



NEWSLETTER

In this issue

Leith Hill Place

Elaine Raven shares her research of this unsung landscape as the National Trust prepare to reopen the house in May 2024 (p. 3-6).

A Bespoke Tour of Painshill Park

Don't miss a specially curated day at this iconic and internationally renowned landscape on our doorstep. With lunch in the Temple of Bacchus taking in the magnificent views we will experience a unique perspective from the team of the challenges management and conservation present (p. 6-7).

What are Neighbourhood Plans?

Helen Parvin works with Don Josey to ensure that any development in Surrey which potentially impacts on our historic parks and gardens or their settings is closely monitored. They are also engaged in reviewing Neighbourhood Development Plans. Helen explains their work (p. 8-9).



Behind the Falkner Entrance, the Victoria Garden, Farnham ©Marion Woodward

From the Chair

We have got off to a busy start in 2024.

Our January Winter Lecture was a celebration of a gem of a public garden much used and loved, The Victoria Garden in Farnham. Designed by Marion Woodward on behalf of Surrey Gardens Trust for the Farnham Swimming Baths Trust in 1997, it is a reminder of how the Trust works to support Surrey's publicly accessible garden spaces through grants and our volunteer expertise and time.

In February a group of SGT member gardeners and designers came together at West Horsley Place to survey and create a planting scheme for the new Sensory Garden. We have also supported the project with a Small Grant contribution. This is part of the West Horsley Place Trust Heritage Without Barriers programme largely funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. You can read more at www.westhorsleyplace.org.

Earlier this month, I was delighted to see a number of members at the 40th anniversary Lutyens Trust Study Day, *Nedi & Bumps: a Creative Alliance*. Cherrill Sands, former SGT chair and garden historian spoke about *The Perfect Partnership: the artist and the architect*. I represented the



Discovering the History of Marden Park with Sandra Pullen

There is still time to buy tickets on line or do just come along and buy your ticket at the door for the last of our in person Saturday afternoon Winter Lectures. Sandra Pullen will explore the history of Marden Park and its original gardens as well as subsequent improvements.

This Saturday 23 March 2024

2.00pm - 4.00pm

Ashted Peace Memorial Hall,
Woodfield Lane, Ashted.

[www.surreygardenstrust.org.uk/
events](http://www.surreygardenstrust.org.uk/events)

From the Chair cont.../



Hard at work at West Horsey Place ©Sarah Dickinson

SGT with a lecture on *Gertrude Jekyll's Legacy: The challenges of conserving 'works of art' created out of plants*. Dr Caroline Ikin, the National Trust curator at Munstead Wood, shared her recent research looking at Gertrude Jekyll's craft work at Munstead Wood with reference to Miss Jekyll's scrap books and photographs from her albums. Paul Gallivan, the National Trust Gardens Consultant for London and Southeast Region, took questions about the challenges historic gardens are facing due to environmental and climatic changes. Paul is on secondment from his Head Gardener role at Woolbeding Gardens* and Petworth, two gardens which we have on our fabulously curated garden visit programme this year (see p.7 (*to be announced)). Charles Hind, Chief Curator and H.J.Heinz Curator of Drawings at the RIBA spoke on *Hestercombe and Great Dixter*. He will take over from Clive Aslet as Chair of the Lutyens Trust in June 2024.



Over the winter months our Garden Detectives have been hard at work making excellent progress with their research of locally significant sites in Waverley. The research group continues to grow with new volunteers joining the on going training. In February researchers enjoyed a *Learn to Read Historic Maps* session at the Surrey History Centre led by Brenda Lewis. Here are Sheri Sticpewich and Barbara Judge thoroughly absorbed.

Historic Garden at Leith Hill Place, Dorking (TQ133 423).

by Elaine Raven, member Research & Recording group



View of Leith Hill South over Leith Hill Place, 2020.
AndyScott, [Wiki Creative Commons licence CC-BY-SA-4.0](#)

When most people think of Leith Hill Place they associate it with Charles Darwin or Ralph Vaughan Williams, but there is much more to its history. Original parts of the house date back to the 17th century, with later 18th and 19th century additions. It is surrounded by a small but significant garden with spectacular views to the South Downs. It runs north-south parallel with Leith Hill Lane. It boasts many fine specimen trees and an adjacent Rhododendron Wood. Less well known today is a formal walled garden across the road which has sadly disappeared. It was well documented and is shown on old maps of the estate.

