



A TALE OF TWO GARDENS



WINTER ACONITE ... HIDDEN GEMS AT GATTON PARK



SPRING TULIP VISIT TO HISTORIC PASHLEY MANOR



WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT 'THE CROCUS KING'?



NEWSLETTER



RHS Hilltop, Wisley

Tuesday 9 May from 10am

Designated Parking and Access to the Gardens from 9am

Book your tickets direct through [Eventbrite](#)

Don't miss our exclusive day with the lead scientist

We are very fortunate to have Professor Alistair Griffiths, who leads the scientists and work at RHS Hilltop, join us for this special visit. Many of you are very familiar with RHS Wisley but let me assure you that the day we have arranged is truly inspirational and educational on many levels.

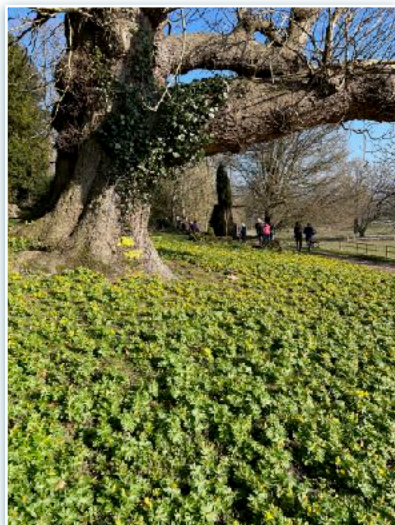
We are all acutely aware of the impacts of changing climate on both our gardens and our much loved historic landscapes. Did you now that this new Home of Gardening Science is developing the first UK scientific collection of all UK garden plants? Or that its research is seeking to advance ecological gardening and control and management strategies such as herbicide and pesticide free gardening? You may also be interested to learn what the RHS is doing in relation to Plant Heritage?

Well being is at the heart of much of the work at RHS Hilltop. We at the SGT, through our Gateway and Schools Awards programmes, have advocated gardens and gardening as a means of bringing joy and improving mental, physical and social wellbeing for many years. We are delighted to be helping the work of local charities, such as The Therapy Garden, and the RHS research and work in this field helps us all to enhance our own work.

I do hope that I have wetted your appetite and that you will support us and join in this day, which also happens to be taking place in this breathtaking iconic building and the fabulous gardens which surround it, not least the exquisite acre of kitchen garden!

Snowdrops, aconites... and so much more at Gatton Park

by the Editor



In February, we were invited by Paul Harvey, Events & Marketing Officer at Gatton Park, Reigate to enjoy a private view of the snowdrops and spring flowers bursting into life in the garden and a visit was hastily arranged. It was a stunning blue sky day and, as you can see from the photographs above, we were treated to a sea of winter aconite, an array of snowdrops through the woodland garden and eye catching views. With an excellent guide reminding us of the mastery of Capability Brown, and explaining the fascinating on going restoration of the Pulhamite rock garden, there was much to enjoy but my highlight was the enchanting Japanese garden.



I looked back through the SGT Newsletter Digital Archive and came across an article written by Pat Pay, the wife of one of the masters at the school who was the driving force behind the transformation of this garden space. As you look at my photographs of the Japanese garden today, I thought you would enjoy reading her description of the discovery and their restoration work in 1999.

“ When Japan finally opened its doors to foreigners in the mid 19th century, its gardens began to influence many garden designers in England. Landowners wanted a flavour of Japan and Sir Jeremiah Coleman was no exception. His idea of a Japanese Garden resulted in a romantic water garden, planted in an English style, complete with thatched teahouse! But when war and death came to rob Gatton of its gardeners and owner, the garden with the estate went to sleep. By 27th March 1999, the Japanese garden was hidden in a self seeded woodland. Its winding pools were filled with silt



www.gattonpark.co.uk

is a private estate owned by Royal Alexandra and Albert School and as a consequence is open to the public on selective days through the year.

Visit their website to find out when it is open and put a date in your diary.



and dead wood, its pretty paths covered in earth and weed with only the weight of countless animal's feet making new routes through the dark under-storey.

“The clues to its former existence were the clumps of bamboo still growing amongst the trees and strange holes in the ground on a small mound. These were noticed for the first time by a vigilant visitor on an Open Day and were found to match up with the position of the teahouse in a photograph which appeared in *The Gardeners' Chronicle* of 1915. These holes gave us the exact dimensions of the original structure.

“Five days later, on Thursday 1st April, water once again flowed through the garden amongst a great variety of new planting including grasses, primulas, shrubs and bamboo. Most of the trees had been removed from the centre of the garden apart from the *Ginkgo*, which was so lovingly embraced by ivy that we almost decided it was beyond saving. Fortunately, due to the skill of our tree surgeon, it now looks beautiful.

