile and the complexion of a weathered russet apple. Did she have a travelling companion? She did not - and from that moment our journey to Norwich passed in an instant. Pat Spencer introduced herself: unaffected and welcoming. Over the course of the journey I learned that she had trained as an architect at the Manchester School of Art. There she had met her husband, enjoyed life to the full and made many friends before moving to Pidley and later settling in Somersham. We found that we had enjoyed holidays in the same places: Scotland, Northumberland and North Yorkshire to mention a few, though Pat had also travelled in Switzerland and China. I discovered on that same journey that we enjoyed similar passions in classical music and poetry, quirkily, both of us sharing a particular admiration for Aphra Behn. But it was the garden that was to bring us particularly close in our leisure time.

Pat became a founder member of the HDFAS Garden Heritage Volunteers and brought her energy, her architect's eye and her abundant knowledge of history, including local history, into the research and analysis of parklands, houses and gardens large and small. Whatever the weather Pat was in the fray climbing walls and dykes and struggling through barbed wire fences. On more temperate sites it would be she who was consulted to name the unusual trees and plants learned by keen observation and by her talent for selecting and growing an amazingly eclectic collection in her own garden (which she opened for charity) and from which she distributed unstintingly to plant stalls, friends and visitors alike.

Rarely alone, Pat's energy and enthusiasm encompassed a plethora of good causes. Even after relinquishing her roles as parish councillor and PCC member at various times for both Pidley and Somersham she immersed herself in community activities. On numerous occasions when I phoned, shouting

The late Pat Spencer (left) with members of the CGT research group of 2005, aka the HDFAS Garden Heritage Volunteers.

over the music of Radio 3 playing loudly in the background, we struggled to arrange dates around commitments to Time Bank, blood transfusions and Somersham library. Her love of history and architecture made her a keen supporter of the Churches Conservation Trust at whose study days we shared sandwiches and dozed through the afternoon sessions. Mysteriously, Pat was always on the ball at the close with her knowledgeable and insightful questions. Such was her enormous breadth of interests, she remained insatiable to the end for all manner of lectures and activities, turning up in her tiny gaily coloured Citroëns. It is a measure of the camaraderie she engendered that even after giving up her car she was never short of a lift, most recently on a visit with Cambridgeshire Gardens Trust to the David Parr House in Cambridge. Exceedingly modest, she was nonetheless blunt in her appraisals of unseemly behaviour or inadequate performance. Holidays were a particular delight. Following family events, we would be regaled with the exploits of her 6 grand-children and of stories of 80th and then 90th birthday parties arranged by her son Kim and her two daughters, Sally and Kay.

Members appreciated her infectious laugh and wry sense of humour as she sipped a glass of sauvignon blanc with her meal. Kind and considerate at all times, I remember asking if she would mind sharing a room with me on a garden group trip to the Cotswolds. 'Oh, you won't want to do that,' she said, 'I snore.' She did. As late as March this year, many CGT members will remember her at our March study day, participating as always in the question sessions. She has brought joy and friendship to many of us in CGT and will be remembered with affection by all who knew her.

Judith Christie, October 2020

AN AWARDS CELEBRATION IN THE TIME OF COVID

OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS, the Trust has endeavoured to combine a notable event with an opportunity for members to meet each other in an environment that allows broader social networking than may be achieved on a visit or a lecture. The 21st anniversary of CGT's founding was celebrated with an excellent lecture from Anna Pavord at Madingley Hall in 2018. In 2019, despite appalling June weather, we gathered for a very successful picnic in the pews at Kirtling Church to celebrate 25 years of support and presidency of the Trust by The Lord Fairhaven. This year we had hoped to hold a summer social event in The Manor at Hemingford Grey but the pandemic required us to defer this to, we hope, summer 2021.

However, the focus for the 2020 event was more than a social gathering, it was to recognise the important contributions made to the two most significant 'Capability' Brown sites in the county by two CGT founder members. It would be a great shame to defer the recognition and so, in the summer, when lockdown restrictions were eased and gardens with open-air facilities were opening again, we decided to organise a relatively limited event at quite short notice in early September.

The heroes we had in mind for public recognition were Philip Whaites, now-retired Head Gardener from the National Trust's Wimpole Hall, and Richard Gant, current Head Gardener at Madingley Hall. Since their Head Gardener was receiving an award, the caterers at Madingley Hall kindly gave us a very special rate for the event, which generosity we gratefully acknowledge.

Liz Whittle, CGT Chair, has just presented Life Membership to Philip Whaites (left) and Richard Gant (right).

Photo: Antony Warren

Our relatively spontaneous social event took place on Thursday 3rd September. The day was blessed with fine weather which allowed some 30 members to wander round the wonderful gardens before gathering on the terrace (Fig. 1) at 6:30pm. By then the temperature was just starting to fall and there was some uncertainty about whether we should don masks and move inside or stay outside. The decision was made for us by the staff who had laid tables inside and provided us with generous platefuls of sandwiches, savouries and desserts, which many hardy folks opted to consume on the terrace after all. By 8:00pm darkness was gathering and so everyone congregated in the main dining room to hear our chair, Liz Whittle, make the awards of CGT Life Membership, firstly to Philip and then to Richard.

Both recipients provided us with background notes and so we thought it would interest members to reproduce them here.

PHILIP WHAITES

My gardening career started during local government re-organisation in 1972, and was a change of direction in my career as a motor vehicle engineer (my father's choice). Having started work for a parks department I attended Lancashire College of Agriculture studying arboriculture and gardening. My ambition was to work for the National Trust and I applied for a position at a local Trust property, Gawthorpe Hall (Fig. 2), as Gardener in Charge. I was taken on and had the opportunity to restore part of the formal gardens originally designed by Sir Charles Barry. I had greater ambitions and applied for the position as Assistant Gardener at Wimpole. Having worked at Wimpole for just a short time, the Head Gardener tragically died, and I took the opportunity to apply for the Head Gardener's role. The garden lacked any serious horticultural activities and in order to make the garden more interesting and at the same time carry out investigations into its past glories, I started to re-

Fig. 1. Madingley Hall terrace in June, with a glimpse of the view towards Cambridge.

Fig. 2. Gawthorpe Hall in Lancashire, where Philip Whaites served as Gardener in Charge before moving to Wimpole.

create long-lost features; this was made possible by using many volunteers and seeking funds from outside sources. The NGS helped us with funding not only for restoration of the smaller ha-ha but also to re-create the parterre, which really did put the garden on the map. From then on, alongside the formal structures, was the restoration of the Pleasure Ground, an area that was overgrown with very many dead elm trees. We established new plantings including a collection of walnut trees (eventually to become a national collection). At this time, I first met John Drake who was an active member of Plant Heritage.

The Walled Garden restoration was our next big project: we established a working kitchen garden supplying vegetables and fruit to our catering outlets, at the same time establishing an Orchard which produced over 30 types of apple varieties and 10,000 bottles of apple juice. Again, we benefited from a large NGS grant for the re-creation of the Soane glasshouse. This gave us the growing space to provide the many plants for the formal gardens. John was a frequent visitor to Wimpole and he invited me along to view many of the properties he attended in his role as a garden advisor. I and Dr Jill Cremer (Jill was one of my volunteers) were invited to look at a garden in Ramsey, which we did, and established that it was a Victorian walled garden, very overgrown and not Elizabethan as was first suggested by the lady that gardened part of the site. We then reported back to John and the rest is history. I am now one of the Trustees and, more recently, pop up with my wife Janet and help with the pruning. I think if we lived closer to Ramsey, we would be never away from those four walls.

RICHARD GANT

I distinctly remember the launch of the CGT at Wimpole Hall amid a room of great anticipation and enthusiasm in November 1996. A successful Study Day was held at Madingley in 1997 followed by a visit to Kimbolton Castle. I also recall a very successful CGT coach outing to Sutton Place in Surrey in April 1998 and a spring lecture series in 1999, at which I was kindly invited to present a piece on Madingley Hall Garden.

It is interesting that our partner conservation organisation, Plant Heritage, started in 1978 as the National Council for the Conservation of Plants and Gardens. Plant Heritage evolved through the creation of the National Plant Collection scheme to focus on cultivated plant conservation while the county Gardens Trusts moved into the gardens conservation brief. From a gardening perspective, both organisations are of equal merit and importance and I spent nine years as a trustee of Plant Heritage and continue to serve on their Cambridgeshire Committee. John Drake, Cambridgeshire GT founder Chair, also served Plant Heritage for many years and he drew the combined conservation interests of both in his superb publication *Wood & Ingram A Huntingdonshire Nursery 1742-1950*. My hope, moving forward, is that these two organisations will be able to take a leaf from John's book and work more closely and collaboratively together.

The two national conferences organised by CGT in 2009 and 2016 both visited Madingley Hall and we were delighted in June 2018 to host the CGT 21st anniversary celebration with the lecture by Anna Pavord. CGT produced a wonderful leaflet for the Lancelot 'Capability' Brown tercentenary in 2016, detailing a walk through his Madingley landscape, which provided the opportunity and impetus to restore a permissive path though the adjacent woodland. The leaflet and walk continue to be popular and we have already invested in two leaflet reprints. The CGT tercentenary working group produced a successful programme culminating in the 'Capability' Brown Memorial Service, a Choral Evensong at St Peter and Paul Church Fenstanton (with accompanying flower festival) followed by the unveiling of the Lancelot 'Capability' Brown commemoration stained glass window designed by local schoolchildren. The Bishop's sermon alluded to all the workers who had painstakingly created Brown's landscapes, while I hear the celebrations at Kirkharle, his birthplace in Northumberland where the Bishop of Newcastle preached, were of lighter contemplation! In October 2016, a concert entitled *Capability Sounds: A Musical Celebration of Lancelot Brown* featured a piece written for the anniversary by Jeremy Thurlow called 'Steeples Eclipse' played in the Saloon at Madingley Hall.

