

NEWSLETTER



SURREY
GARDENS
TRUST

April 2020
No. 58

Chair's Note

When I addressed you through my Chair's Report and in person at the AGM in December, with enthusiastic talk of our exciting plans for 2020, little could we have contemplated what this year would actually bring. With my editorial hat on for the newsletter I am sure you will appreciate that this has been a difficult one to put together and I hope you will forgive the delay in bringing it to you.

We have all become acutely aware of the value of open space in this new Covid-19 world and this includes historic open space. It is perhaps more important than ever that we remember what we have and take full heed of the potential threats it will face as a consequence of the economic impact of the pandemic. The Gardens Trust launched an Unforgettable Gardens campaign at the end of 2019 and it is more poignant than ever as a rallying call to consider how these special places are maintained and the kind of things that we will all need to do in the future to help them retain their significance and survive.

We should all use some of the time we have been gifted and remember the places we hold dear and then reach out through their websites and social media links to see how they are coping and what we can do to help. Please do get in touch with your thoughts and concerns and let's see whether we as a Trust can work together and be of help too.

I am sure you all, like me, smile quietly to yourself as the wonders of a garden and gardening are awakened to a new audience. We all know the mindfulness benefits of time in our gardens and I hope that you are all enjoying the Spring and the fruits of your labours. I have set out a favourite poem as a brief memory to Mary Caroe. We have so many memories to share with you all of this wonderful lady and have decided to publish a dedicated *Tribute to Mary* in the coming weeks.

Please stay safe.

Sarah Dickinson

Mary Caroe

18 August 1938 - 5 April 2020

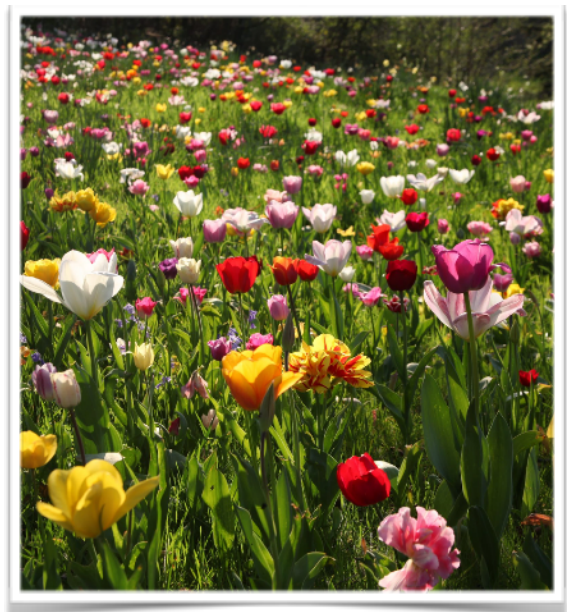
'Strength may wield the pond'rous spade,
May turn the clod, and wheel the compost home,
But elegance, chief grace the garden shows
And most attractive, is the fair result
Of thought, the creature of a polish'd mind.'

The Task, by William Cowper



Mary in 2019 receiving an NGS Award for opening the gates to Vann for 50 years under the scheme.

Dunsborough Park Tulip Festival



ngs.org.uk/dunsborough-park-tulips/

We must wait until April 2021 to enjoy the stunning display of tulips at Dunsborough Park in person but in the interim, follow the link above and enjoy an extremely informative walk around the gardens with a commentary by Baroness Caroline Sweerts de Landas Wyborgh.

We were delighted to be able to make a donation of £155 to the family's nominated charity, ACE SMA, from the donations members had made as a gesture of thanks for our invitation from the family and which they nominated to give despite the cancellation of the event. Baroness Caroline's daughter-in-law has expressed the family's delight at your generosity and confirmed that their invitation remains open for us to visit next year.

Here are the family's words of thanks.

'A huge thank you to everyone at the Surrey Gardens Trust for their incredibly kind donation to ACE SMA. We are very sad that in the current circumstances we were unable to host you in the gardens at Dunsborough Park and therefore hugely appreciative of your continued support. The donations will be going towards funding the research programme into exoskeletons in the hope that they will enable children with Spinal Muscular Atrophy to walk and maybe one day run unsupported.'

Events Update

Rescheduled dates for the diary

I am most grateful to Sheri, Helen and Tracey for their proactive response to the Covid-19 impact on the 2020 programme of lectures, the study day and garden visits, and, of course, our tour to Somerset, which had all been planned with such expertise. Their rapid response has meant that we were able to arrange a revised date for the study day at RHS Wisley before the staff there were furloughed. Our speakers have all been extremely enthusiastic in finding a new date. Let's hope that we are somewhere back to normal by then.

Study Day on Geoffrey Jellicoe

21 October 2020

10.00am to 4.00pm

RHS Wisley, Surrey

Please put the date in your diaries and keep your fingers crossed. We will include articles from our speakers in our next newsletter.