“New hoggin paths were laid over their original sites and lantern bases, found at the points where the paths had led to stepping stones across the water, were repaired. Lanterns were loaned specially for the filming. However, during the desilting some very exciting finds were made....

“Since then a wooden bridge has been installed and looks wonderful. All this restoration has been completed with the help of ten volunteers! Our grateful thanks go to Gatton park Volunteers, Legal & General Volunteers, Writtle College and Surrey Gardens Trust members, without whom it just would not have been possible.”

You can read this article and see the photographs referred to in the [SGT Newsletter Autumn/Winter 1999, Issue No. 17](#) through the [Digital Archive](#) where you can also search for other Gatton Park articles.

FROM THE CHAIR

Our AGM in December 2022, was a morning of lively discussion and engagement, not forgetting the delicious lunch. Our wonderful volunteers across the committees and groups talked passionately to the assembled members about their work and how to get involved. A huge thank you to those who signed up for research and recording and offered their gardens for Gateway visits as well as to help with the visiting groups.

Twelve weeks into 2023, and as you will read below we are busy on many fronts and I thought I would take this opportunity to reinforce the conversation we had in December.

The Events committee would like to encourage members to join them. As you all know, our current, diligent team efficiently orchestrates and delivers a hugely varied programme of lectures and visits. If we are to maintain this much enjoyed and valuable element of the SGT calendar, we do need more help. As well as being part of the decision making process or perhaps organising one of the annual trips, we are looking for members who enjoy the backroom administrative aspects of this work. More detail will follow in the coming months but in the meantime, please do drop a note to Sheri Sticpewich at eventssgt@gmail.com if you would like more information.

The Schools Committee is counting down to the 31 March deadline for the Schools Award applications for 2023. The next task is to assess the applications. If you think that you would enjoy this process and rewarding work do get in touch with Wendy Craft as soon as possible or just to let her know that you would love to visit a school project near you in the coming months: schoolssgt@gmail.com.

Thank you...

...and in the meantime...



Members at the AGM 2022, The Old Barn Hall, Great Bookham and one of our presentation boards (below)



HELP NEEDED SGT at Dunsborough Park Tulip Festival, 20 April 2023



We will be running a Cake and refreshments stall at the Dunsborough Park Tulip Festival on Thursday, 20 April, 9.30am - 12pm and 1pm - 3.30pm.

We had a lot of fun last year raising funds which enabled us to meet all the School Award applications.

If you can spare some time either morning or afternoon and/or bake a cake please let me know: chairsurreygt@gmail.com

OUR WORK

Research & Recording group

In the New Year, Brenda Lewis stepped back as Chair of the Research & Recording group after 16 years, handing over the reins to Fiona Maccoll. Brenda is still very much involved with the group, continuing to share her extensive knowledge, and we extend our heartfelt and enormous thanks to her for the exemplary steerage and drive she has given this essential part of our work over so many years.

Fiona continues to lead the group’s work on the Local List project. Following the successful ‘A Landscape in Time’ Study Day in October 2022 and our promotion of the group’s work at the AGM, we are delighted to have four new recruits joining the Waverley Local List and Jekyll Publication research groups. A series of Zoom sessions, study days and ‘buddy’ groups will help the new recruits over the coming weeks and months as they start to explore the historic landscape of Waverley which includes much of Jekyll’s Surrey work. All SGT members who are interested in research are most welcome. It is never too late to get involved! Contact: chairsurreygt@gmail.com

Busbridge Noticeboard

The SGT has funded and created a Noticeboard, now on display in the new Yew Tree Cafe at the heart of the Busbridge Graveyard, home to the Grade II Jekyll Memorial designed by Lutyens for Gertrude Jekyll and members of her family. The prominent Grade I War Memorial in the churchyard was also designed by Lutyens and their friendship and collaboration is explained.

The Epitaph on Jekyll’s grave reads ‘Artist, Gardener, Craftswoman.’ An insight into her extraordinary accomplishments is set out on the Board.

Our thanks to Simon Taylor, Rector, Busbridge Church for enabling us to share our knowledge in this way.



Julian Pooley talking at the Study Day in October held at the Surrey History Centre



The Jekyll Memorial, Busbridge churchyard and the Noticeboard (below)



Surrey Head Gardeners Network

The Surrey Head Gardeners Network continues to grow. We have representatives from Chinthurst Hill, Hascombe Court, Hatchlands, Gatton Park, Holmdale Estate, Munstead Wood, Painshill, Ramster, Titsey Place, Watts Gallery, Westbrook, West Horsley Place, Winkworth Arboretum and Vann.