The first owner to radically redevelop the grounds (so successfully as to eradicate any trace of the earlier features) was Lt General John Folliott, who lived at Leith Hill Place from 1725-1748. He spent a great deal of money redesigning and planting. Sale particulars at his death observed "the estate was so well improved by the General in his lifetime as to be now esteemed one of the most compact in England".

At the most northerly point from the house was the "Firr Grove", which was also planted with other trees and shrubs. The Grove and other garden walks covered 17 acres. The house was accessed by a coach road which led down to the front door which faced north, with "a noble bason of water and a sweep on both sides of the house". There were garden pathways and "beautiful serpentine walks", all enclosed with a new dwarf brick wall and a haha.

Many features of the General's garden disappeared in later rearrangements, including the avenue leading down the hill, gone by 1847. Immediately to the east across the road was a remarkable walled garden, no longer extant, though the mellowed brick wall still encloses the site. Again the invaluable sale particulars refer to the "very good garden, well stocked with all sorts of wall and other fruits". By 1827 it was still documented as "an extensive walled-in garden, with a regular supply of water, for which no expense has been spared". This served all the premises, and apparently there was a reservoir outside the house. Nearby was a "Conduit Copse". A Rocque map of 1765 shows a cruciform pattern of paths, lost by the 1970s. The garden provided the house with its daily requirement of fruit and vegetables. There was a fishpond with carp and tench. A sketch of a summerhouse survives.

To the south, on the same side of the road was an orchard, intriguingly referred to as Port Mahon. (This was an English naval base in the 18th century, perhaps a connection with the General's previous career?) Rocque's 1768 map of Surrey is the first to show the buildings and garden in some detail, and illustrates the additions and improvements made by him.



(Left) Photograph Leith Hill Place - view from rear of the house ©Marion Woodward

(Below top) Photograph Leith Hill Place former walled garden 2023 ©Fiona Maccoll

(Below bottom) Photograph Leith Hill Place Lime Avenue 2023 ©Fiona Maccoll

He built or improved many of the estate buildings judging by the similarity of the bricks. They were probably made nearby, for example south west of the house was a "kiln field". The house is shown in a rectangular enclosure, possibly indicating terraces, with the round outline of a pond to the north. The avenue of trees is clearly shown running north-south. The kitchen garden is divided into four quarters. There was a "Gardener's House", three other cottages and gardens and a Smith's shop. A new farmhouse was built across the road in the 18th century. It was all surrounded by woodland and parkland.

Several years later the estate was purchased by Richard Hull, whose greatest memorial is the Leith Hill Tower, (1776), still very much a Surrey landmark. The top is the highest point in the south east of England.