Kitsgate Court Gardens: Three Generations of Women Gardeners

Saturday, 17 October 2020

2.30pm

**Ashted Peace Memorial Hall,
Ashted**

Vanessa Berridge has kindly agreed an alternative date. This was a hugely popular lecture and I am quite sure that you will all be signing up for this new date. Spaces are confirmed for those who previously booked and did not request a refund.

Sussex Prairie Garden and Borde Hill Garden

3 September 2020

10.00am and 2.00pm (respectively)

These two visits are still in the diary and we very much hope they will go ahead subject to developments with the Covid-19 restrictions. We will keep you informed by e mail in due course. Refunds have been given for all garden visits. Should this visit proceed you will need to rebook.

Details are set out at:

www.surreygardenstrust.org.uk/events

Delivering Jekyll to a 21st century

Audience

by Sarah Dickinson

In November last year, I spoke to the Lutyens Trust who have expressed a keen interest in and shown great support for our work to achieve the digital copying of the Gertrude Jekyll Collection, part of the Reef Point Garden archive, UC, Berkeley. When preparing my talk, it occurred to me that, while my audience of architecture gurus would undoubtedly be knowledgeable, their perception of Gertrude Jekyll might be somewhat formulaic, the infamous depictions of a young twenty-year-old Edwin Lutyens engaging with the revered middle aged 'Bumps' set the scene (1). In his *The Life of Lutyens* (1950), Christopher Hussey described her as 'earthy and practical and determined ...short, stout, myopic, downright...a frightening, but kind, wise old lady.' Need I say more.

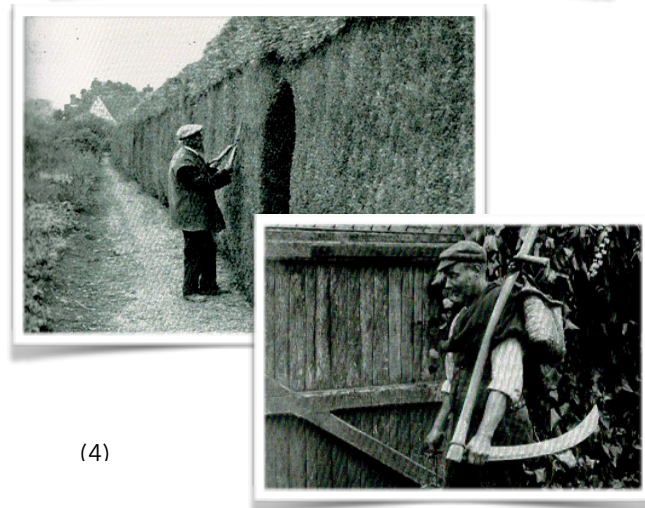
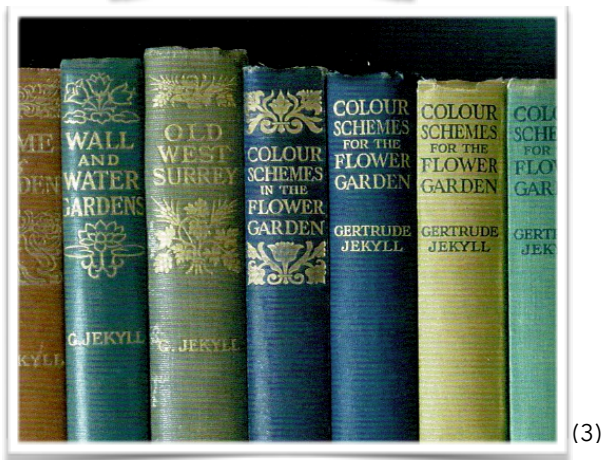
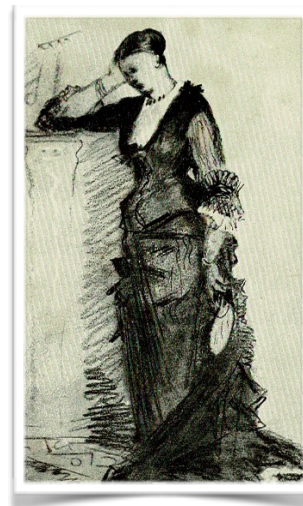
It is even more important when I talk to wider audiences who are new to the world of Gertrude Jekyll (and trust me we are in a minority) to sway these perceptions which can be a little misleading. In this context, it can be revealing to take a look at this quite extraordinary woman in a comparative light with some of the celebrated gardeners and garden designers of the 21st century and in so doing reveal how relevant her work remains.

So let's start again with a more glamorous image of Gertrude as a younger woman drawn by her life long friend, Susan Muir MacKenzie. The drawing (2) appears in Francis Jekyll's Memoir of 1934 where he also includes a contemporary description of Miss MacKenzie as 'a brilliant and witty creature...tall and distinguished in appearance, full of originality in thought and word...artistic, musical, beloved of her friends and feared by the dull witted'. She and Gertrude Jekyll were fellow art students in London in the late 1860s and became travelling companions. It speaks volumes of Gertrude Jekyll's own character and talents that they were such good companions and happily shared an extended circle of friends including Ruskin, Watts (for whom Jekyll sat 'for arms' with much pride), Morris, and (Jon Guille) Millais to name just a few of their circle, into which we must of course add, Edwin Lutyens.