In February, Annabel Watts, Head Gardener at Munstead Wood, treated the group to a private tour of the gardens and house. A WhatsApp group keeps everyone in touch with fabulous photographs of the winter pruning and hedging work.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you would like to join the group.

Small Grants Awards

We are delighted to announce Small Grant Awards of £1750 each to The Therapy Garden and West Horsley Place Trust.

We have a visit arranged to **The Therapy Garden** on 13 April 2023 when we will see the work they have been undertaking to drain an area of the garden enabling them to expand the space to further their work. Our Small Grant was matched by the Wisley Foundation raising the £3500 needed to reach their target figure.

There are still spaces to join the visit in April and learn about the valuable work undertaken by this charity: [Book here](#).

At **West Horsley Place**, a project is evolving to create a sensory garden experience for visitors to this historic garden who are visually impaired. We have committed to contribute to the overall funding for the project and are also providing professional design and horticultural assistance as appropriate.

A visit to the house and garden is arranged for SGT members in September. Details have just been released so do visit the website: [Events calendar 2023](#) to book. Many of you will be aware that the house is used for filming *Ghosts* for many months of the year and so access is limited. Once again, we are delighted to be supporting the West Horsley Place Trust as they work to restore the gardens and house.



Annabel Watts talking to members of the Surrey Head Gardeners' group in the garden at Munstead Wood.



SPRING TULIP VISIT

Pashley Manor Gardens, Wadhurst

SGT guided visit on Thursday 27 April, 2023, 10am.

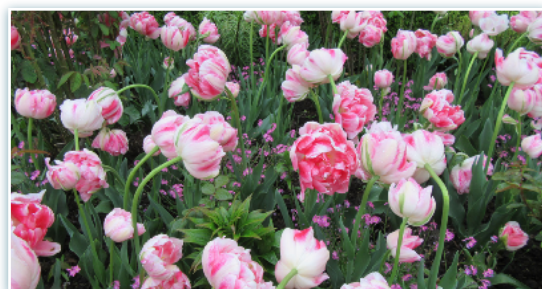
Our visit coincides with Pashley Manor's spectacular Tulip Festival when the garden is carpeted with over 48,000 tulips. Over a hundred varieties of tulip are planted in colour themed garden 'rooms' throughout the grounds and in pot displays.

There is evidence of gardening at Pashley from the 16th century. The Walled Garden was completed in 1720 and is historically listed in its own right. It was one of the first things to be redesigned and replanted in 1982. Since then significant changes have been made throughout the garden. After the guided tour you will have time to explore the gardens including the Rose Garden, Kitchen Garden and the Bluebell Walk.

The original house at Pashley was on the moated island and was believed to be a hunting lodge. This house was owned at the outset of the Wars of the Roses by Sir Geoffrey Boleyn, Lord Mayor of London in 1457 and great-grandfather of Anne Boleyn. In 1540, the estate was sold to Sir Thomas May, an affluent iron master, who moved the lodge and built Pashley Manor on higher land just north of the original site. Today, Pashley Manor retains its Tudor facade, with a later Georgian addition to the rear which acts as a magnificent backdrop to the garden.

Please note that the house is not open to the public.

The current owners, the Sellick family, purchased the estate in 1981 with derelict gardens. Over several decades the garden was uncovered and redesigned with the help of the eminent landscape architect and author, the late Anthony du Gard Pasley, an old friend of the Sellicks.



Photos ©Kate Wilson

If you would like to join us for this visit book your ticket through [Eventbrite](#).

Thursday, 27 April 2023

10am to 12.30pm

£24 includes a full guided tour of the garden with experienced garden guide.

The Garden Room will be open to buy homemade food and beverages

ADVENTURES ABROAD

A Tale of Two Gardens

by Iain McLaren

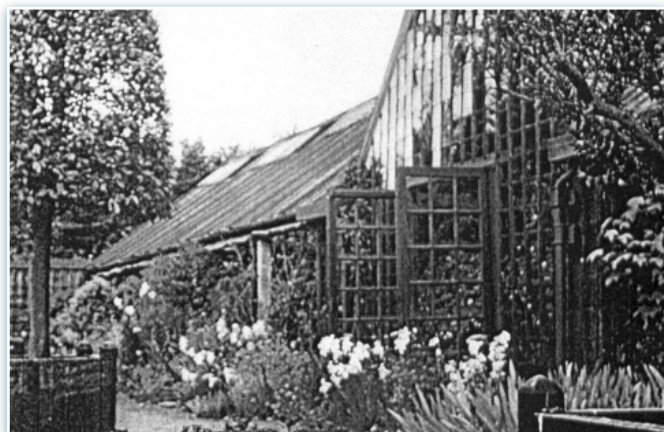
In 2003, I was commissioned by the National Trust to design an accurate replica of the Plant Shelter in Hidcote Manor Garden, Gloucestershire, the original having been demolished some years previously. My only references at that time were the buried foundation pads, intact below modern planting and some *Country Life* photographs.