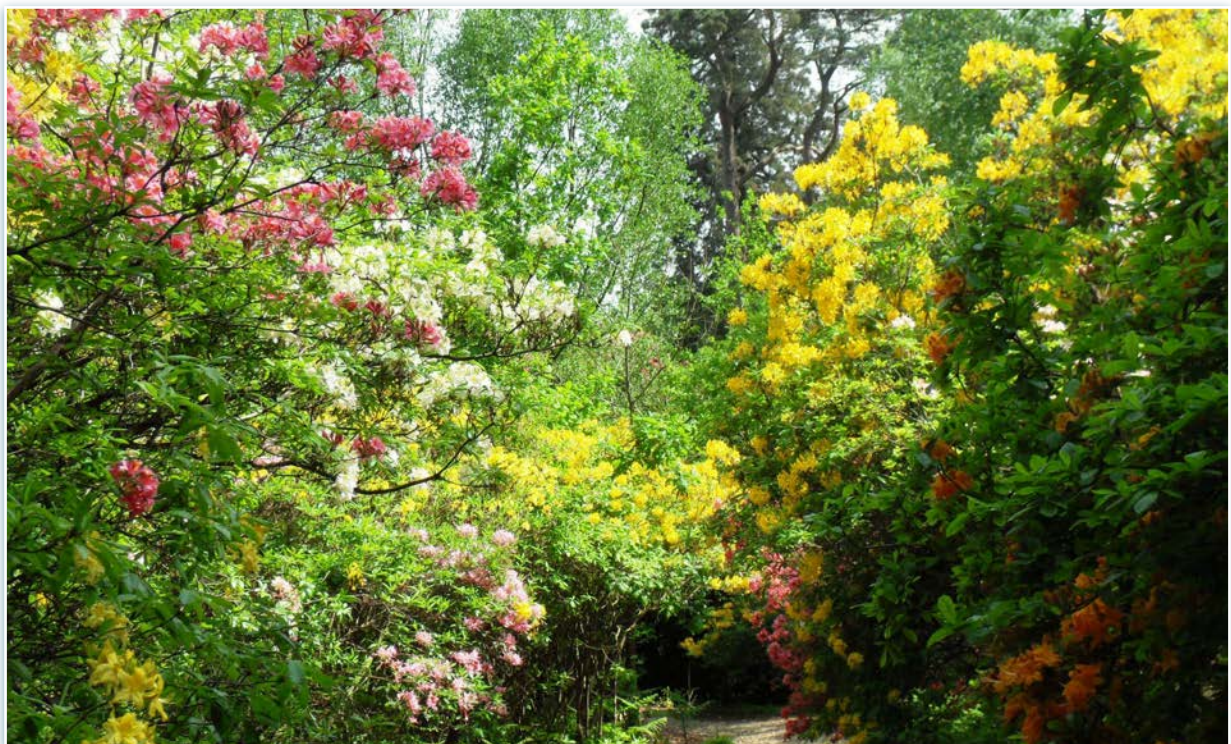
Telescopes were provided to enjoy the sweeping views which stretched across fourteen counties, with London landmarks to the north and the English Channel to the south.

A later owner was John Smallpiece, who added Etherley Farm, immediately to the south. It has been suggested that he was ensuring that the view south would continue to be uninterrupted. The gothic style Lodge by the modern entrance displays his family crest.



In 1847 the estate was bought by Josiah Wedgwood III, of the china dynasty, who with his wife Caroline were the next owners to make their significant mark on the grounds. He was fifty years old and had three young daughters. Caroline was the older sister of Charles Darwin. Josiah is credited with a great deal of new planting, especially rhododendrons and azaleas. He also took an interest in the Osmunda fern, which grew wild in the woods on Leith Hill. It was in danger of disappearing, so he preserved it by transplanting the last specimens to his own grounds.

Caroline Wedgwood is credited with being responsible for the creation of the Rhododendron Wood. Map evidence of the time shows small pieces of field and woodland were converted into a formally planted park and garden. A two acre field, then known as George's Platt, together with the Lewisham or Lucerne Field now form the Wood. Today it still has some survivors of her planting, such as the Giant Redwood.



Rhododendron wood, May 2010
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Azeleas_Leith_Hill.jpg

Josiah planted flowering shrubs in the Leith Hill woodland under the shelter of native oaks and conifers. On the path down to the house is a splendid example of a tulip tree, one of the largest in England. Other specimens include a Dawn Redwood, Coast Redwood, Paperbark Birch, River Birch, Weeping Yew, Japanese Cedar and Himalayan Pine. The rhododendrons come from India, China, the Himalayas, Thailand and the Tibetan frontier.

Many are large, old and tree like, such as the *Rhododendron arboreum*, or rare, such as the *Rhododendron glischroides* from Upper Myanmar. A series of paths was created in the surrounding woodland. One example which is still available to access was across the road from the house below the orchard. Lime trees formed an avenue which led to a small pond fed by a waterfall. Further along a seat has been situated so visitors may admire the view to the south.

Charles Darwin paid frequent visits to his sister's home, and employed the services of the "Dear Angels", his three nieces, as his assistants in research work. In 1881 he published *The Formation of Vegetable Mould*, the action of worms, with observations on their habits. His niece Sophy looked for worms, often on Leith Hill Common, and her sister Lucy Caroline reported back to her uncle. He sent her comments to Mr T. Masters, suggesting the piece be inserted in the *Gardener's Chronicle*. In a field near the house he noticed a large stone, probably an erratic, transported from its original habitat due to glacial action in the Ice Age, which was sinking into the ground. He concluded that it was due to the actions of earthworms. On a visit to Stonehenge he had noticed the same phenomenon. The "Wormstone" may be seen today, west of the mansion near a footpath.