Once Jekyll turned her attention to gardening and garden design, in characteristic fashion and in very short order, she began to excel. Her diaries mention that William Robinson visited Munstead in 1880 and by June 1881 she was judging at the precursor to the Chelsea Flower Show, where she became acquainted with a G F Wilson, owner of a property near Wisley which was to form the nucleus for the RHS gardens. In 1881, she started to write articles and by 1883-4 was cooperating with William Robinson for his famous book, *The English Flower Garden*. Thirteen books followed (3).

I could go on but let me try to answer the question: to whom would you compare Gertrude Jekyll if she were operating in the world of garden design and horticulture today?

Perhaps in relation to her horticultural diligence we should have Monty Don in mind? I am quite sure that if television had been an option there would have been a *Gardeners World* filmed at Munstead Wood. Gertrude Jekyll was very quick to master photography and appreciate the benefits of being able to illustrate her publications with her own photographs. I couldn't resist adding a couple of Gertrude Jekyll's photographs of her gardeners (4), elaborating on the running of her garden is for another time.



Delivering Jekyll to a 21st century Audience... cont...

We then remember that Gertrude Jekyll supplemented her income by collaborating with a leading glass manufacturer to produce flower vases (chiefly because she was unable to buy vases which complimented her advanced (of course) skills in flower arrangement (5). She also engaged with a local basket manufacturer in Guildford to produce the Munstead Basket, which was then advertised in *The Garden* magazine in 1901, the year she happened to be the editor (6). And who comes to mind today, perhaps Sarah Raven (7)?

But of course, her ability to exploit her entrepreneurial tendencies was as a result of her reputation as a plants woman and innovative garden designer and so of course we must also add a leading designer to our 21st century comparative list and Arabella Lennox Boyd comes to mind.

The list could be endless but in the context of plant knowledge my closest comparison would be Beth Chatto who with her husband ran a plant nursery and developed an exquisite and ground breaking garden on which she wrote extensively. A straightforward comparison, save to say that Gertrude Jekyll was also running a garden design business and ran a comprehensive nursery from her home which more than adequately serviced the garden commissions and the receipts from which easily paid the wages of the four under-gardeners working in the gardens at Munstead Wood (8). Large quantities of plants could be supplied if required as Gertrude Jekyll's Notebooks document.

It was with these sentiments in mind that I read with much interest personal recollections written in relation to Beth Chatto, following her death in 2018, and recently recorded in *Hortus* No. 131 Autumn 2019. The accolades are well founded and I will share some of these below, but what struck me was how they mirrored the words of the obituary to Gertrude Jekyll written in 1932 (*The Times*, 10 December 1932) and how Beth Chatto's achievements both in her garden and through authorship so closely aligned not only the sentiments but the practical detail of Gertrude Jekyll's own words.

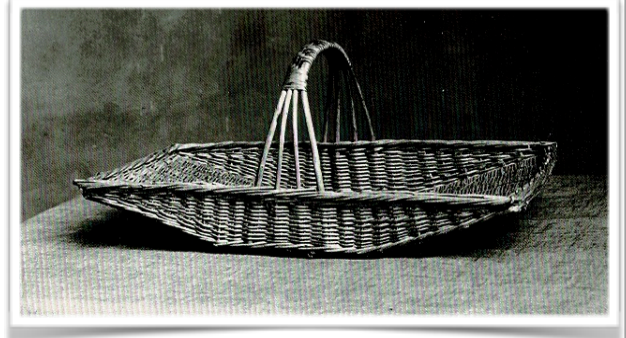
Fergus Garrett (Head Gardener at Great Dixter) writes: *'Beth also broadened our horizons - she made us look again and reconsider our aesthetics, reassessing the plants we thought garden worthy. And through this process and through her eyes we as an industry have begun to accept the elegance and beauty of wilder plants. With her painterly eye, Beth had an effortless ability in arranging plants. She assembled composition after composition, weaving plants through each other creating complex designs with sophisticated interlocking layers of foliage and flower, her planting often artistically mimicking wild environments using garden plants. She changed the way we arrange our material ...in our gardens, and in landscape design.'* *Hortus* (ibid p. 72).