The Plant Shelter had been created by Lawrence Johnston, the then owner of Hidcote, in two phases, originally in 1923 and enlarged in 1943. It was a 'homespun' construction, not employing any of the standardised manufactured systems available at the time and incorporated some unique features, especially the detachable glazing casements on the south elevation. During the course of my research, I discovered that Lawrence Johnston owned another garden, Serre de la Madone, in Menton on the French Riviera. It was his retreat from the English winter and where, from 1924 until 1939, he planted exotic subtropical species on terraces formed on the steeply sloping hillside amid the old olive trees that dotted the site.

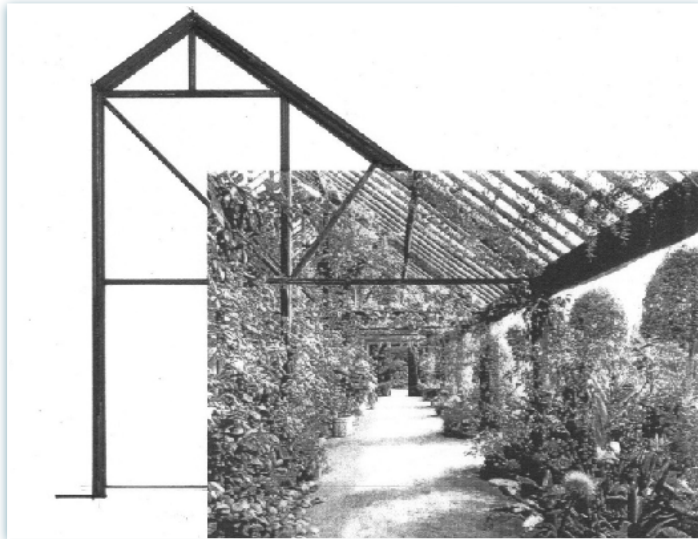
I also discovered that although this garden had fallen into neglect following Johnston's death in 1958, the Orangery at Serre de la Madone still survived intact and had exactly the same unique fenestration detail that had been lost at Hidcote. I casually mentioned to the National Trust that I could go to Menton to measure their casements and thereby ensure the accuracy of the Hidcote replicas. To my surprise, they said yes.

And so it was, in the searing heat of July 2003, that I took a day trip to the French Riviera to measure the Orangery casements at Serre de la Madone. I even constructed a letter in internet French to the head gardener only to find on arrival that he spoke perfect English! The resurrection of the Hidcote Plant Shelter was finally accomplished in 2010, having been constructed in two phases like the original.

But it was not until this year, in February 2023, that I saw Serre de la Madone again, on a tour of gardens of the French Riviera, taking in La Mouissonne in Grasse, Villa Ephrussi in St Jean Cap Ferrat and the Jardin Exotique in Eze, amongst others. Notwithstanding the delights of these other gardens, Serre de la Madone was for me the highlight of the tour and a welcome trip down Memory Lane.



The Plant Shelter circa 1943, *Country Life*. Many hours were spent studying this and other photographs through magnifying glasses in preparation for the project. Extensive rot and decay had led to its inevitable demolition in the latter half of the 20th century.



My diagrammatic analysis of the original structure based upon a *Country Life* photograph showing part of the interior of the Plant Shelter, with detachable front casements removed.



The Orangerie, Serre de la Madone, July 2003, overgrown, with front casements removed, pool empty, statues removed, but the garden gradually being revived and restored.



Measuring one of the detachable interlocking casements, July 2003.



The Plant Shelter, Hidcote Manor Garden, completed in 2010, with three tiers of detachable casements copied from Serre de la Madone. Its colour, a chocolate brown, quite unlike the ubiquitous Hidcote sky blue, was ascertained by microscopic analysis of surviving Johnston era wooden structures elsewhere in the garden.



The Orangery, Serre de la Madone, February 2023, with three tier detachable casements in place. The garden is now being restored it to its Johnston planting layout by the Conservatoire du littoral, a French public conservation body inspired, coincidentally, by the National Trust.