Richard adds, 'I am very touched and honoured to be invited to become an honorary CGT member particularly as my friend and long-time neighbouring gardening colleague Philip Whaites is also a recipient. I often remind Philip that Brown designed and implemented his Madingley commission in 1756-1757; the Earl of Hardwick didn't commission him to work at Wimpole until 1760!'

AND FINALLY...

Liz also took the opportunity to present Judith Christie with her Gardens Trust 'Volunteer of the Year' award, a handsome crystal obelisk (Fig. 3). The award was shared with Juliet Wilmot of Wiltshire GT but, because of CV-19, moving the obelisk was overlooked in March and it had only just arrived.

Phil Christie

Fig. 3. Liz Whittle hands over the Gardens Trust award to Judith Christie. Photo: Antony Warren.

THE GARDENS OF FITZWILLIAM COLLEGE

IN 1852 A ROYAL COMMISSION report put forward the idea to make it possible for students of under-privileged backgrounds to be admitted to the University without having been accepted by a college and the consequent expenses of residence. After the University's and colleges' objections had been answered, a Bill was enacted in 1869 providing for a Censor, with the general duties of a tutor, and a Board for Non-Collegiate Students. Students were required to sign an attendance register five times a week and had to be supervised. A room was hired for them to meet the Censor. A succession of Censors eventually secured from the University a loan of £100 enabling the purchase of the freehold of 31-32 Trumpington Street in 1887. The students had formed the Non-Collegiate Amalgamated Club and held a meeting to choose a name for this Georgian building opposite the Fitzwilliam Museum: Fitzwilliam Hall, and then in 1924, Fitzwilliam House. A playing field in Oxford Road was secured in 1908. The long haul towards collegiate status had begun and a site on Huntingdon Road was found for new buildings designed by Sir Denys Lasdun, between 1958-63. These were funded by the University Grants Committee, who imposed stringent economic restraint, and there were no private endowments. In 1966 a Royal Charter granted collegiate status and Fitzwilliam College was established with a Master replacing the Censor.

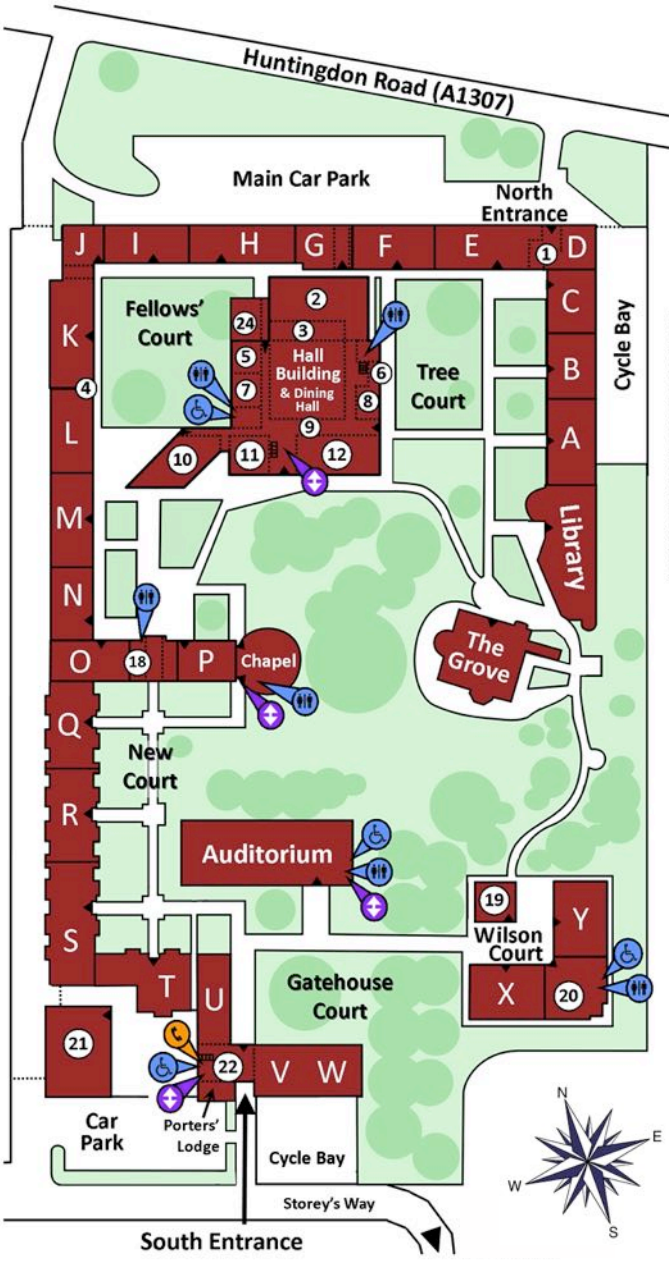
THE SITE

The college has boundaries with Huntingdon Road to the north, Wychfield Lane and Trinity Hall's Wychfield settlement to the west, Storey's Way and its main entrance to the south and the adjacent Murray Edwards College to the east. Fitzwilliam College, together with the other colleges, own different parts of the estate of The Grove, a Regency house of 1812-13 in the parish of St Giles. These Colleges, together with Churchill, are on the land referred to in the Holford Report 1949, and accepted by the Minister in 1954, as 'All land between the Huntingdon and Barton Roads and west of the Backs should be treated as a reserve' for the needs of the University for the future.

THE ESTATE AND GARDEN BEFORE COLLEGIATE STATUS, 1966

The estate of The Grove was the first development in the vast West Fields of Cambridge, which were enclosed in 1803-4. It lies within a northern furlong of Grithow Field on the highest land alongside the Huntingdon Way. For the most part it is gravel over chalk. This small part of the Field is included in the oldest area of cultivation, perhaps explaining the 2006 archaeological dig here, which revealed the remains of a 3500 years' old farmstead (Oxford Archaeology East, 2013).

William Custance was the first of the three Enclosure Commissioners; an experienced architect, surveyor and map-maker of Cambridge, he was well placed to secure an advantageous area in which to build a house. The largest acreage of the West Fields had been apportioned to a number of Cambridge colleges. Jacob Smith, the second largest private landowner of the parish of St Giles, had a 33-acre allotment in three pieces; in 1811 he sold 15 acres adjacent to the



Present-day map of Fitzwilliam College. © Master, Fellows and Scholars of Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge.

Huntingdon Way to William Custance, who built his residence, The Grove, in 1812-13. It was a fine Regency House of yellow Cambridge brick with a slate roof and an attractive verandah; Baker's Map of 1830 shows The Grove estate, in isolation in the newly enclosed field. To the west it suggests a large area of pasture and then a more central house and formal garden with an orchard to the south (Fig 1, following page).

Charles Darwin's widow, Emma, moved from Kent to Cambridge and bought The Grove estate, where she lived from 1883 to 1896. One of her granddaughters, Margaret Keynes wrote, 'The house lies to the south of Huntingdon Road and stands half-hidden by big trees at the further edge of the field in which The Grove cows used to graze.' Gwen Raverat, another granddaughter, remembered visiting The Grove, 'It was surrounded by great park-like meadows and here both Uncle Frank and Uncle Horace built themselves houses: Wychfield

Fig. 1a. Detail from Baker's map of 1830 showing the Grove estate bordering an otherwise undeveloped Huntingdon Road, outside the Toll Bar.

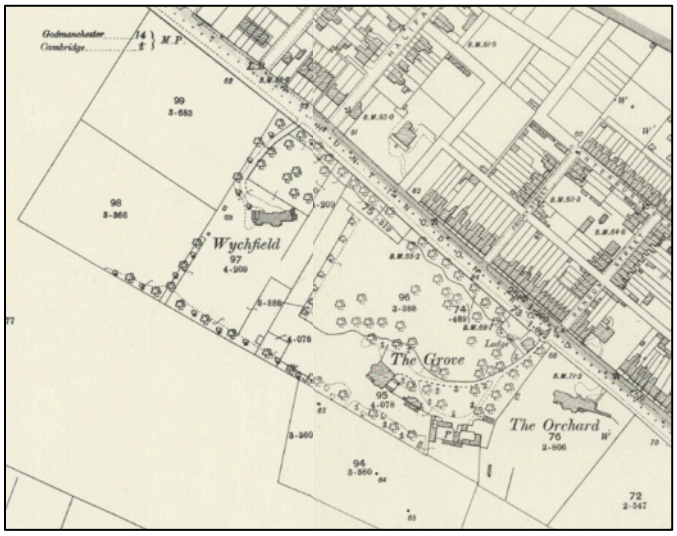


Fig. 1b. The Grove, as mapped by OS in 1901 and published in the 1903 25" series. The northern side of Huntingdon Road is developed and The Grove has been joined by Wychfield and The Orchard. © National Library of Scotland.

and The Orchard. It was a lovely place, where the children and Grandmama's cows and carriage-horses, and Frances's donkeys all wandered about under the trees' (Fig. 1b). Emma Darwin gave her two sons plots upon which to build; today Wychfield is owned by Trinity Hall, and Horace's daughters, one of whom was the distinguished plantswoman Nora Barlow, gave The Orchard to New Hall (now Murray Edwards College). The latter college has retained for its use The Grove Lodge with its entrance on the Huntingdon Road.

Emma Darwin developed an attractive Victorian garden around The Grove, 'being the very place for an old person, such nooks and corners for shelter and seats.' She wrote, 'I never saw such a display of primroses anywhere especially under each of the beech trees; they were like a carpet.' And her daughter Henrietta said that The Grove 'had old walls and spreading wych-elms which gave it charm and individuality.' To the east of the house were a kitchen garden, a stable block with sundial, and greenhouses. Margaret Keynes recalled that Ida Darwin's garden 'abuts on the kitchen garden of The Grove' and this area is shared between Fitzwilliam and Murray Edwards Colleges with the greenhouses and stables in the latter's ownership (as are the remnants of The Grove's orchard).