The south front of Leith Hill Place country house | © National Trust Images/Andrew Butler <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/surrey/leith-hill>

The National Trust advise that the house will reopen in May 2024 but do visit the beautiful landscape and enjoy the Rhododendron displays in the coming weeks with Elaine's research in hand.



Recent History

The youngest niece was Margaret, who married the Reverend Arthur Williams, a neighbour. This continued a long connection with the nearby properties of Tanhurst and Parkhurst. Widowed early she returned to her childhood home with her children, and on her death left the estate to her son Harvey. On his death in 1944 it passed to his younger brother the composer Ralph Vaughan Williams who gave it to the National Trust. It was rented out as a school, returning to the Trust 2008-10. A report on the house and estate was commissioned to help to decide its future. The house is currently closed for essential repairs but is due to reopen Spring 2024.

My thanks to all people and organisations who have helped with my research but especially to the contribution made by the National Trust.

Don't Miss....

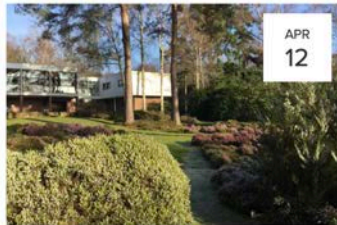
Painshill Park - a unique private and bespoke look behind the scenes

You've been to Painshill Park before so think you won't need to visit again? Please think again - this visit has been specially curated for us, the Painshill team have never held a tour like this before. It will be an in depth view showing us how the historic landscape is managed with the challenges of today and covering conservation and flooding issues. As part of the tour lunch will be served in the Temple of Bacchus with its great views over the park.

Click here to buy [tickets](#). They are selling fast and our numbers are limited to 20.

2024 Spring and Summer Garden Visits

If you haven't booked your place already do visit our website to secure a place on one or more of the visits arranged for us all this year by the Events team.



Garden Visits
The Homewood

Friday, 12 April 2024
10:30 am – 4:30 pm
[The Homewood \(map\)](#)

Explore this Modernist home and garden designed by architect Patrick Gwynne.

[VIEW EVENT →](#)



Garden Visits
Runnymede

Tuesday, 23 April 2024
11:00 am – 12:30 pm
[Runnymede \(map\)](#)

Guided tour of this historically significant memorial to John F. Kennedy.

[VIEW EVENT →](#)

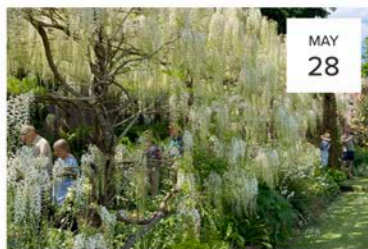


Garden Visits
Painshill Park

Thursday, 9 May 2024
10:00 am – 2:30 pm
[Painshill Park \(map\)](#)

Experience a tour like no other at historic Painshill Park

[VIEW EVENT →](#)



Garden Visits
Petworth Private Walled Garden

Tuesday, 28 May 2024
2:30 pm – 4:30 pm
[Petworth Walled Garden \(map\)](#)

Guided tour of this secret, magical private garden of Petworth House.

[VIEW EVENT →](#)



Garden Visits
Lower House, Bowlhead Green

Wednesday, 5 June 2024
2:00 pm – 4:00 pm
[Lower House \(map\)](#)

Explore this beautifully mature and lovingly maintained garden.

[VIEW EVENT →](#)

Our role in the planning consultation process and commenting on Neighbourhood Development Plans

by Helen Parvin

One of the influential roles that Surrey Gardens Trust (SGT) has to play is that of informing and advising planning officers at the various Surrey local authorities in relation to the significance of the 42 gardens, parks and cemeteries of national significance in Surrey that appear in the Historic England *Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest*. There are nearly 1700 registered parks and gardens in the England and Wales on the Register. These are graded Grade I, sites of exceptional interest, Grade II*, particularly important sites of more than special interest and Grade II, sites of special interest, warranting every effort to preserve them. A historic designed landscape on the Register is a 'designated heritage asset'.