THE CROCUS KING

Myddelton House and Garden, the home and garden of E.A. Bowles

by Martin Cole

I grew up in Enfield and in recent years I have watched with much interest the restoration of this historic garden and home of Edward Augustus Bowles, MA, FLS, FES, VMH who was nicknamed 'The Crocus King'. This article is largely based on a publication by Bryan Hewitt, *The Crocus King - E.A. Bowles of Myddelton House - the gardens restored*, published by Rockingham (2018). Bryan Hewitt was acting Head Gardener in 2018 and his book was an enlarged version of a 1997 book written before the restoration. In 2018, the estate was in the ownership of Lee Valley Regional Park Authority and open to the public.



Entrance porch to Myddelton House, Enfield where E.A.Bowles lived and close up of the Blue Plaque with fire mark plaque below. Photograph by M Cole 22.09.2018

The history of Myddelton House is bound up with the inadequacy of London's water supply, the solution to which was to construct what was called The New River to bring water from Chadwell and Amwell 20 miles away in Hertfordshire to the Round Pond at Finsbury Park at 80 feet high above the city. It was to Hugh Myddelton in March 1609 that the City of London conveyed powers under two Acts of Parliament to build the river. Sir Hugh Myddelton was a citizen of London, a goldsmith and a member of the Merchant Adventurers who would help raise funds for the project. The project was completed in 1613, being financially supported by King James II, the river going through his grounds at Theobalds Palace to the north of Myddelton House in the Lea Valley.

In 1724, a Huguenot refugee, Michael Garnault, purchased an estate called Bowling Green House at Bulls Cross, North Enfield with a loop of the New River cutting through the garden. When he died the property passed to his nephew Aime, Treasurer of the New River Company. This estate, through inheritance, eventually went to Anne Garnault who had married Henry Carrington Bowles, a print seller and publisher who built a new house on site in 1818. He named it

Myddelton House as he did not want to be known as Bowles of Bowling Green House. On Henry's death the estate passed through various members of the family until Edward Augustus Bowles (Gussie) inherited it. He was born in the house in 1865 and died in 1954. Although he suffered from poor health and damaged eyesight he started to develop the garden and collect plants with the encouragement of his father and Canon Ellacombe, a distinguished horticultural writer.

The Canon gave Bowles a plant of twisted hazel which he planted in the area set aside for plants not growing to true form and which he called the Lunatic Asylum. This was joined by a hedgehog holly, a laburnum with oak-like leaves, a contorted hawthorn and a golden sycamore. Canon Ellacombe suggested Gussie should join the Royal Horticultural Society which he did, sending a cheque for £26 5s 6d. for life membership – a good investment for the next 57 years!

By 1895, Gussie was buying plants from Barr & Sons, Thomas Ware of Tottenham and Hale Farm Nurseries and started specialising in growing crocuses in large frames in the kitchen garden. He also built up a collection of *Iris unguicularis* (*I. stylosa*) and had a white one named after him, now extinct. He made excellent paintings of flowers, some of which are illustrated in Bryan Hewitt's book but there are also examples exhibited at Myddelton House.



One of E.A. Bowles's water colour paintings of his flowering plants above a doorway in Myddelton House.

Photograph by M Cole 22.09.2018

Gussie's poor health meant that he did not follow his elder brother to Harrow but was educated at home by a governess using *The Child's Book of Knowledge*, then the Vicar and later a tutor who prepared him for army and university examinations. He learnt enough mathematics, Greek and Latin to gain matriculation and a place at Jesus College, Cambridge in 1884 to study theological subjects. He learnt to play the piano by ear as he could not see the printed music and for physical exercise rode a pony and worked in the garden. He was fascinated by insects and joined the Cambridge Entomological Society where he met Arthur Robinson, a law student who became a lifelong friend. A fellow member of this Club was the future Prime Minister, Stanley Baldwin.

Gussie spent the whole of his life at Myddelton House, although he did travel abroad to France, Italy, Greece and Egypt with friends and relatives, all plant enthusiasts, on plant hunting expeditions. In a churchyard at La Grove in the Alps he found a beautiful periwinkle notable for its broad foliage. At Myddelton House it produced bright blue flowers. The nurseryman, Amos Perry, introduced it as *Vinca minor* Bowles variety. Gussie also produced paintings of flowers

for the Garden Magazine under the heading 'Notes from Myddleton House' even though his sight was failing. Some paintings went to the Natural History Museum. For all his work for the Royal Horticultural Society, research, committees, paintings he was awarded the Victoria Medal of Honour in 1917. When travelling to RHS meetings at Vincent Square he would be driven to Enfield Town Station in the landau if fine or brougham if raining. The train would take him to Liverpool Street Station and he would draw cash for the staff at Hoare's Bank in Fleet Street.