The Times obituary to Gertrude Jekyll (above), was definitive: *'She was a great gardener, second only, if indeed she was second, to her friend William Robinson, of Gravetye. To these two, more than to any others, are due not only the complete transformation of English horticultural method and design, but also that wide diffusion of knowledge and taste which has made us almost a nation of gardeners. Miss Jekyll was always a true artist with an exquisite sense of colour.'*

In her own words in *Wood and Garden* (first published in 1899), Gertrude Jekyll explains her approach to planting: *'If in the following chapters I have laid special stress upon gardening for beautiful effect, it is because it is the way of gardening that I love best, and know most about, and that seems to be*



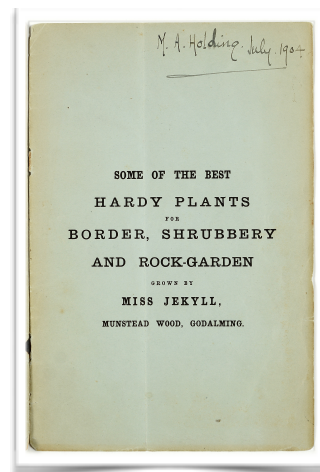
(5)



(6)



(7)



(8)

Delivering Jekyll to a 21st century Audience...cont...

capable of giving greatest amount of pleasure. I am strongly for treating garden and wooded ground in pictorial way, mainly with large effects, and in the second place with lesser beautiful incidents, and for so arranging plants and trees and grassy spaces that they look happy and at home, and make no parade of conscious effort. I try for beauty and harmony everywhere, and especially for harmony of colour.'

The extent of Gertrude Jekyll's reach was illustrated by Russell Page in *The Education of a Gardener* (Collins, 1962), when he writes: 'I can think of few English gardens made in the last fifty years which do not bear the mark of her teaching, whether in the arrangement of a flower border, the almost habitual association of certain plants or the planting of that difficult passage where garden merges into wild.'

As each generation of gardeners passes they leave their own unique stamp on the gardening world and there is no suggestion here that Beth Chatto is not a formidable force who has brought huge knowledge and ideas to the horticultural world. As Ambra Edwards points out in *The Story of the English Garden* (Pavilion Books 2018), Beth Chatto's gravel garden was a game-changer, freeing gardeners from Arts and Crafts convention and showing them how to adapt to climate change. There is no doubt, however, that Beth Chatto was one of the many gardeners who have drawn inspiration and practical guidance from the pages of Gertrude Jekyll's books.

As we continue to raise funds for the digitisation project, putting Gertrude Jekyll into a parallel world helps to highlight her true relevance and the importance of her work as it was perceived by her contemporaries and commentators within her life time.

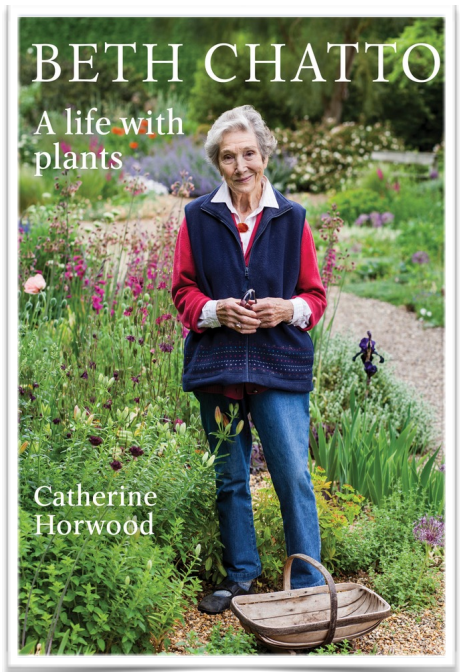
I conclude with two further quotes. First, the closing paragraph from Gertrude Jekyll's obituary (Obituary *ibid*): 'Gertrude Jekyll, to whom we now bid a grateful "Hail and Farewell", sought ever for practical knowledge allied to beauty, and in the quest, whereby she may truly be said to have transfigured the gardens of England, she never grew old at heart or wearied in mind, was never discouraged by difficulty or defeated by failure, neither did she cease to share widely the fruits of her long and loving apprenticeship to Nature.'

Catherine Horwood, the author of *Gardening Women* (Virago Press 2010), and Beth Chatto's biographer, writes in her reflections (*Hortus ibid*, p74), 'Of course it is a mistake to put our heroes on a pedestal. They may have feet of clay. In Beth's case, this could be thought appropriate although her flaws were rarely horticultural ones. Delegation never came easily to her. She took no prisoners when it came to working to her high standards. She could reduce staff members - both male and female - to tears. And yet, in addition to the thousands who knew and loved her through her exhibits and her writing, she inspired exceptional loyalty from those who worked for her ... and the loyalty was reciprocated.'

Christopher Hussey's words of Gertrude Jekyll (set out earlier) ring a similar tone. Two extraordinary women who were unflinching in their dedication throughout their lives to creating masterpieces in their own gardens and sharing their accumulated knowledge. I will give Gertrude Jekyll, as the pioneer, the last word: 'And a garden is a grand teacher. It teaches patience and careful watchfulness; it teaches industry and thrift; above all it teaches entire trust.' (*Wood and Garden*, 1899).