In 1958 a rectangular site between Wychfield and The Orchard was secured for building residential accommodation for the students of Fitzwilliam House, but it was not until 1988 that The Grove and a fenced area of its garden were purchased after the death of its elderly resident.

THE COLLEGE GARDENS AND THEIR DEVELOPMENT, 1966-2020

Sir Denys Lasdun's plan for the College was restricted to the northern part of the site and the construction of two courts, Fellows' and Tree, separated by the Hall and with an entrance on Huntingdon Road, 1960-63. His intention was to develop a spiral or snail-shell idea with a centrally placed block of public rooms as a focal point around which a community could evolve. It was modified when further funds permitted the acquisition of The Grove and the building by MacCormac, Jamieson and Prichard of New Court, 1985 and the Chapel, 1991.

Opportunities for the development of gardens prompted the college to ask its then Head Gardener, Andrew Peters, to prepare plans to link the mature garden of The Grove to the other buildings and to landscape a larger area. Lasdun had retained many of The Grove's wych elms and beeches; Peters retained The Grove's mature Victorian garden around the house rather than allowing the lawn to flow up to its walls. He introduced shrubs and climbers in planters to Fellows' Court and he made large beds around the Hall, planted with drifts and clumps of buddleias and yuccas to give structure above salvias, phlox, achilleas and asters. The hedged formal garden of The Grove was augmented on its eastern side with ornamental potagers with tulips in spring and summer flowers. In the New Court he developed panels of lawns and shrubs on the south side of the Chapel and a packed winter border along its northern wall, under-planted with heather together with cornus, witch-hazel, viburnum and epimedium. By the early 1990s Peters had integrated a Victorian woodland garden into a modernist college setting.

Further building during the last 25 years changed the orientation of the college. At last the college acquired an impressive entrance in the south from Storey's Way, opposite the Master's Lodge; this house, adapted from Atholl Lodge built in 1931, has a garden enclosed by a yew hedge and possesses a fine copper beech (Fig. 2). The new gateway is linked to the mature lime tree avenue which had provided access to The Grove from Storey's Way (Fig. 3). Wilson Court,

Fig. 2. The Master's Lodge, with copper beech and yew hedge. Image capture 2015 by Google street scene.

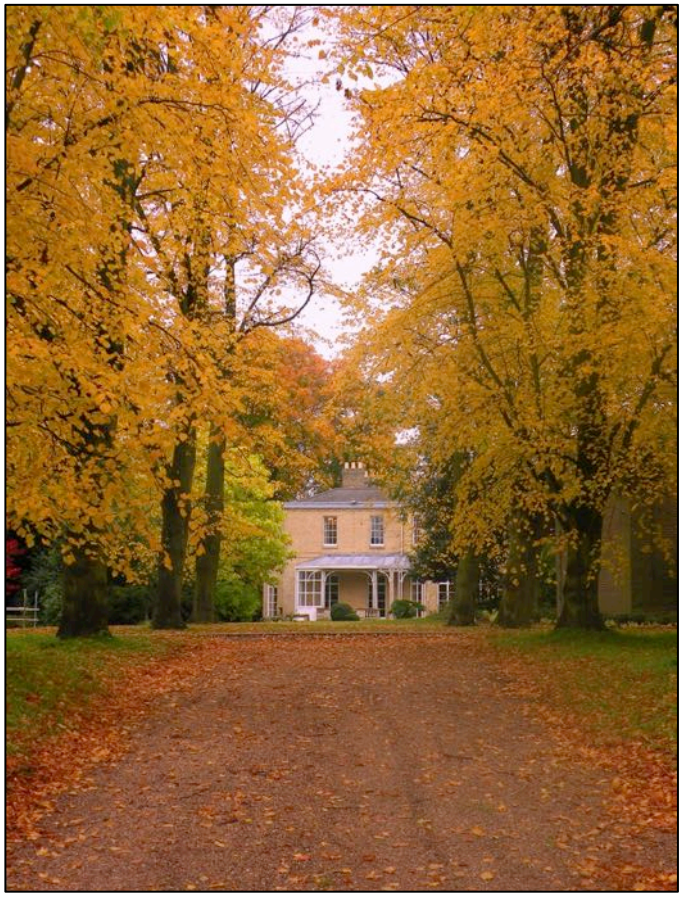


Photo by Alison Carter.

Fig. 3. The lime tree avenue leading to The Grove. Reproduced with permission of Fitzwilliam College, University of Cambridge.

1994, was built in the south-eastern corner of the site and the new complex of Porter's Lodge and cloistered walk designed by Allies and Morrison, 2003, together with their free-standing Auditorium, constructed in brick similar to that of The Grove, created a new Gatehouse Court. Finally, in 2009 Ted Cullinan designed the much-needed Olisa Library matching Lasdun's adjacent wing in Tree Court. These buildings provided a structure for the present Head Gardener, Steve Kidger and his team to continue the evolution of this most attractive college garden; a mixture of modern, naturalistic and traditional planting.

THE GARDENS TODAY

The Garden Committee of seventeen give strong support to the ideas of Steve Kidger and his team of four, who have moved away from relying on herbicides and pesticides to more sustainable methods. They have gained University environmental awards and, this year 2020, have received a Hedgehog Friendly Campus Bronze Award. Steve reported, 'Over the year we have established hedgehog-friendly habitat, hog hotels and feeding stations in the college grounds.'

The Storey's Way Entrance and Gatehouse Court

Since 2003 the gardeners have used the opportunity afforded by the new entrance and related new buildings to make a dramatic development of the grounds of the southern part of Fitzwilliam's site. From Storey's Way the entry path is flanked by Colletia cruciata and the summer beds are planted with red-hot pokers and devil's tobacco. Inside the court, primulas and dicentras grow among ferns, and autumn cyclamen flower under the copper beech. To the west, Steve Kidger explains 'When Professor Lethbridge took on the Mastership in 2005 we established a kitchen garden adjacent to the Master's Lodge garden, providing herbs and vegetables for the Lodge. We based its style on a French potager, mixing ornamental plants and flowers with the productive vegetables, so that the vegetable garden becomes more than just an allotment, but can be viewed as a decorative addition to the wider garden, drawing in pollinators to help set fruit and beneficial insects to assist us in controlling pests.' There are tubs of tulips to the east of the Gatehouse and the path is lined with yew hedges as backdrop to a range of plants offset by ornamental grasses and mounds of pittosporum and the vivid blue Ceratostigma willmottianum. A straight cloistered walk to the glass-walled, free-standing Auditorium creates an enclosed court.

The Sunken Garden

To the east from the Gatehouse towards the Auditorium a low bridge crosses a wide depression creating the illusion of a stream. This 'planted moat' uses fountain grass and blue agapanthus to mimic water. A large area of plum-coloured pittosporum 'reflects' the crown of the copper beech. Across the bridge an avenue of century-old limes leads to The Grove (Fig. 3); in Spring, chionodoxa, snakes-head fritillaries and wild daffodils grow in its grassy banks.

New Court

An earlier infestation of the chafer beetle in the lawns offered a new opportunity to the gardeners. 'We have used a more formal geometric arrangement utilizing box hedging to define the rectangular planting spaces, inspiration having been taken from the formal gardens of Villandry in the Loire Valley. The planting scheme has pumpkins, leeks and rainbow chard as the vegetable element with begonia, santolina and scabious as the

Fig. 4. Chard (above) and pumpkins (below) form the vegetable element in New Court. Reproduced with permission of Fitzwilliam College, University of Cambridge.

colour complement' (Fig. 4). The vegetables are harvested in the Michaelmas term and used by the College chefs. 'This garden style, together with extensive wild flower planting has transformed the aesthetic of the Court and addresses environmental concerns about biodiversity and sustainability.'

Fellows' and Tree Courts

Moving along the western boundary beyond the Chapel, the paved Fellows' Court offers an austere contrast with its gingko trees and tubs around doorways planted with sarcococca and alliums. Beyond the Hall and along the boundaries of Tree Court Emma Darwin's beeches still stand; there is new planting of woodrush and brunnera. The two lawns hold English and North American oaks and are edged by gypsophila and kolkwitzia bushes. There is a wide mixed border with Mediterranean plants, suitable for hot and dry conditions, and the enclosing three-storey walls of the Court contain purple sages, euphorbias, begonias and olearias (Fig. 5).

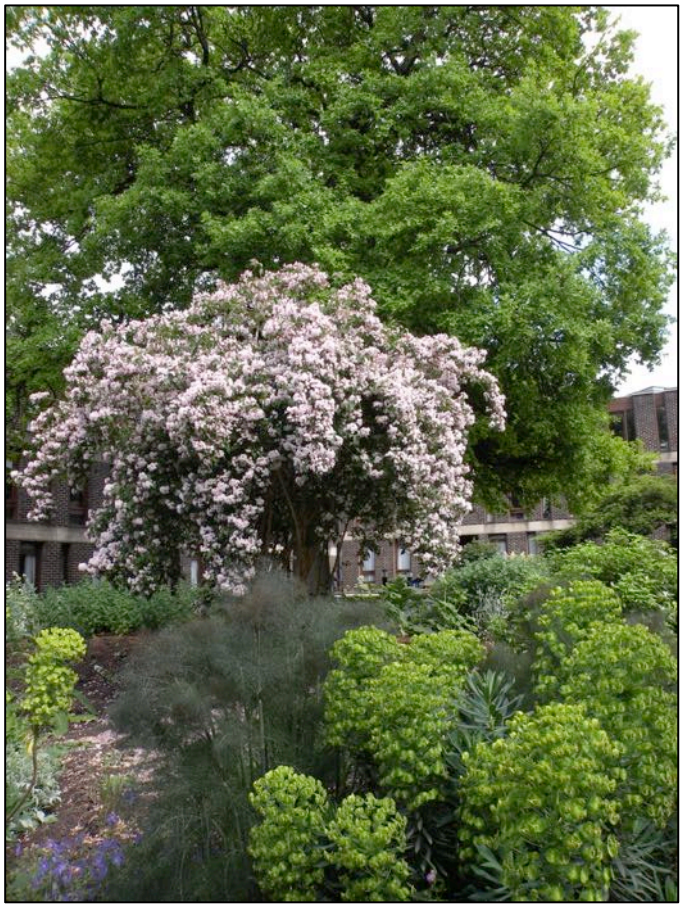


Photo by Alison Carter.