Gussie took on Frances Everitt as a garden 'boy' – "come and do some weeding" he said. This was the start of a career for her in horticulture. She married Gerald Perry whose father was Amos Perry of the famous Enfield Nursery family. She became the first female member of the RHS Council in 1968. Her sons went to my school, Enfield Grammar School but sadly one was killed on the very narrow Maiden's Bridge on the road near their home and Myddelton House.

By 1895 Bowles' collection of crocus numbered 135 named species and varieties, many of the hybrids being raised by himself. In 1924 his *Handbook of Crocus and Colchicum for Gardeners* was published (12s. 6d.) containing 11 plates of his watercolour paintings. The section on *Colchicum* was added to point out the difference from crocuses as the former belong to the lily family with six stamens, Crocus, an irid, having only three.

Gussie also wrote a book *My Garden* in four parts, describing it in the four seasons and 20 years later in 1934 his *A Handbook of Narcissus* was published. In answer to the question what is the difference between a Narcissus and a daffodil Gussie quoted John Parkinson: "many idle and ignorant gardeners doe call some of these Daffodils Narcisses, when as all know that know any Latine that Narcissus is the Latine name and Daffodil the English of one and the same thing".

An American lady visitor in 1923 described a walk through Gussie's garden. She saw the box-edged rose garden with the recovered Enfield's old market cross in the centre, a natural looking rock garden with the sky blue poppy *Meconopsis stellata*, from the Himalayan mountains, the river, a canal filled with limey water and bordered with high tulips, and from a lime tree walk a beautiful vista to his brother's house and park (Forty Hall), then a flagged terrace with steps to a lily pond. The walk ended having tea with Mr. Bowles in the Victorian drawing room amidst precious old Bow and Chelsea porcelain.

Gussie's older brother, a barrister and military man, Sir Henry Ferryman Bowles, became Enfield's Member of Parliament in a by-election in 1889. In that year he married Florence Broughton and they took up residence at Forty Hall, a seventeenth century mansion his father had purchased the previous year, the grounds of which adjoined Myddelton House. Florence, popularly known as Dolly, obviously got on very well with Gussie and she is said to have "kept an eye" on him to make sure he looked after himself.

Gussie was the great uncle of Brigadier Andrew Parker Bowles who remembers as a boy visiting Myddelton House with his brother, Simon, when their parents were living at the adjoining Forty Hall. Andrew learnt a lot about plants, breeding them, crossing them and with his brother was given all sorts of things such as birds' eggs, shells – and sweets. When Andrew was away at school he was sent bulbs and plants "in funny old parcels, with things falling out of them" which helped him win school gardening competitions.

Gussie founded in 1888 a night school for children to learn to read, write and draw, his father having supplied the building, Bentley House, 88 Turkey Street, Enfield. It is sobering to realise that the education of poor children depended on benefaction from the better off who had the motivation to do it. The school had 70 pupils and provided games after lessons. He also founded the 4th Enfield Boys' Brigade in 1892.

By 1915 E. A. Bowles was increasingly involved in outside activities such as meetings of the Cottage Hospital and the Anne Crowe Almshouses. He also represented Middlesex County Council on the governing body of Enfield Grammar School, as well as being the Vicar's Warden of the local Jesus Church, Forty Hall, Enfield and a trustee of Enfield Parochial Charities. However, Bowles did find time, when the house staff were on holiday in September, to visit in 1911 Gertrude Jekyll at Munstead Wood and William Robinson at Gravetye Manor when William was editor of *The Garden* magazine.

Following a heart attack at Myddelton House Gussie died in 1954, where he was born in 1865. In his Will he requested that the RHS should have all his drawings, manuscripts and documents relating to Galanthus and to W. T. Stearn at the British Museum his papers relating to Anemone for a book they were working on. E. A. Bowles's principal heir, Derek Parker Bowles, sent his bequest of books and documents from E.A. Bowles's library to the RHS's Lindley Library, some to the Chelsea Physic Garden and others to the Department of Botany at the Natural History Museum.

After the death of Bowles, Myddelton House, its gardens and its adjoining fields were purchased by the Royal Free Hospital School of Medicine jointly with the University of London School of Pharmacy, the latter looking after the Kitchen garden which became a Pharmacognasy Garden. The Chairman of the garden committee was William MacKenzie, Director of the Chelsea Physic Garden and Frances Perry looked after maintaining the main garden but limited funding meant that it could not be tended to Bowles's standard under which the hoe was a banned tool – you had to hand weed. At this time there was only limited public access to the garden. The Pharmacognasy Garden was first looked after by Bowles's former Head Gardener, John Rogers and from 1970-2000 by Charlie Smith who had been chauffeur and gardener for Bowles. The fields at the back of the house became sports fields for the Royal Free Hospital and a sports pavilion was built.