Photograph of Gertrude Jekyll which features on the front cover of *Gertrude Jekyll* by Sally Festing (Viking, 1991)



Pyrford Neighbourhood Forum Heritage Conservation Assessment

by Tim Matthews

Just before all events for the summer had to be put on hold, Anne McClean and I enjoyed a fascinating visit to The Old House, Pyrford Road, Pyrford at the kind invitation of its owner, Joy Sachak. Joy sits on the Pyrford Neighbourhood Forum with Tim Matthews (who has written the article below) and they had approached the Trust to see whether we could support them in raising money to sponsor a local project to have a Heritage Conservation Assessment written for Pyrford as a first line of defence in protecting their local heritage. We thought that this would be of huge interest to our members and a date was set for an Open Garden Event at The Old House in May by kind permission of Joy and Akeel Sachak and supporting the Pyrford Neighbourhood Forum Heritage Conservation Assessment. While this will not now happen, I thought that it would be interesting to share their work with you.

Sarah Dickinson

Although Woking Borough Council (WBC) is responsible for conserving local heritage, they have been unable to carry out a heritage assessment review of Pyrford since the late 1990s. With the support of the WBC, the Pyrford Neighbourhood Forum is employing a consultancy firm, the LDA, to produce an assessment, that meets the correct standards for the Council. The Heritage Assessment will survey and appraise the important assets of the village, including over forty buildings of architectural significance. With pressure from Government and Borough Councils alike eager to identify land on which to build new homes, it is a vital and important undertaking. The Forum has already raised £11,500 for the project but a further £1,500 is still needed.

Opening the Gardens to the public is a proposed fundraising initiative that will help achieve the financial goal of £13,000 and go a long way to preserve Pyrford's valuable heritage.

This heritage includes the grounds of The Old House. The Old House dates back to the 15th century and is Grade II 'listed'. The grounds have a history and heritage that reflect those distant times. With more than 100 acres including ancient woodland, with lakes and formal gardens, it is a jewel in Woking's rural crown. The unconventional gardens are immensely varied and special, featuring wide lawns with box hedging and a most original and unique water sculpture; hidden orchards and a secret walled flower garden surprise the visitor. The owners have planted more than 1,000 trees to supplement the natural biodiversity with meadows of wildflowers and native grasses that sweep down to the River Wey. The views are as extraordinary as they are breathtaking.

A rewilding project is in hand which will help return a former golf-course to a natural habitat for wildlife including bees and deer. Interestingly, underground water-courses, built in the 17th century, irrigate the land without flooding. Lessons for us all!

Contact Joy Sachak for further information: sachakj@yahoo.co.uk



The Old House, contemporary view © RJM



The Old House.
Pen and ink, 1950s © Marquerite Howarth

Harold Peto (1854-1933) Travel Diaries

In advance of our now postponed visit to Harold Peto's gardens at Iford Manor, Somerset in July 2021, do take a look at some interesting reading brought to our attention by Jane Balfour who was an acknowledged collaborator on the project to publish these diaries.

Harold Peto is now well established for creating some of the most outstanding gardens of the Edwardian period. The range of his work, much of which appeared in *Country Life*, is a huge testimony to his skill and appreciation of the different landscapes he undertook to design for his commissions. It is evident from his eclectic style how his work was inspired by the gardens and art of Italy, France, Spain and the Far East.

Although he practiced as an architect in London in a flourishing partnership with Ernest George (1839-1922), it is for his designed gardens of the *belle époque* that he has become justifiably acclaimed, even to the accolade of 'genius'. However in spite of this recognition very little documentation has hitherto been published to substantiate how his knowledge and enthusiasm for garden making evolved as part of his working life. It is therefore now particularly significant that to compensate for this lack of biographical evidence, his **Travel Diaries**, by agreement with the owners, have been published by the Cwareli Press, to give us a fascinating insight into the man, his background and the sources of his inspiration - all are brought into focus for the first time. They offer a very personal view of his experiences abroad during the 1880s and '90s. The journals in themselves, being descriptive and amusing, are an evocative reflection of the experience of late nineteenth century travellers, while at the same time illuminating what was to become his essential and characteristic style of gardening, that which matured and blossomed, following his decision to leave London and the partnership in 1892.

All the diaries are introduced by Robin Whalley who, over many years, has studied and written extensively on the work of Harold Peto. He has, with the acknowledged help of other scholars, transcribed the diaries, editing where necessary, and giving a background and a context for the people referred to, in some cases just acquaintances, and in others, part of a wider group of lifetime friends or family. The footnotes have been kept to a minimum and only supplied when the text needs further clarification. Each of the diaries have been published as a separate booklet adhering to a uniform size and style so that the set brought together provides overall a unique insight into Harold Peto's formative years.

For more information on **Harold Peto and the Travel Diaries** see www.cwarelipress.co.uk. Those wishing to purchase a complete set of all twelve publications (A5 size) can purchase them for £8.00 including postage and packing.

Orders should be sent to:

Cwareli Press, Cwm Oergwm
Llanfrynach, BRECON Powys
Wales LD3 7LQ

Order forms can be downloaded from their website (see address above).
Please state number of sets required and include the following information.

Name, Full Address, Postcode, Telephone No and Email address.

Cheques should be made payable to Cwareli Press.



Iford Manor's Italianate enchantment, Peto's country house

West Horsley Place: The proposed restoration of the historic rose parterre in the walled garden.