Fig. 5. The planting in Andrew Peters' Tree Court. Reproduced with permission of Fitzwilliam College, University of Cambridge.

Adjacent to Tree Court is Fitzwilliam's latest addition, the Olisa Library and a new landscape (Fig. 6). Rudbeckia and pampas grass follow the tower's curve. A triangular bed holds a number of Cornus controversa Variegata trees with echinacea for summer colour. Osmanthus and Viburnum burkwoodii grow here.

The Grove

The house is Grade II listed (Fig. 7). Its stair hall retains original William Morris wallpaper. Today it is Fitzwilliam's central feature; within are the Master's dining room, college offices and the Middle Combination Room for its post-graduate

Photo by John Cleaver.

Fig. 6. The beds flanking the recent Olisa Library building. Reproduced with permission of Fitzwilliam College, University of Cambridge.

students. Initially the College was built in The Grove's garden, today The Grove is the College's garden. It is sited on a slight mound and approached from the west up a few steps. The plane tree between the Chapel and The Grove is over 200 years old. The climbing rose and snail-shaped topiaries by the verandah are newer additions. Triangular beds of a parterre radiate from a central sundial and are planted in cottage style with English sage and heliotrope (Fig. 8). To this formal garden an eastern more open border has been developed with a planting of penstemons, phlox, day-lilies and geums around a central

Photo by Nicola Collenette.

Fig. 7. The Grove, viewed from the east with the MCR extension. Reproduced with permission of Fitzwilliam College, University of Cambridge.

Photo by Steve Kidger.

Fig. 8. Triangular beds and sundial in front of The Grove. Reproduced with permission of Fitzwilliam College, University of Cambridge.

prunus Praecox. The gardeners have achieved a clever blurring of the garden edges and central lawn with the buildings of the College, skilfully using trees and shrubs as screens with vistas and planting suitable to its woodland setting. A shrubbery walk on the eastern side of The Grove contains flowering cherries, hellebores and ferns planted in the overgrown box plantation among the yews.

Wilson Court, 1994

This building in the south-east stands within The Grove's mature trees. A summer border lies hidden behind the court along the boundary with Murray Edwards College. Euphorbias line the path returning to Gatehouse Court. A Japanese Maple is a point of focus growing in a small lawn, with salvias in flanking beds (Fig. 9).

Photo by Steve Kidger.

Fig. 9. Autumnal view of the Japanese maple in Wilson Court. Reproduced with permission of Fitzwilliam College, University of Cambridge.

The Eastern Boundary

Behind the Library is a meadow planted with native trees including Scots Pine. Behind Wilson Court are Fitzwilliam's community allotments established in 2015. Raised beds offer members of the college the chance to cultivate their own plots (Fig. 10). They were the inspiration for the potager in New Court.

Fig. 10. Student allotments. Reproduced with permission of Fitzwilliam College, University of Cambridge.

These attractive gardens have evolved over a period of 60 years; they are little known but are a most worthy addition to Cambridge college gardens.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Charles Malyon, May 2020

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DISCUSSION OF 'ONE MAN WENT TO MOW; A POINT OF VIEW'

JUDY ROSSITER TREATED US to a thought-provoking, beautifully written piece in the May edition of our Newsletter (vol 48, p 5-6) on the management of 'lawn'. Fate has delivered up further valuable information and reflections on lawns or meadows from two Head Gardeners, Joakim Seiler (Gunnebo House, outside Gothenburg) and Steve Coghill (King's College, Cambridge). I'd like to explore what Judy said about the care of grass close to high status buildings in the context of these two men's work and their views on what it is like for others to live at, work in, or visit their sites.

My understanding from these gentlemen's presentations (see below for links) gives these answers to her question 'How would we feel, as visitors to these sites, to find the grass uncut and possibly looking rather untidy?'

In brief:

Seiler The grass and other plants (the space would become biodiverse) wouldn't be uncut, they would be scythed with an appropriate frequency for the local growing conditions (about three-weekly at Gunnebo in western Sweden). It would look perfectly acceptable, and visitors would actively enjoy the quiet and inherent interest of the methods used to tend the gardens. His prediction for ten years' time is that stately homes will be using robots or scything for their grass. People using power mowers will be a thing of the past.

Coghill Several months of the year the northern part of the sown area west of the chapel and Gibbs Building ('the Back Lawn') would be floriferous with a mixture of annual and perennial flowers and native grasses. It would be mowed once a year with a power mower, at Lammastide. For a few weeks in August it would look brown but then it would green up so from a distance it would be easy on the eye and would only look 'characterful' (but interesting!) from close up. Visitors liked what they were able to see of it in 2020. In four years' time the Gardens Committee of the college will decide whether to return the wildflower/hay meadow to formal lawn or whether to spread the meadow across the whole space. Steve hopes for the latter. St John's College has some of this year's King's seed and is going to create a hay meadow in the Wilderness. They are two of the several organisations whose aim is to create an ecological corridor through the middle of Cambridge.

GUNNEBO HOUSE

To elaborate the summary above with more detail, an introduction to Gunnebo (link below) might help. It is a late-18C landscape. The house, garden, park and farm were conceived as one entity, a ferme ornée, by Carl Wilhelm Carlberg for the then owner, a Gothenburg merchant called John Hall. Carlberg, who also designed Gothenburg Cathedral, had recently returned there from a European Grand Tour. Gunnebo is currently owned by the City of Mölndal, which runs the whole site as a museum and cultural centre. Seiler's academic reading of 18C gardening books from Sweden and elsewhere, including the UK, has sought to answer the question *How did they do it back then?* and the practical work in which he has been leading his team has addressed the *How shall we do it now?* issue (Seiler's italics).

Fig. 1a. Sketch by John Hall the Younger of Gunnebo House showing scythe and hay rake as used in the late 18C (Seiler 2020). Photo: Röhsska Museum of Design and Craft.

Fig. 1b. Joakim Seiler scything the grass at Gunnebo House in the 21C. Photo: Malin Arnesson.

Seiler worked back and forth between historical sources (books and museum objects) and craft experiments. The craft work was often videoed while the craftsperson spoke a commentary about what they were doing, why, and how it felt, and the experience of doing it was meticulously recorded in diaries, with before-and-after stills of the results. This process has convinced him that the optimal way to manage the lawns close around the house at Gunnebo is by scything (Fig. 1). Seiler rejects what he terms *the management regime of the heritage garden*, which was in use by the municipality of Mölndal. I think he would say this is what the National Trust, English Heritage and many other historic high-status site owners do. Mölndal did seek to revive the 18C at Gunnebo, but he feels that the previous regime produced a 'heritagized' image of a past time. In the 18C the ideals, style and craft were modern and future oriented. Today this approach is a historical enterprise oriented to the past. They are not, and cannot be, the same. Seiler calls his own approach, which he started to experiment with eight years ago, *the regime of meaningful management.* In this 'craft is not only a means to preserve historic gardens, to look back over history and to define values based on tangible and intangible cultural historical qualities' but also 'a meaningful activity in its own right for people of today. It encourages quality and combines good practices from different pasts with contemporary concerns for biodiversity and

Fig. 2. The proud owner of this traditional hay rake (cf Fig. 1a) seems to have nipped into the kitchen for a refreshing mug of tea… *Photo: Antony Warren.*

sustainability as well as people's sense of heritage and interest in learning from the past.'

He acknowledges that using manual tools requires more skill than using power tools. I liked what Seiler said in his public PhD defence about his 'time gap' apprenticeship to John Abercrombie, by using his 1767 book, co-authored with Thomas Mawe, *Every man his own gardener* to learn how to use scythes, pruning hooks and so on. He also handled tools in the Nordic Museum in Stockholm to understand tacit information about, for instance, the feel of the angle of a scythe handle and the angle of the blade to the ground. Seiler worked with a blacksmith to make individual new tools, bought second-hand ones, and bought new mass-made ones when he could track them down. With the blacksmith he studied illustrations from a 1754 book by Peter Lundberg (Seiler 2020: p246) which has a tool chart, sadly without measurements. So they made a handle of a billhook using Seiler's hand as the pattern, then made the blade in proportion.

He confirms that it is possible to learn/discover the method for scything well - preparation of the grass the previous early evening, then scything in the morning while the dew is still on it so the grass blades are heavy against the scythe blade; getting a feel for how frequently to stop and resharpen the scythe blade, and what it actually feels like to do that competently - without having a live tutor.

As with any craft skill, one gets more proficient with practice - beautiful effect, fast. They have discovered that scything about every three weeks through the growing season suits the lawn close around Gunnebo House. Through the whole season, this requires no more person-hours of labour than the *regime of heritage gardening* did, uses no petrol or electricity, and needs much less capital investment in equipment. Gunnebo is a favourite trip out from Gothenburg for many people: visitors report liking the use of hand tools in the garden. They appreciate the quietness in contrast to power tools and no longer feel excluded by noise from areas of the garden where the gardeners are working. They find the results of hand tool use aesthetically pleasing and are excited by the increased biodiversity.