At national level the Gardens Trust (GT) is a statutory consultee for planning applications likely to have an impact on registered sites. By way of a weekly list they notify County Gardens Trusts of these proposals. Don Josey is our lead in this work and appraises the Surrey cases from the online documents and plans using his wide knowledge of the county and its parks and gardens. Where the proposals have little or no impact a "No comment" representation is agreed with and sent as a joint response by the GT. Written representations on behalf of SGT are sent to the local planning office when a supportive comment is considered necessary or, more importantly, when an objection is needed to reflect a potential harmful impact on a designated park or garden.

Increasingly we are also consulted on other planning items such as policy documents like Minerals and Waste, Local Plan Policy and Climate Change Supplementary Planning Documents. We would only comment on these should the proposed policies impact on the treasured heritage of our historic parks and gardens. There are a couple of other policy document types which generally do benefit from our input. These are Conservation Area Boundary Reviews and Neighbourhood Development Plans. I have some policy formulating experience in this regard gleaned from my former role as an Historic Environment Officer.

A Neighbourhood Development Plan (or Order) is a development and land-use planning document and sets a vision for the future. It can be detailed, or general, depending on what local people want. Communities can use neighbourhood planning to influence the type, design, location and mix of new development, within the bounds of existing district level planning policies. The policies are grouped into topics such as housing, employment, infrastructure, open space and heritage. It is common for plans to look at least 15 years ahead often aligning their neighbourhood plan period with that of the Local Plan.



The whole draft Neighbourhood Plan document proposal is read. It is very important to reach a clear understanding of the boundary of the area the Neighbourhood Plan will cover. Starting with the oldest maps and working through all the first edition OS maps through to the current mapping provided in the draft Neighbourhood Plan we note the way historic parks, estates and open spaces have been developed, how boundaries may have changed, if there are any changes affecting the historic core and which areas have been left unchanged.



View from high up on Coopers Hill, part of the Englefield Green Village Neighbourhood Plan boundary area.

©Helen Parvin

Closest scrutiny in the draft Neighbourhood Plan is given to the Historic Environment policies and whether sufficient emphasis has been given to the significance of any registered parks and gardens within the Plan's boundaries. Comment from us would be on new development affecting the setting of these registered sites.

Generally, the Borough and District Councils will reference only buildings and structures with regard to Local Listing and we often have to suggest that a wider approach would be to include parks and gardens of interest too. The current work of the Research & Recording group to review locally significant historic parks and gardens which warrant inclusion on a local list and reference in an Historic Environment Record (HER) feeds into this process and is hugely valuable.

There are often one or two other documents to read such as a consultation document on history of the area for the community to gain a better understanding of what is significant and sensitive in the area highlighting whether there is capacity, or lack of capacity, to change.

Our comments are formally presented in a short and succinct letter submitted to the relevant Borough or District Council's policy planning team, copying in the GT.

If any of you reading this are thinking how interesting to learn about a specific area in Surrey and would like to help us in our consultation responses then please get in touch. Any training you might want can be tailored to you.

Helen Parvin

helenparvin@btinternet.com

Save the Date

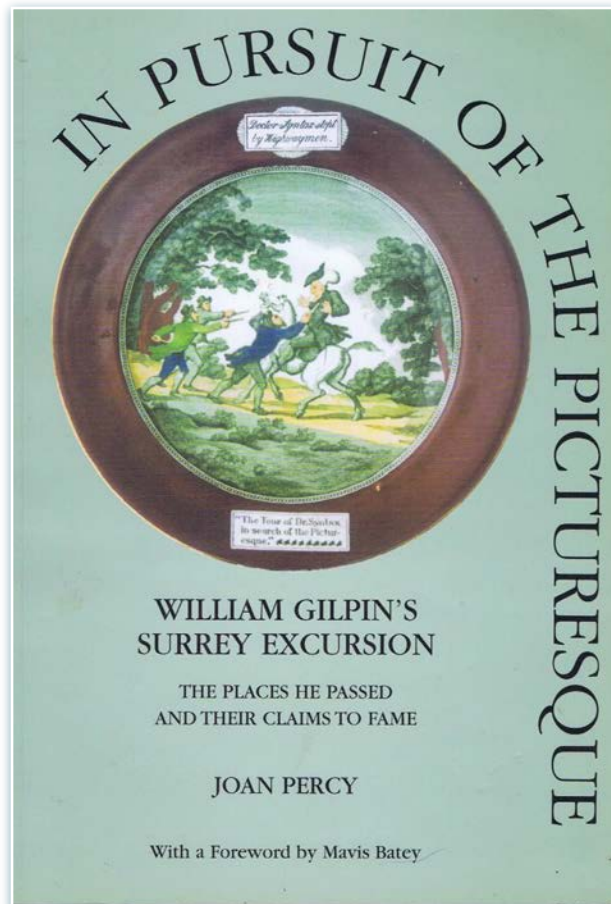
300th Anniversary Year Celebration of the life of the Revd William Gilpin