Some members may have seen the article in the *Leatherhead and Dorking Advertiser* (Thursday, 2 April, 2020) regarding the West Horsley Place Trust's appeal for funds to restore the 1930's rose parterre created by the Marquess and Marchioness of Crewe when they bought the house. It fell into disrepair during WWII. When their daughter, Mary, Duchess of Roxburghe inherited the estate the only viable option was to simplify the original scheme which in itself has now fallen into a poor state.

Quoting from the article: '*...the West Horsley Place Trust would like to reinstate the rose parterre as part of the charity's commitment to create a welcoming space at West Horsley Place for the community to enjoy.*'

The Head Gardener, Nicky Webber, has confirmed that the original planting will be restored. She explains that '*Mary, Duchess of Roxburghe was presented with a huge challenge with the gardens at West Horsley Place when she inherited the estate, but as her correspondence shows, she was passionate about plants and determined to do her utmost to maintain what she could. A series of recently discovered letters between the Duchess and experts at nearby RHS Wisley sheds light on this determination...*'

Nicky adds, '*After researching the plants for the rose parterre, I was amazed to discover that David Austin Roses have records of orders from West Horsley Place dating back many years.*'



The Rose Garden, June 1992
© Marion Woodward

The Surrey Gardens Trust has taken a keen interest over the years in the very special gardens at West Horsley Place and their history. We were able to share a photograph with Nicky of the rose garden taken on a visit in 1992 and she has confirmed that the lavender will be replanted and that they are keeping the *Rosa* 'Iceberg' (white) but replacing the poorly red ones with *Rosa* 'Olivia Austin' (pink), which she explains, '*has many attributes of an old style rose but few problems*'.

If you are interested in supporting this appeal go to www.westhorsleyplace.org for further information as to how you can sponsor a lavender or rose.



Photograph from the *Leatherhead and Dorking Advertiser* (above) showing the current state of disrepair of the rose parterre

Unforgettable Gardens

The Gardens Trust launched a new collaborative theme, Unforgettable Gardens, at the end of 2019. This is an opportunity for us to think about what is special to us in Surrey.

So what does Unforgettable Gardens mean? Here is an explanation from the Gardens Trust Campaign page.

Historic parks and gardens are a much-loved part of our shared national story, appreciated now more than ever as Covid-19 forces us to evaluate the role of open space in our lives. Sadly though, these unforgettable gardens are themselves at risk. Gardens and landscapes have always been vulnerable to destruction through maintenance cuts, neglect, development or mismanagement but now these precious treasures are more at risk than ever, as Covid-19 has forced many historic gardens to shut their doors and lose essential ticket revenue, whilst on the flipside public parks struggle to serve the growing needs of their communities for outside exercise.

Here are some of the ways that the Gardens Trust are suggesting we could get involved:

- suggest a site or story to be the subject of our Covid-19 social media campaign
- join us on our social media to highlight sites you are missing during lockdown, or sites you are now reliant on for your daily exercise
- write the story of a lost garden that will never be forgotten
- host an online exhibition of old garden photographs
- put together a volunteer group to help look after your local threatened landscape

While you are enjoying your daily exercise or reading about the difficulties of your local parks give a thought to whether these are historic parks and gardens which are of local significance and which we can highlight and go some way to helping to preserve. There may be local sites which have been lost to development, walled gardens or urban green spaces, for example? Unforgettable Gardens will give us an opportunity to look at these as examples of what we have lost and why we do not want to lose more.

If you have any thoughts please do email me at chairsurreygt@gmail.com.

Schools Awards 2020

The Schools Committee launched this year's Awards Scheme ahead of Covid-19 and has received another fabulous response from schools, many applications completed by teachers from home and at the very last minute before the 3 April deadline. We look forward to reporting in due course how the £3,000 Award will be distributed.

The Schools Committee is also working on a new initiative *Tools for Schools* and will be providing more details on this in the weeks ahead.

Flower Power

The soft energy of plants can be turned into a potent symbol of political authority

I read a very entertaining article by Richard Mawrey in *Historic Gardens Review* (Winter 2019/2020 Issue 40) regarding the emblems and national symbols of different countries in which he illustrates a fascinating fact that almost every nation uses a plant as its symbol. I thought that I would translate the information into a little quiz for your entertainment. Quite simply, can you match the country to the plant which has been chosen as its national symbol? The article itself gives an in-depth look at why particular plants have been chosen. The article can be downloaded in its entirety for you to read and find the answers alongside the Newsletter. My thanks go to Gillian and Richard Mawrey for playing their part and many congratulations on the 40th Anniversary of *Historic Gardens Review* which remains as fresh and relevant to the historic parks and gardens debate as it has been since its inception. I would highly recommend that you visit www.historicgardens.org and get a flavour of the work they do.