KING'S COLLEGE MEADOW

Coghill and the King's Garden Committee's results and analysis are much less mature. The hay meadow was prepared and sown in September 2019 with a mixture of annual and perennial wildflower seeds and native grasses from Emorsgate Seeds of Tilney All Saints. The first stage of the archaeology and historical study of the site reminded people that the area, near the river, was part of the heart of Viking and Medieval Cambridge before it was 'compulsorily purchased' by Henry VI. There was a church and graveyard on part of it, and it only became formal lawn in 1772. The burial ground tallies with the superficially unusual soil analysis which showed high levels of phosphate in the subsoil. Given wildflowers' preference for nutrient-poor soil the team were careful not to bring the phosphate up as they prepared the area (full details of soil preparation and sowing technique are on the YouTube presentation, link below). The soil comprises sands, silts and large amounts of organic matter. It is a meadow, not pasture or lawn, because it is mowed once a year, at Lammastide, and no chemicals are used (hogweed, docks and thistles are pulled up because they will out-compete the wildflowers in the relatively high-nutrient soil). Anyone wishing to compare the three sorts of 'grass' on a very short walk can look at the formal lawn (frequently close mown, chemicals used) in Front Court, pass the hay meadow, go over the river and see the pasture (grazed, naturally fertilized, no chemicals) that is Scholars' Piece.

The aims for this hay meadow are to be aesthetically pleasing, and so improve human wellbeing, and to be a small but highly visible step towards increasing biodiversity and reducing carbon dioxide emissions. Research and education are the raison d'être of King's College and so the meadow is being monitored by Dr Cicely Marshall, Prof. Geoff Moggridge and others from the points of view of botany and ecology, and the archaeology is being further studied. Thus, it seems to be on course to become one of the most intensively studied newly created meadows ever. Monitoring the wellness of those living and working with the meadow has been slowed because so few people could interact with it during summer 2020 (Fig. 3): the plan is to mow paths through it and install benches to tempt people to stroll in and wind down while enjoying its beauty. As well as being supplied to St John's, some of the 2020 seed harvest went back to Emorsgate, and some was said to be on sale at The Shop at King's, but there wasn't any available when I tried to buy some two days after the presentation.

The baseline plant species survey in 2019 showed a species density of 4.2 per square quarter metre with 22 species in total. These rose in 2020 to 11.2 and 64 respectively. Sweep netting for insects showed nine species per 20 paces rising to 13, and the total number of species going up from 22 to 29, with

Photo by Geoff Moggridge.

Fig. 3. The new meadow with King's Chapel and the Gibbs Building in the background as at June 2020. Photo reproduced by permission of King's College, University of Cambridge.

concomitant improvements for pollinators and moths specifically (Fig. 4). Pitfall traps for invertebrates (which appear to be tiny versions of Pooh's Heffalump traps, or even tinier versions of the trap into which David Douglas of Douglas-fir fame fell to his death in Hawaii in 1834) caught an average of 3.6 species per trap in 2019, and results for 2020, in hand now, look promising. Covid will make it difficult for undergraduates in relevant disciplines to go on field trips, so they are likely to be recruited to 'meadow studies'. The bees whose hives are in the corner of Scholars' Pieces certainly produced a bumper crop of honey in 2020.

Photo by Geoff Moggridge.

Fig. 4. A pollinator busy on the new King's meadow. Photo reproduced by permission of King's College, University of Cambridge.

Steve Coghill, Cicely Marshall and Geoff Moggridge, the latter a member of King's Gardens Committee, hope that the decision in four years' time will be to spread the meadow all the way across the Back Lawn: they say that public reaction will feed into the decision, so they encourage us - and anyone else with a view - to send in feedback.

So, back to Judy's question: How would we feel, as visitors to these sites, to find the grass uncut and possibly looking rather untidy?' My personal answer would be: spiritually uplifted and intellectually stimulated by the combination of beauty and knowledge of what was going on beyond that which my eyes were seeing, ears hearing and nose smelling.

And I'll finish my reflections on grass with the memory of a rather sad, sour passage in Gwen Raverat's *Period Piece*, about Queens' Green. She describes what she regarded as the Borough's sacrilegious levelling of Queens' Green, opposite her childhood home of Newnham Grange, as a tragedy. Apparently, before it was raised to match the levels of Silver Street and Queen's Road it was the most gorgeous, even, green old pasture, grazed over centuries.

Gin Warren, October 2020

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A POINT OF VIEW: BEING FEMALE CONFINES YOU TO THE FOOTNOTES OF BOTH GARDEN HISTORY AND PRACTICAL HORTICULTURE

EARLIER IN THE YEAR there was a copy of Caroline Criado-Perez' book *Invisible Women* on my adult daughter's kitchen table. I speed-read much of it with a weary sense of déjà vu: the publicised 'classic' heart attack symptoms being the ones men characteristically get, IT design being intuitive for men, pink-handled disposable razors costing more than blue or black, etc.; you get the idea. The chapter that arrested my attention started with several paragraphs about the paucity of sensibly sized grand pianos in major concert halls, and the frustrated careers of women virtuosi. How much great piano music can you not play with aplomb if you have normal female hands?

It left me wanting to encourage CGT to found, and you all to contribute to, a list and a directory. The list would be practically useful to many of us, being about realistically-sized garden tools. The directory would be about women-in-garden-history. In my dreams, we would have a policy of always mentioning these women first before relevant men in articles and presentations, in order to start redressing the balance of centuries. I considered including, when known, the number of pregnancies each woman had gone through, and the number of children they had raised, as a key complementary part of their activity and the reason women generally have had less opportunity to make their mark on the outside world. But I decided that was condescending. Please reply with your views on that thought and do send in additions and corrections. Here goes, to get us started!

GARDENING EQUIPMENT LIST

The rarity of 7/8th grand pianos set me thinking how grateful I was to discover, just a few years ago, that it was possible to buy:

- **gardening gloves** that didn't have stiff, protruding finger-ends and clumsy wrists (**Jayco's Ladies Tough Touch**);
- **Secateurs** which don't exhaust me and give me cramp (**Felco 6**);
- **Trousers**, with plenty of pockets of varying natures, built-in knee pads, and a waterproof seat, that are cut to have hips and a waist (**Genus** range).

The author's secateurs and gloves, contrasted with their unhelpful predecessors, lying on a background of her nine-pocket (two even knife-proof!) trousers on a mown path in her meadow.

Searching the internet brings up some patronising (suspect word, that - it's men giving in to a tendency to expect obeisance and gratitude, isn't it?) gestures on the tools-for-practical-horticulture front: Florabrite, for instance, make pink-handled secateurs for we girlies. Unfortunately, they weigh 300 g which suggests they are just men's ones in a bit of disguise. My genuinely female-friendly Felco 6s are only 220 g. Why do so many designers and manufacturers have trouble grasping the difference between presentation and substance?

DIRECTORY OF PEOPLE - A STARTER TO CONVEY THE IDEA

I thank Dr Deborah Reid for telling me about the women marked* in her lecture at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh on her PhD thesis *The Role and Influence of Scottish Women Gardeners 1800-1930*, given on 9th March 2019.

The Hon. Alicia Amherst aka Mrs Evelyn Cecil aka Lady Rockley of Lytchett Heath aka Baroness Rockley. Active late 19C / early 20C. Arguably the first garden historian, also a gardener, and someone who tried to improve others' lives. Noteworthy as the author of, for instance, *A History of Gardening in England* (1896), *Children's Gardens* (1902), *London Parks and Gardens* (1907), and for succeeding in talking her way into Trinity College library as a young gel with, apparently, no connection with Trinity or the University. She worked on *The Feate* of Jon the Gardener, amongst others of their holdings.

GB/PERS/F/002, Gertrude Bell Archive, Newcastle University Library.

Gertrude Bell (on camel in front of sphinx) at the Cairo Conference 1921, with Churchill on her right and T.E. Lawrence on her left. Photo G.M. Georgoulas, published under Creative Commons CC BY-SA 4.0 licence.

Gertrude Bell. Active early 20C. Garden owner. Noteworthy for her Rock Garden, and also for her exploration, diplomacy and espionage in the Middle East.

Sue Biggs. Active currently. Director General of the Royal Horticultural Society and thereby leading, among other responsibilities, the development of RHS Bridgewater. Community input is very important at this garden in Salford which will open in May 2021. [https://www.rhs.org.uk/gardens/bridgewater]

Georgina Binnie-Clark*. Active late 19C and early 20C. Noteworthy for introducing women market gardeners and settlers to Saskatchewan and onward to the rest of Canada. *See Turner, J.S.*

Mary Elizabeth Burton*. Active late 19C and first half of 20C. Professional gardener. Heriot-Watt College evening classes were open to women, so she studied geology, botany, agriculture and chemistry. She was initially (1886) appointed to interest the women patients at Mavisbank Institution for the Nervous in gardening, but soon became the first woman head gardener in Scotland. She achieved membership of the Scottish Horticultural Association in 1900 and became its first female president in 1920.

Elizabeth Capell aka Elizabeth Dormer, Countess of Carnarvon, sister to Mary *q.v.* Active late 17C. Botanical artist.

Mary Capell aka Mary Somerset, Duchess of Beaufort, sister to Elizabeth *q.v.* Active late 17C. Plantswoman, botanist and garden owner twice-over, herbarium compiler and florilegium commissioner. Noteworthy for her stove at Badminton and sunken garden in Chelsea, and her plants from the West Indies, Virginia and the Cape of Good Hope.

Beth Chatto. Active late 20C. Plantswoman and nursery owner. Noteworthy for her 'dry garden' in Essex.

Eleanor Coade. Active late 18C and early 19C. Manufacturer of 'Lithodipyra' or Coade Stone. Noteworthy for her commercial and production engineering skills: her products (neoclassical statues, architectural decorations and garden ornaments) are to be found widely in the UK, having proved very durable.