Back in 1859 the loop in the New River which ran through the grounds of Myddelton House was by-passed to shorten its length but the channel through the garden was kept filled with water for a charge. However, by the 1960s this was not deemed justifiable and so the channel was filled in with soil from the Victoria underground line extension and grassed over but the 1832 cast iron footbridge is still there.



One of the 'borders' in the garden at Myddelton House with garden over New River canal sweeping round at the right. The walled vegetable garden is on the left of the photograph.

Photograph by M Cole 22.09.2018



Iron footbridge dated 1832 over a short section of retained New River running through the garden at Myddelton House. Very old Wisteria along boundary wall at the back. The river used to go below this wall and the public road beyond.

Photograph by M Cole 22.09.2018

In 1968, the house and gardens were sold to the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority and one gardener, Eddie Piggot, looked after only the paths and lawns for 15 years! In 1982, the Authority requested advice from Christopher Bricknell at RHS Wisley about restoration of the garden as many of the garden features and unusual plants had disappeared. A visit was made by members of the National Council for the Conservation of Plants and Gardens (NCCPG) (London Group). It was recommended that a Head Gardener be appointed and by April 1984, Geoff Stebbings who held a Kew Diploma was selected, with a staff of two gardeners, with the task of restoring the garden. They replaced very old roses with new species roses, renewed the pergola and paving stones, put in a water supply with standpipes and by 1986 dredged the pond and put in a butyl lining. A garden advisory group was established drawn from the local Preservation and Horticultural Societies, the NCCPG and staff from the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority, By 1987, the Terrace Garden and the *Eremurus* and Cactus bed in the Rock Garden were restored and around 2,000 varieties of plants introduced into the garden, including the National Collection of Bearded Iris. All the plants were given an accession number with origin and date of planting recorded. Limited opening of the garden was arranged with a coloured leaflet.



Access to the pond in the heart of the garden at Myddelton House.

Photograph by M Cole 22.09.2018

Eventually by 1993, the garden became the responsibility of the Countryside Service of the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority and the E. A. Bowles Myddelton House Society was formed as a registered charity. Its objectives included promoting the horticultural work of the late E. A. Bowles and through fundraising and other activities trying to ensure the maintenance of the historic garden at Myddelton House with access for the general public.

Gradually through the 1990s the London School of Pharmacy and the Royal Free Hospital of Medicine ran down their activities in the medicinal garden located in the former Myddelton House kitchen garden. With fewer students visiting they jointly decided to close it down in 1999. Gussie's former chauffeur and gardener, Charlie Smith and Head Gardener, Christine Murphy, had been trialling opium poppies and cannabis and other herbs to supply both schools with plant material.

The medicinal garden and sports fields were put up for sale and they were purchased by the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority in the year 2000 so reuniting all parts of the original estate after 45 years. Until 2011, the Sports and Social Club Pavilion and the football pitches behind Myddelton House were hired out to Tottenham Hotspur Football Club for training youngsters. There were inadequate resources to maintain the medicinal garden and weeds were taking over with the occasional bright poppy amongst them but the metal glasshouses were kept in use for propagation and overwintering.

Clearly major funding was needed to bring the gardens and their buildings and statues back to their former glory so an approach was made to the Heritage Lottery Fund. This was initiated by the Area Manager of the Regional Park Authority at Myddelton House and having received an expression of interest a formal application was drafted by Paul Roper who became the Project Manager. The application took 6 months to draft and after a further 6 months he received a letter to say it had been successful. An award of £487,500 was granted in September 2008, under the title 'The Bowles Story at Myddelton House Gardens'. The Lee Valley Regional Park Authority matched this award thus making a substantial sum available so enabling the restoration project to go ahead over the next 2 years. The award rested on the decision of Wesley Kerr, OBE, Chairman of the Heritage Lottery Fund's London Committee who attended the launching of the project on the 21 June, 2009. Wesley wrote as a conclusion to Bryan Hewitt's book : "This is

one of the most fantastic gardens in London. It was covered up and almost lost but now it has been revealed again. This is one of the very best schemes for us to give money to and visitors have gone from 300 a month to 300 a day”.