1. Egypt
2. Wales
3. Japan
4. Canada
5. Northern Ireland
6. Portugal
7. Scotland
8. England
9. Israel
10. USA
11. Lebanon

- a. *Linum usitatissimum*
- b. *Cenhinen*
- c. *Cedrus libani*
- d. *Chrysanthemum*
- e. *Acer*
- f. *Onopordum acanthium*
- g. *Tudor Rosa*
- h. *Anemone coronaria*
- i. *Rosa*
- j. *Lavendula spica*
- k. *Nelumbo nucifera*



John Evelyn

by Beryl Saich

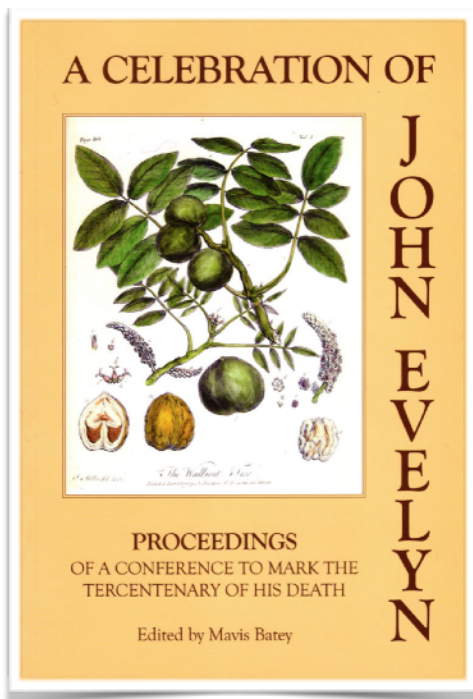
“a garden is the place of all terrestrial enjoyments most resembling Heaven”

In 2020, we celebrate the four hundredth anniversary of the birth of John Evelyn. Born at Wotton in Surrey in 1620, he was influenced all his life by the beauty of the countryside he grew up in, which he sought to compare and admire wherever he travelled around Europe and at home. He lived in extraordinary times, experiencing the Civil War (he was a devoted Royalist), the Commonwealth, the plague and the fire, the reigns of Charles I, Charles II, James II, William III and Mary II and finally Queen Anne. *'Great changes took place in that time, not only in religion and politics, but in the consideration and testing of ideas and knowledge which would lead to 18th century enlightenment.'* (Batey)

We remember him for the many books he wrote: *Sylva or a discourse of Forest trees*, *Kalendarium or the Gard'ners Almanack*, a guide to monthly tasks in the garden, *Fumifugium*, the first appeal for clean air in London and the greatest, *Elysium Britannicum* which he wanted to be as complete a description as possible of every aspect of gardening but never quite finished, finally published in 2001. He was a founder member, and later secretary, of The Royal Society where everything was discussed except religion and politics.

We remember him particularly for the gardens he made and influenced: Sayes Court in Deptford inherited from his wife's uncle, where he worked for forty years; Albury which he designed for his friend Henry Howard based on the existing garden but reflecting the ideas they had seen together in Italy and France and Wotton, the home that he returned to in old age, where the garden had been newly designed by his brother George with advice on planting by John.

This is but a snapshot but much more can be learned from our own publication, *A celebration of John Evelyn* the proceedings of a two day conference organised by the Surrey Gardens Trust in 2006 and still available to purchase.



For more details about the book and how to purchase a copy please go to:

www.surreygardenstrust.org.uk/publications

Brian Edward Wilson

29 April 1931 – 31 October 2019



Brian was born in Hampstead but he was evacuated to a friend's cottage on the edge of Frensham pond during the war. It was here that his love of the natural world developed. Brian went to Loughborough Grammar School and then to Haberdashers School where he was a founder member of the rowing club. His National Service was in the RAF, in the education department with young recruits.

He studied botany at Nottingham University where he was involved in the dramatic society and later founded the Ottershaw Players, who are still performing to this day. Thinking he would like to be a farmer, he spent time on a farm in Sussex. This was not to his liking so he became interested in the birth of computers, then the size of a small room. He subsequently worked for Watneys, Bowaters, C&A, Grand Metropolitan and several smaller companies. His love of rowing continued on from school and he joined London Rowing Club in Putney where he lived for a period of time. It was near there he met Joan. They were married for nearly 60 years and had a daughter Caroline and a son Andrew. They loved being grandparents to four grandchildren. His interest in rowing led to many visits with friends over the years to Henley Regatta where they cheered on London Rowing Club and enjoyed elegant picnics.

Brian always felt that he wanted to give something back to society, so he volunteered with the Samaritans, getting up in the middle of the night and driving to Guildford to help counsel people.

Brian joined the Surrey Gardens Trust in 1991, becoming an enthusiastic member of the Research and Recording group, with a special interest in the Pyrford area. By 1996 he had become a trustee, and Secretary to the Council, a post he held until 2000.