The South Bank Lion is a Coade stone sculpture of a standing male lion cast in 1837.

Another of her lions which members might know is on the Lion Gate at Kew Gardens, in a different pose. But this one, originally from a set made for Goding's Lion Brewery in Lambeth, has special links with Cambridge. The wooden original was for some time to be seen, painted red, in Lion Yard. It is now with the University Rugby Club in Grange Road. This is fitting as another of the set, at Twickenham, was covered in gold leaf when England hosted the 1991 World Cup.

Mary Delany. Active late 18C. Maker of botanical 'paper mosaicks' or collages. Noteworthy for inventing this technique and also for her shell work, fine drawing and painting. She improved her own garden in Dublin, and then that of the Duchess of Portland in Buckinghamshire.

Norah Geddes*. Active first half of 20C. Landscape gardener/architect and social activist. Worked on, for example, Edinburgh Old Town and Dublin slums, introducing green spaces, children's nurseries and playgrounds. Noteworthy for her 1913 design for Edinburgh Zoo.

Beatrix Havergal. Active mid 20C. Garden owner, designer and horticultural educator. Noteworthy for establishing a School of Horticulture for Ladies at Waterperry near Oxford, which ran from 1932 to 1971.

Hildegard of Bingen. Active 12C. German Benedictine abbess, writer, composer, theologian, Christian mystic, visionary, and polymath of the High Middle Ages. Proto-ecologist who spotted the relationship between growth force of the earth and human health: *viriditas*.

Isobel Wylie Hutchison*. Active first three-quarters of 20C. Plant collector in Iceland, Greenland, Alaska and the Yukon Territories. Noteworthy for collecting the Arctic Poppy (she tended to collect new varieties of known species); for declaring the chap with whom, with their dogs, she once spent seven weeks in a one-room cabin in Alaska to be 'a perfect gentleman'; and having been on the Aleutian Islands when the Japanese invaded in 1942.

Gertrude Jekyll. Active late 19C and early 20C. Garden designer and writer. Noteworthy for her Arts and Crafts gardens, for soothing the late 19C architect v gardener battle for influence, and for developing the career of Edwin Lutyens whom she met as a young architect with potential.

https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/nicholson-miss-jekylls-gardening-boots-n05548

'Miss Jekyll's Gardening Boots' by Sir William Nicholson, 1920. In 1920, Gertrude Jekyll was 76 and 'quite difficult'. It is said that Nicholson painted this picture of her boots while he was waiting the opportunity of a sitting. Published under Creative Commons Licence CC-BY-NC-ND 3.0 (unported). Photo © Tate Images.

Empress Josephine. Active early 19C. Garden owner. Noteworthy for her extensive collection of hybridised roses at

the Château de Malmaison. Said to have catalysed France's becoming the centre of rose hybridisation. The skill of French gardeners in doing this was noted in 1902 by Mrs Evelyn Cecil, aka Alicia Amherst *q.v.* in her useful volume *Children's Gardens*.

The Ladies of Llangollen: Lady Eleanor Butler and Miss Sarah Ponsonby. Active late 18C and early 19C. Noteworthy for their creation of a picturesque garden at Plâs Newydd in Llangollen, and for their wide ranging political and cultural friends and acquaintanceships.

Jane Loudon. Active early and mid 19C. Writer and editor, with her husband, of books and periodicals about plants, gardens and gardening. Specialised in books intended to give women confidence in gardening. Noteworthy as a very early science fiction writer, and for twice having pulled herself out of penury that others had caused her.

Queen Mary II. Active late 17C. Plantswoman and garden owner. Noteworthy for her collection of tender exotics and the stoves she had built at Hampton Court to accommodate them. Plants supplied by the Dutch East India Company.

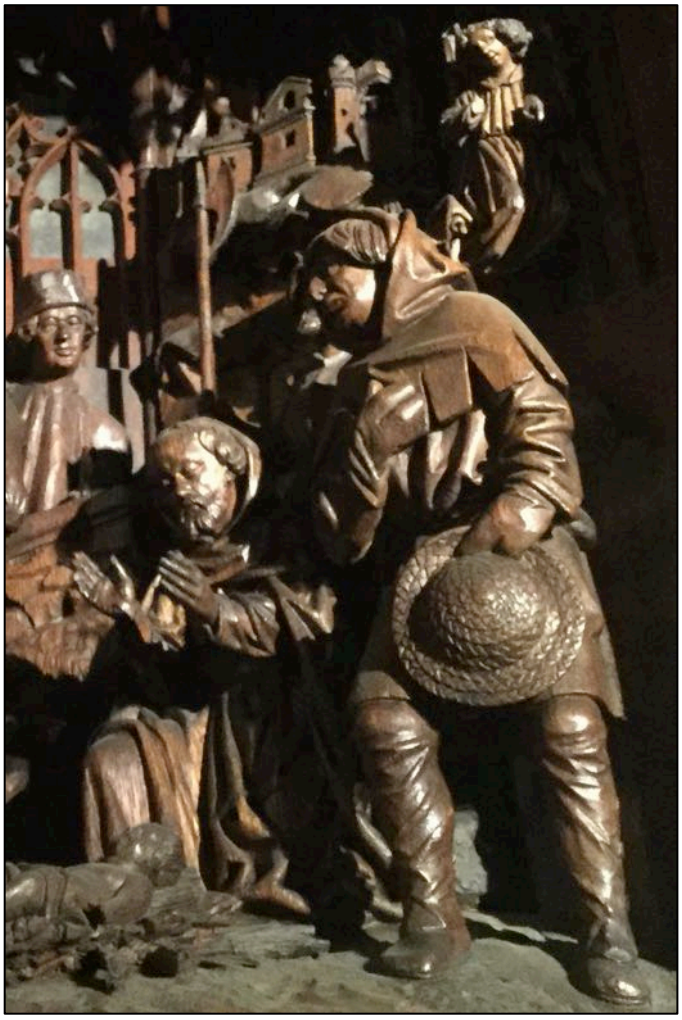
Jane Percy, Duchess of Northumberland. Active currently. Her possibly unique achievement has been an aristocratic reworking of the dilapidated garden by a famous castle in the 21C, stimulating her local economy in Alnwick, and creating a lasting source of pleasure and interest for visitors. The Poison Garden (opened 2005) is perhaps the biggest draw for the public.

Portrait of Christian Ramsay beside a water-colour of a flower and a bird.

Christian Ramsay aka Countess Dalhousie*. Active first half of 19C. Botanist and plant collector in Nova Scotia, South Africa and India. Sent plants back to William Hooker at Glasgow and Joseph Archibald at Dalhousie Castle. Noteworthy as an educationalist and caricaturist, for her personal herbarium (300 specimens are now in the Royal Botanic Gardens, Ontario), as a talented watercolourist and for being said to have died on Dean Bridge in Edinburgh with a list of plants in her hand.

Vita Sackville-West aka Lady Nicolson. Active mid-20C. Garden owner and plantswoman; novelist, poet and journalist. Noteworthy for her extensive social connections, including being Virginia Woolf's lover.

Miss J.S. Turner*. Active late 19C - early 20C. Principal of horticultural training schools for women. Noteworthy for being superintendent of The Glynde College for Lady Gardeners and then Principal of the Arlesey House Country and Colonial Training School for Ladies. She prepared women to run their own garden, a market garden or even a farm, with a focus on the then British colonies. She had most success in settling women in Canada, with the help of Georgina Binnie-Clark of Saskatchewan *q.v.*



One of the shepherds visiting Christ on Radwinter church reredos, wearing 'glovens' or 'mivves'.

Photo: Antony Warren.

Weeding Women. Active throughout history until the advent of chemical control measures. Often un-named, and routinely paid less than the most junior male gardener, they apparently protected their hands with garments which were a cross between gloves and mittens. Such garments can be seen in the early 16C reredos at St Mary the Virgin, Radwinter in Essex.

The publication of *Invisible Women* is part of a bigger trend; the University of Oxford has just set up what they believe to be the world's first ever professorial chair in Women's History. Hillary Rodham Clinton has lent her name to it, and Professor Brenda Stevenson looks as if she will make an impact. The Zoom Introduction and Q&A I saw suggests her prime interest would be in the Weeding Women, were she to turn her attention to women in gardening.

So, is CGT ready to work on eliminating the bias of centuries?

Gin Warren
October 2020

RAMSEY WALLED GARDEN DURING THE PANDEMIC

AS MEMBERS KNOW the restoration of Ramsey Abbey Walled Kitchen Garden was initiated by Cambridgeshire Gardens Trust. Although a separate charitable trust, the link has been retained with four trustees also being members of CGT. All work is done by volunteers.

After a very wet autumn and winter 2019, we were already behind in the garden and then the lockdown due to Coronavirus was initiated in March 2020. Apart from concern about the country, my first reaction was of panic – what would happen to the garden? Volunteers have spent about 20 years working in the garden, slowly removing the overgrowth and bringing the garden back to life. We all know how quickly gardens can go back to nature; what would happen if we were all 'locked in' with essential trips only? Almost immediately, the government decided that visiting allotments was allowed so, after spending years explaining that the Walled Garden was an attractive garden not a series of allotments, we had to temporarily change our definition. One of our volunteers found hidden on a government website, that one could go to 'work' for charitable projects when that work could not be done at home. Clearly weeding, planting potatoes and onions and pruning trees cannot be done at home.

Some volunteers were unable to attend as they were shielding, caring for children or living with older relatives, but a small core were only too happy to attend our normal twice-weekly sessions. We came to a decision that a maximum of six people working in the garden at any one time felt about right so we could easily keep out of each other's way. Coffee breaks were discontinued and we all worked by ourselves rather than companionably chatting with a colleague when working on the same piece of ground. Then we had that beautiful weather which made lockdown easier for those of us lucky enough to have gardens and also for us with our Walled Garden. The only downside to the lovely weather was that we had to water so much and that we had problems with newly germinated seeds shrivelling up in the hot sun in the greenhouse. As a key holder, I made my allowed daily exercise outing to the Walled Garden, mainly to water and to plant vegetables.