On Thursday 18 July at Juniper Hall, Mickleham, Dorking

Surrey Gardens Trust will be hosting a day
in Celebration of the life of the Revd William Gilpin (1724-1804),

Pioneer of the Picturesque

Speakers, including Michael Symes and Cherrill Sands,
will be looking at some of the sites he mentioned on his Surrey excursion
to The Rookery at Westcott in August 1768.



Remembering friends and colleagues

Rita Goodwin

Here second in from the left with Cherrill Sands, Mavis Batey and Brenda Lewis at SGT's Evelyn Conference at Wootton House in 2006.



Rita Goodwin passed away in November 2023. An enthusiastic member of Surrey Gardens Trust, Rita was also one of the Research and Recording team and wrote articles for the newsletter about Mount Felix, Jane Loudon and Las Pozas, the surrealist garden in Mexico created by Edward James. Rita visited Las Pozas as part of the tour organised by the Garden History Society (now the Gardens Trust). She was a keen gardener, but enthusiastic to learn more about gardens and studied for the garden history diploma at Birkbeck College.

Rita was kind and generous, with a warm personality and friendly smile. She was always great company, good at welcoming and encouraging new members, and always willing lending a hand at any SGT event. We all miss her.

Cherrill Sands

Beryl Saich (1931 - 2024)

Here pictured with her beloved husband, Michael Saich, who died in 2023.



©Marion Woodward

Beryl was born in Coventry in 1931, the youngest of three children. To put her childhood in context, she remembered sheltering under the stairs as the bombs fell. A bright girl, she attended the King's High School for Girls, Warwick, and went on to study History at Westfield College, University of London. Beryl stayed on in London after attaining her degree and, with her love of books, decided to become a librarian, starting at Islington Public Libraries as an assistant. Here she met Michael, a union that lasted 70 years, being married for 66 of them.

Remembering friends and colleagues, cont/...

Beryl and Michael had two daughters, Nancy and Dinah, who now have successful careers and families of their own. Beryl continued to work and, when the family moved to Coulsdon, she became the hospital librarian at Netherne. Her love of dramatic performances was useful in the annual pantomime, over the years playing the principal boy and also parts in the chorus. She later moved to Redhill Hospital, then set up the library at the new East Surrey Hospital, where she stayed until her retirement in 1995.

Beryl and Michael joined SGT in 1991 and both served on Council from December 1997 until November 2015. Beryl joined the Research and Recording Group and her extensive site research was mainly in the Tandridge area as it was closest to her home.

As a boost for sales of the SGT publication *In Pursuit of the Picturesque, William Gilpin's Surrey Excursion* a performance was created from William Combes' poem *Dr Syntax* (who was based on William Gilpin). Beryl was happy to play the part of Dr Syntax's wife, Dolly, in suitable costume, as well as six other parts indicated just by changes of hat. (See SGT Newsletter Spring 2005).

Beryl later wrote 'A visit to the RHS Lindley Library to explore its biographical resources for garden history research revealed Blanche Henrey's three Volume *British Botanical and Horticultural Literature before 1800*, (published 1975). Its quality was evident, even at first glance, and demanded investigation of its author/compiler and how this impressive work was produced'. Beryl loved researching Henrey's archive at the Natural History Museum, London, and exploring other avenues for information on her life. Her research on Blanche Henrey was presented at the New Research Symposium which preceded the Gardens Trust Conference in Plymouth in September 2017, and Beryl was very amused to be called a 'new' researcher when in her 80s. The article would go on to be published first in *Garden History* and then republished in the Royal Photographic Society's *The Photohistorian* as Blanche Henrey had been a member.