Brian loved dogs and he and Joan owned an Italian Spinone and several basset hounds over the years. Searching for more information on the history of the basset hound in this country, he approached the archivist at Clandon House knowing that in 1872 the 4th Earl of Onslow had bought some bassets and created a pack, the first in England. This led to Brian trying to find the relevant information in the library there, but as the books were kept in colour formation on the shelves it led to him cataloguing the whole library. One day the late Lord Onslow said "have you done the ones in the attic?" Brian then spent many freezing cold hours cataloguing these books only for many to be lost in Clandon House's disastrous fire. In his time in the library Brian came across a hand written gardener's diary from 1906 - 1911, which was transcribed by Kathleen Burgess, one of our early recorders. This information has recently been shared with the National Trust.

Brian became Master of the Leadon Vale basset hounds in Gloucestershire and was responsible for the stud book as a committee member of the Association of Basset Hounds. He joined the Surrey and North Sussex beagles in the 1970s and became Master responsible for the west side of the country for eight years. His scientific education gave him a knowledge of genetics and physiology and he became a world expert on the basset hound and the author of two books.

One day he took his energetic daughter to the local athletics track and became hooked on coaching young athletes. He passed several tests to become a high jump and 400m coach. He had success in getting one of his male athletes to the 1980 Olympics relay team, only for one member (not him) to drop the baton. He carried his interest in coaching further and at the age of 68 he studied at Surrey University and gained a PhD in volunteering for coaching in sports.

Brian loved his garden and especially growing irises. He would sit in the arbour and admire many different varieties, some of which he imported from France. In his own garden he recorded birds, sometimes as many as 20 species a month.

Brian belonged to the Surrey Archaeological Society and the Domestic Buildings Research Group, which fostered an interest in old houses especially when he moved to live in Lady Place Cottage, a 16th-century house in Pyrford. Brian continued his membership of the Surrey Gardens Trust up to the end of his life and the Trust is truly grateful for the work he did for the organisation, especially in its early days.

Book Reviews

The Story of the English Garden by Ambra Edwards

I chose this book from the Raffle table at the AGM in December and was very pleased with my prize. I had read very good reviews and knowing Ambra's work was excited to have a copy to read. It has been sitting on my desk alongside a very steep pile of Gertrude Jekyll and Lutyens texts ever since!

When I finally opened its cover I was not disappointed. The prose is fresh and has a nimbleness which carries you from chapter to chapter, heading to heading and the photographs and illustrations are generous and engaging. I was intrigued by Chapter 8: Interwar Gardens Hiding from History 1918 - 1940. Edwards describes how after the war, in Europe, the effect appeared to be a wholesale rejection of history while in Britain, the first response was a retreat into the safety of the past. She talks about Charles Paget Wade's Snowhill Manor in the Cotswolds, Lady Cecilie Goff's at The Courts in Wiltshire where she interpreted *Colour in the Garden* by Gertrude Jekyll as an approach (one which gardeners would follow for the next century) and then moves to Devon and the Rupert D'Oyly Carte gardens at Coleton Fishacre. The next page is headed *American Beauty* and Hidcote sets the scene.

The two pages on the *Rose Garden* were extremely valuable too.

Definitely a book for the shelf but one which should be opened and read regularly.

by Sarah Dickinson



Pavilion Press

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Books on your shelves...

We all have books on our shelves bought enthusiastically at talks and events with all good intentions to read before life intervenes. This is an excellent opportunity to open those covers and absorb their contents. They may go back years!

My challenge to you all is to pick up these books, dip in and to then send to me a brief 2 - 3 paragraphs as a review. This might simply be a fascinating fact which was particularly interesting to you. Let's share our experiences of all things whether they are horticultural, garden history or conservation. Hopefully we will have some cross overs which can be edited into an interesting debate.

I would love to start a regular feature. My attempt opposite will I hope start the ball rolling.

Please send your reviews to me at chairsurreygt@gmail.com.

On my list...

Thoughtful Gardening by Robin Lane Fox

The Flower Garden by Clare Foster and Sabina Ruber

The Glory of the Garden A Horticultural Celebration from the pages of Country Life

Topiary by Twigs Way

Natural History of English Gardening by Mark Laird

The Dry Garden by Beth Chatto (again)

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I hope you join in and if anyone out there would like to take up the challenge of running and editing this slot please please let me know.

Update on M25/A3 road proposals by Don Josey

The website is being monitored weekly to keep us informed as the DCO proceeds through its Examination stages.

Painshill Park Trust continue to pursue the retention of a western access and have recently submitted robust and detailed answers to questions posed by the Examining Authority. Highways England seem adamant that there is no overriding public interest in such a requirement in relation to the significance of this part of Painshill Park. They have, however, investigated in detail alternative access routes alongside the A3 for the Girl Guide site to assist its safeguarding arrangements. The alternatives have a greater impact on the adjoining Ancient Woodland and another impasse arises as the Inquiry timetable advances.

Like all our wonderful historic spaces, don't forget Painshill Park during the pandemic. You can visit their website to see how you can help: <https://www.painshill.co.uk/help-painshill-survive-coronavirus-crisis/>.



Happy Memories

Mary and Sarah at Vann promoting the Surrey Gardens Trust at an NGS opening

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