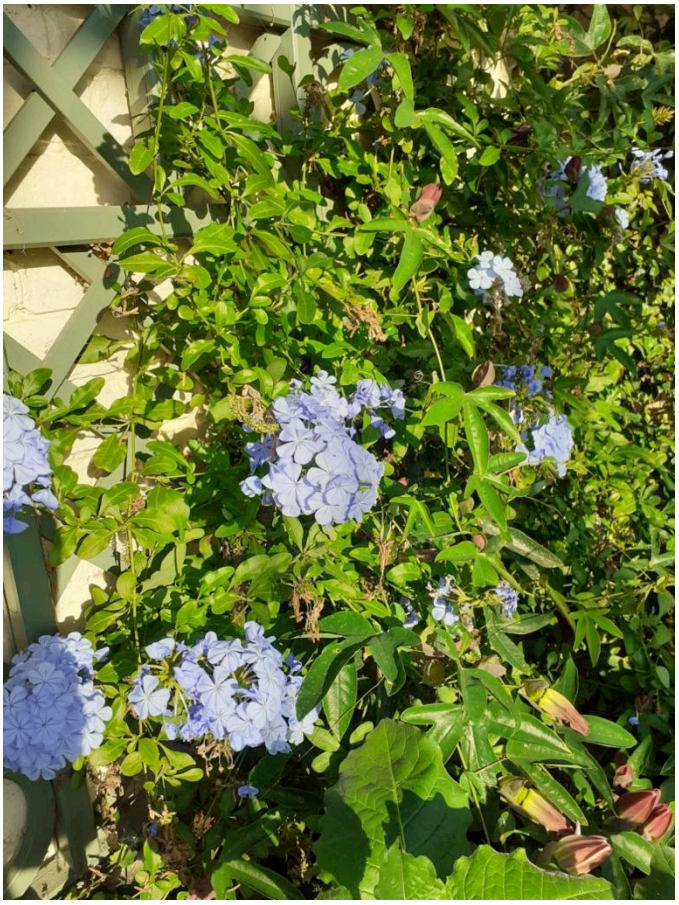
As the beautiful weather continued and those locked-down were becoming desperate for something to do, people began asking if they could come and help in the garden. We instigated another gardening session (but always maintaining social distancing!).

We had decisions to make: we could take a lot of salvia cuttings to raise income but if we had no visitors, it would just mean more watering. Instead, we planted out all the tender salvias without any plan, but just to ensure they had enough space to grow without a lot of maintenance. The garden has a collection of salvias, the shrubby type (like the well-known Salvia 'Hot Lips'), ones which are not reliably hardy and frost-tender ones such as Saliva convertiflora. In all, we are fortunate to have over 70 different salvias. These were donated to the garden by Janet Buist of Pennycross Plants who was retiring. After visiting the garden and seeing our greenhouse which has heating in one wing, she thought this would make a suitable place for her salvia collection. In addition to making a beautiful display, selling cuttings would help to raise funds for the garden. But, since everywhere was closed this year, we decided

Irises during the spectacular May at Ramsey Walled Garden.

Some of the wonderful salvias from the collection of over 70.

Cones define a one-way system for social distancing.



Plumbago auriculata in the glasshouse.

to defer our plan for a year and avoid watering potted cuttings with no visitors to buy them.

Our new eco-toilet, funded with a grant from Ramsey Rotary, was due to be 'opened' in early April at the start of the season with the Rotary Club having a social evening in the garden. Eventually, this grand official opening comprised a few photographs which appeared in the Hunts Post in October.

Gardeners are never happy with the weather and we did find it quite hard, with fewer volunteers, to get all our vegetables planted and weeded. Early sowings of beetroot and carrots developed very slowly. Our first runner beans did not germinate and the second sowing was eaten by a pheasant, but we have had an excellent crop in September and October, rather later than usual. Just as the mulberries were ripening, the tree split. This was not due to the wind but rather the wet weather and warm spring, causing very rapid growth. We are keeping our fingers crossed that it survives. The August winds caused some havoc, with an overladen quince tree leaning and the dahlias taking a bashing. Staking them was a task that got missed.

As lockdown began to be lifted, outdoor venues such as gardens could open for visitors. We normally open on a Sunday afternoon and we decided we would open from the beginning of July. Three of us were tasked with working out how we could open safely. We needed to ensure that it was possible to walk round without inadvertently bumping into someone else but still let visitors see as much as they could. Normally we sell our produce, jams etc. and plants near the gate where visitors tend to congregate. We moved the sales points to the grassed area and plants sales near the greenhouse. We divided the wide central path in two with coloured cones, sprayed arrows on the paths and printed off diagrams to show the route. We were concerned about monitoring numbers in case too many people came all at once. The openings have been a great success with people obeying the directions and, fortunately, a steady stream of visitors meant there were never too many people in the garden at any one time. Local people have been very pleased that the garden has re-opened, offering somewhere to go and we have been thanked profusely for all the effort to open safely.

All in all, it has been a very strange year for managing a garden which opens for visitors. Fewer volunteers, beautiful weather followed by some heavy rain and strong winds but made so worthwhile by the positive comments and thanks from our visitors.

The garden is open 2.00-5.00pm on Sundays and bank holiday Mondays from April until the end of October. Further details can be found on the website www.ramseywalledgarden.

Jane Sills, October 2020

TWO NEW BOOKS FROM TWIGS WAY

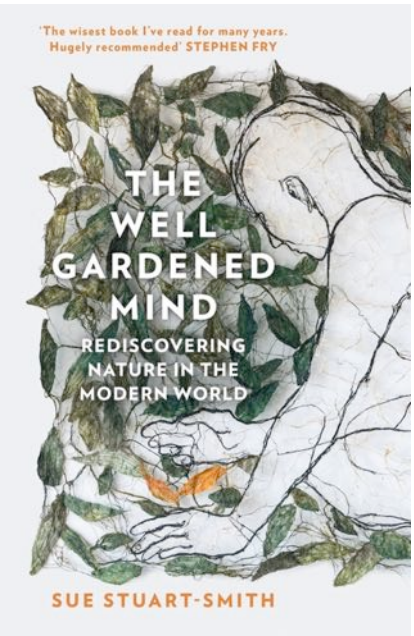
JUST AS WE WENT TO PRESS, Twigs Way sent details of two new books she has completed and are being published in good time for Christmas stockings. The first is by Reaktion Books in their botanical flower series, simply entitled *Chrysanthemum*. [Hardback, 216 pages, 90 illustrations, 78 in colour, ISBN 9781789142051: £16]. The second is by Amberley Books and entitled *Suburban Gardens*. [Paperback, 64 pages, 80 illustrations, ISBN 9781445683263: £8.09 limited duration offer]. More information is available on the CGT and publishers' websites, and the ubiquitous Amazon.

REVIEW: THE WELL GARDENED MIND – REDISCOVERING NATURE IN THE MODERN WORLD (BOOK AND ZOOM LECTURE 16 SEPTEMBER 2020)

SUE STUART-SMITH is a woman who looks at the world in a lot of different ways - as an English literature graduate, a consultant psychotherapist, a psychoanalyst, a mother, as the co-creator with her husband of their garden, and as an author. Her recent book has the same title as the Zoom lecture she delivered to CGT members on 16 September 2020 and the lecture broadly followed it. Publication had coincided with lockdown and felt eerily prescient. For her talk to us, she showed colourful and interesting images of their Barn Garden in Hertfordshire, running from daffodils in the orchard at the start of lockdown to the early autumn. Anne Treneman summed up well in her review for *The Times,* 'this book explores how gardening is good for the mind on all sorts of levels'.

There are some impressively wide-ranging chapters which introduce the idea that growing plants might not only feed us and our animals but also nurture our minds. So we learn about, for instance, the truly dreadful experiences of one of her grandfathers, Ted May, as a prisoner of war during the First World War, and his recovery. Less personally, we are introduced to Saint Hildegarde of Bingen's development of Benedictine teachings to recognise a connection between the human spirit and the growth force of the earth, which she called *viriditas*. We 'meet' various patients of Dr Stuart-Smith's, William and Dorothy Wordsworth, Donald Winnicott, Melanie Klein, Sigmund Freud and many others, famous and ordinary.

Readers of the book are then exposed to some neuroscience that no-one should be daunted by, even though this aspect was downplayed in Sue's talk. We are introduced to microglial cells, which 'are highly mobile and, as they crawl over the neural networks in our brains, they weed and root out weak connections and damaged cells. Most activity happens while we sleep, when the brain shrinks and gives the microglia room to work using their finger-like projections to remove toxins, reduce inflammation, and prune redundant synapses and cells.



The cover of Sue Stuart-Smith's recent book.