As well as writing numerous articles for the SGT Newsletter on the sites she had researched, Beryl also lectured for the Trust, particularly on John Evelyn following the publication of the book *A Celebration of John Evelyn: Proceedings of a Conference to Mark the Tercentenary of his Death*, most recently at Wotton House, Dorking, in 2017 as part of an Evelyn Study Day.

Four days before Beryl died, I telephoned to remind her that there was a Zoom Research and Recording meeting that day. She told me to give her apologies and also said that she felt she should stand down from the group. A wonderful person and dear friend, she is much missed.

Brenda Lewis



Munstead Wood at Godalming Museum

Don't forget to pop in to Godalming Museum and meet the Munstead Wood team while their display is on the walls of the cafe area until 30 March 2024.



Announcing a Surrey Gardens Trust Summer Party

Thursday, 29 August, 2024 (pm)

In the walled garden at West Horsley Place

We are very excited to announce a summer get together for our members and friends. Please put the date in your diary in anticipation of a relaxed picnic afternoon sitting in the wonderful walled garden at West Horsley Place enjoying entertainment by Playgc Theatre Company. A little taster below but more details will follow.



Glory of the Garden

A glorious anthology of poetry, prose and songs, delivered by five versatile professional performers, on the theme of gardens and the gardeners who tend them. From Gertrude Jekyll to Pam Ayres, from An English Country Garden to The Secret Garden, from the lyrical to limericks, this is a flowerbed full of delights.

Audience feedback from 'Glory of the Garden' staged at The Shaftesbury Fringe in July 2023:

- "My group soooo enjoyed your event! We had the happiest time with you and talked a lot about you over lunch. THANK YOU VERY MUCH for the entertainment!!"
- "Well, what a stunning show. Thank you, all of you, for producing such a brilliant hour of horticultural fun."
- "Wow - what a triumph.... such an entertaining show, funny, touching, sweet and just too true!!"
- "We greatly enjoyed Glory of the Garden. Highly engaging, entertaining and relatable!"
- "I just had to write to say how much I enjoyed your performance in Shaftesbury yesterday, it exceeded all my expectations."
- "All emotions evoked and so well put together."

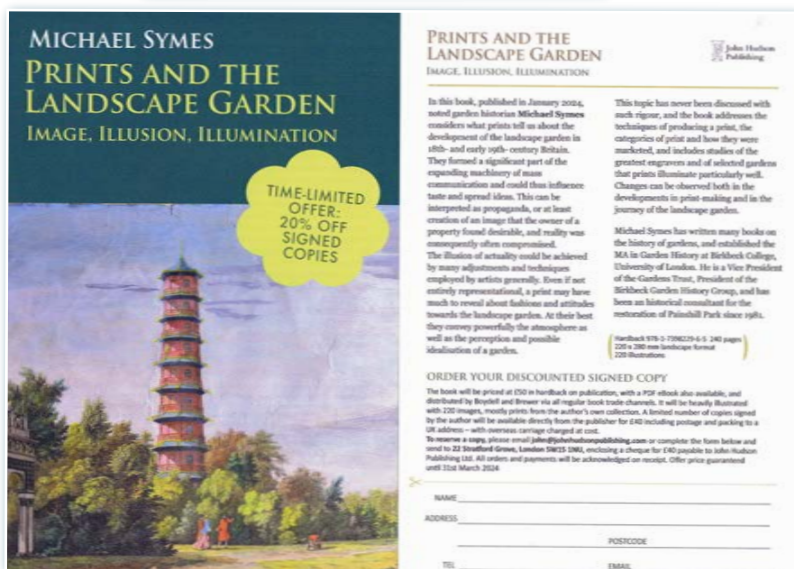
PlayGC Theatre Company was delighted to be voted by our audience members the **best** production in the 'Poetry & Spoken Word' category.





Graham Alderton, NT Head Gardener at Winkworth Arboretum is amongst the speakers taking part in the Petworth Park, Spring Festival Garden talks between 23 and 29 March 2024.

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/sussex/petworth/spring-festival-at-petworth>



20% Off Signed Copy offer ends on 31 March 2024. To reserve a copy of this fascinating new publication at £40 (incl. postage in UK) e mail: john@johnhudsonpublishing.com.

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