Following the resignation of the Head Gardener, Christine Murphy, Bryan Hewitt, author of *The Crocus King* book, took over as Acting Senior Gardener in 2008. The Regional Park Authority then set about appointing a new Head Gardener, the successful candidate being Andrew Turvey, aged 26, who had learned his skills at RHS Wisley and Hilliers Arboretum. He started work in May 2009 on the main tasks listed in the successful Heritage Lottery Fund application. Under the supervision of architect Andrew Berzins, the Georgian stables were transformed into a Cafeteria and the Carriage House into a small museum; having visited both I can say they are excellent. At the entrance to the Museum are Gussie’s two restored lead ostriches standing around six feet tall. They came from Gussie’s father’s garden and are now around 300 years old, having been made in Van Nosts workshop near Hyde Park.

Andrew also created a large tool shed near the pond by using part of the steel frame of the Victorian style conservatory. In the garden the paving was relaid and the Enfield Market Cross in the Rose Garden and other monuments restored. Restoration work was also carried out on all the old garden buildings such as the Potting Shed, Peach House, Cold Frames, etc. But not the glass houses which were left to a subsequent project funded by the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority at a cost of £350,000, being completed in 2012. They were officially opened by Sir Tim Smit, KBE, of Lost Gardens of Heligan fame. In 2015, Head Gardener, Andrew became Head Gardener at Hatfield House and James Hall replaced him.



Exotic plant in the glasshouse at Myddelton House.

Photograph by M Cole 22.09.2018

The Kitchen Garden underwent a massive clearance assisted by three pigs rescued from the slaughterhouse. They dealt with the bulk of the ground elder, convolvulus and other weeds before the garden was planted up for vegetables, fruit and cut flowers. Pigs were successfully used during the restoration work required in the creation of the New RHS Garden, Bridgewater, Salford.

The Heritage Lottery Fund also provided an Historic and Botanic Garden Bursary to half fund a trainee gardener, the other half being provided by the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority; this was an excellent additional benefit. To help visitors to appreciate the garden features and the history of the estate members of the Myddelton House Society have created twenty two interpretation boards to be displayed in the museum and around the grounds. All the plants in the garden were being catalogued at the time of the publication of Brian Hewitt's book about Myddelton House.

The official opening of the restored gardens took place on the 5 May, 2011 attended by the Queen Consort, then Camilla, HRH The Duchess of Cornwall, a keen gardener. Also present were representatives of the Regional Park Authority, the Myddelton House Society, its President Brigadier Andrew Parker Bowles, OBE and Wesley Kerr, OBE of the Heritage Lottery Fund.

I had a rather unexpected introduction to the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority at a Patron's event at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew in 2016 when I met Stephen Roberts, Head of Property for this Authority. I was surprised to discover that his office was in Myddelton House; an interesting conversation ensued.

The Lee Valley Regional Park Authority is responsible for many of the historic properties and countryside features stretching along the Lea Valley with the River Lea flowing from Ware in the north via a series of lakes and reservoirs until it enters the River Thames at Leamouth. The New River runs along the West side of the Valley carrying fresh water to London. Some of the notable places of interest in the area include the Olympic Park at Stratford, the Royal Gunpowder Mills at Waltham Abbey, the Ediswan Factory, Ponders End (light bulbs and thermionic valves), the Royal Small Arms Factory, Enfield Lock (Lee Enfield Rifle), the River Lea Country Park in the Upper Lea Valley and now the modern London Waste Eco Park on the North Circular Road. There is also the site of Dr. John Fothergill's Upton House, now West Ham Park managed by the Corporation of London, where he established a notable botanic garden and grew plants from around the world including oranges in a hothouse.

Excellent plans of the Lea Valley, with the location of the places of historic interest are contained in a book *Water and waste from hundred years of health improvement in the Lea Valley* by Dr. Jim Lewis, Middlesex University Press, 2009.

From the Editor...|

Martin very kindly submitted this review in response to my challenge to members to pick up a book and send a review (SGT Newsletter Spring 2020). Martin explained in his covering note to me: 'I thought, why don't I do a precis for the Surrey Gardens Trust as I thought members would be interested. However as I set to I got rather carried away as I found the book is so packed with fascinating information and my attempts to precis evaporated!' Thank you Martin, fascinating indeed.

I look forward to hearing from other members with their 'Books on your shelf' review.

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A HUGE THANK YOU

Once again, the SGT Schools Awards are sponsored by Squires Garden Centres with ten £20 vouchers to give away to participating schools.

This is to say thank you for their support over many years.

BOOKING OPEN FOR SUMMER VISITS



Down House
Tuesday 6 June
10am



Knepp Castle Estate
Monday 17 July
10am



Titsey Place
Wednesday 9 August
2.30pm



West Horsley Place
Wednesday 13
September
9.30am

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