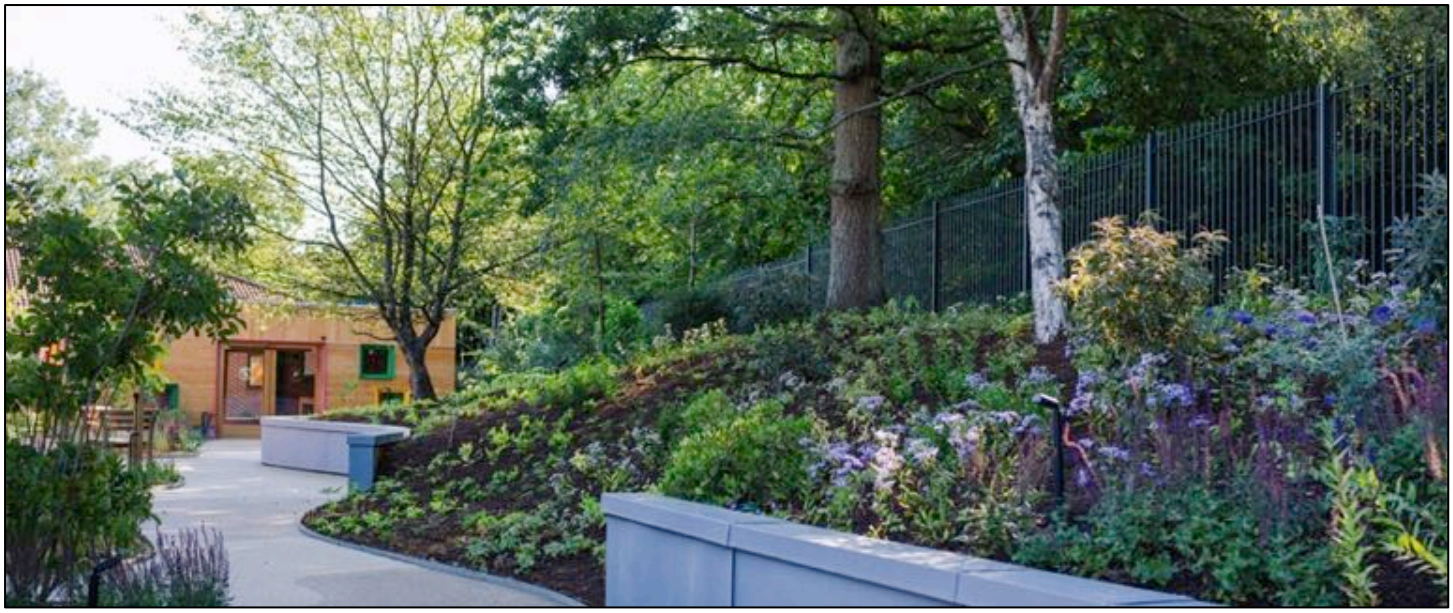
Recent developments in imaging techniques have made it possible to observe the microglia in action and it appears that each one tends its own patch of neural territory. Like true gardeners, they not only weed and clear, they also help the brain's neurons and synapses to grow. This process… is facilitated by a protein that they and other brain cells release… the effects of this on neuronal cells are akin to a fertiliser, which has earned it a reputation as the brain's 'Miracle-Gro'. Low levels… lead to depleted neural networks and are increasingly thought to be implicated in depression… Levels can be boosted through various forms of stimulation, that include exercise, play and social interaction.

A constant process of being weeded, pruned and fertilised keeps the brain healthy at a cellular level… What is taking place on a microscopic scale also needs to happen on a larger canvas. The mind needs to be gardened, too. Our emotional lives are complex and need constant tending and reworking. The form this takes will be different for each of us, but fundamentally... we need to cultivate a caring and creative atmosphere. Above all, we need to recognise what nourishes us.'

Having delivered the concepts, there are a series of sections which could be used as reference works. Those bringing up, or helping to bring up, children can learn how plants, greenness and gardening help their development; prison governors can review the evidence about gardening reducing re-offending rates; similarly, social workers can see how gardening and well-kept green spaces help poor or stigmatised people to maintain their self-esteem (John Claudius Loudon would have agreed with that!); those running the Armed Forces can see the value of plants in helping service people cope with difficult physical conditions and hard choices, and so on.

One of the groups for whom Sue helpfully sets out the relevant evidence are the caring professions - both in physical and mental health. By facilitating access to greenery, they can optimise conditions for their patients. And for themselves, I

Inmates at New York's Rikers Island have transformed a 2-acre plot with the aid of the Horticultural Society of New York. The programme has reduced recidivism by 40% and results in 190 kg of organic fruit and vegetables a year.



The Horatio's Garden for London and the South-East. Home to the London Spinal Cord Injury Centre at Stanmore, the garden has been designed by Tom Stuart-Smith with the needs and well-being of both patients and families in mind. The design features include a social space, private areas for patients, the calming sound of flowing water, a garden room, a garden therapy area and a greenhouse. The planting is designed to supply colour all year round whilst wildlife has been encouraged with bird and butterfly boxes.

have to say. If I may lapse into anecdote, I'll tell you about the time I was effectively a prisoner in Addenbrooke's hospital for a fortnight as a very junior doctor. I was in a '1 in 2' rota, which meant I did the ordinary working week plus every other night and weekend. This was just about survivable until my opposite number suffered a relapse of his own chronic health problem, so I went onto a '1 in 1'. I was so desperate to get away from concrete, lino and metal that I revolted and told my seniors that one of them was staying at work that night, because I needed to go and talk to some trees - and sleep. Contrast this with the West Suffolk Hospital, where I was on a '1 in 4'. Less hard work, but once every four weeks I started work at Thursday breakfast time and went through to Monday supper time. Yup - around 106 hours straight. Relatively speaking, a doddle, I think because of the variously planted courtyards, which attract visiting birds and are a feature of that design of hospital.

Now you may be thinking 'hospitals… gardens… Stuart-Smith?' and you would be right. As Sue was lecturing to us, her husband Tom was being lauded for the design of the newly opened Horatio's Garden at the London Spinal Injury Centre at the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital, Stanmore. [www.horatiosgarden.org.uk/the-gardens/london-south-east/]

Gin Warren, October 2020

Sue Stuart-Smith, 2020. *The Well Gardened Mind: Rediscovering Nature in the Modern World.* William Collins, London. ISBN 978-0-00-810071-1

AND ANOTHER CGT QUIZ

OUR MAY NEWSLETTER highlighted Christopher Vane Percy as the winner of our challenge question in Newsletter 47. Here, we give you the answers to the quiz from page 14 of Newsletter 48 as, when you read this, the winner will have been announced at the 2020 Annual General Meeting and be in possession of a bottle of Wine Society claret.

ANSWERS TO QUIZ IN NEWSLETTER 48

1. What are Wilkes' Gobs and where might you find them?
   Double-sized bricks – an attempt to minimize brick tax – in the mushroom house at Burghley House.
2. Where was the Cambridge 'Campus Martius' and why was it so called?
   St Thomas' Leys, according to Fuller in 1665, where scholars exercised themselves sometimes too violently, in allusion to ancient Rome's Campus Martius, which was originally a militia muster area.
3. What did Jane Webb stop practising when she married?
   Writing excellent science fiction, in favour of gardening books for ladies, following her marriage to John Loudon.
4. What might a 'Calcutta' be (as well as an Indian city)?
   A hothouse, for obvious reasons.
5. Which country had sovereignty over the Brough of Birsay in the time of Thorfinn Sigurdsson?
   Thorfinn Sigurdsson, c.1009-1065, was Earl of Orkney and owed allegiance to Norway.

NEW QUIZ QUESTIONS

Here are another five questions drawn from Newsletter 49. Again the winner will receive a little something to relieve the Covid blues (sadly we don't have early access to a vaccine).

1. What position was done away with when Fitzwilliam College was granted its Royal Charter?
2. Who designed the wallpaper in The Grove?
3. Where was there an Institution for the Nervous?
4. Who designed the ornamental garden at Gawthorpe Hall?
5. What is Lithodipyra and, for a bonus, why was it so called?

Phil Christie, April 2020

PROGRAMME OF VISITS & EVENTS 2020-2021

Because of the covid-19 situation, all visits and events apart from the Zoom lectures are provisional for the time being and so the visits outlined below are unconfirmed ideas. If members have locations they'd like to suggest, please get in touch via the email address admin@cambridgeshiregardenstrust.org.uk. As government advice changes, we will update the website and circulate details by email and post. We hope sites will re-open in 2021 for socially distanced group visits. In each case 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.

NOV. 2020	7 Sat **ZOOM**	11:30am-1:00pm	**AGM** starting at 11:30am, followed by guest speaker Dr David Marsh at approximately 12:00noon. David's title is *Garden history in the making? The story of my garden*. AGM papers and Zoom link will be sent out prior to the event.
DEC. 2020	10 Thurs **ZOOM**	11:00am-12:00 noon	**Christmas Lecture** to be given by 'Muddy Archaeologist' Gillian Hovell, entitled *How Roman garden design changed gardens forever and provided the seeds for our modern garden design.* Zoom link will be sent out prior to the event.
APRIL 2021	TBC	TBC	**Visit** to St Paul's Walden Bury, Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG4 8BP. 18C formal woodland garden with temples, statues, ponds, rhododendrons, magnolias and azaleas.
MAY	TBC	TBC	**Visit** to one of the new gardens in the region that have recently opened under the auspices of the National Gardens Scheme. Further details to follow.
JUNE	TBC	TBC	**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.
	TBC	TBC	**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.
JULY	TBC	TBC	**Visit** to Newnham College, Sidgwick Avenue, Cambridge CB3 9DF. Herbaceous borders, sunken rose garden, woodland nutwalk, knot garden, wildflower garden. Refreshments in the Iris Café and a guided tour of the gardens by the Head Gardener.
AUGUST	TBC	TBC	**Visit** to Oxburgh Hall, near Swaffham, Norfolk, PE33 9PS. Today's gardens, created by the 6th Baronet during the Victorian period, mirror the footprint of the original. Visually striking parterre, walled garden, kitchen garden, orchard, herbaceous borders as well as less formal areas, including the Wilderness and My Lady's Wood.
SEPT.	TBC	TBC	**Visit** to The Gibberd Garden, Marsh Lane, Harlow, Essex CM17 0NA. Created between 1957 and 1984 by Sir Frederick Gibberd, the architect who inspired Harlow New Town. Streams, pools, glades, lime avenue, wild garden, moated castle. Village sculptures.
OCT.	TBC	TBC	**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. We hope this visit will include the hall.

(For up-to-date 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.

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