



President: Lady Wroughton

Trustees' Annual Report for 2013/14

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The year under review, March 2013 – March 2014, has been partly covered by Christina Hill Williams in her Report for last year's AGM. I do not want to repeat that, but only record that we had a successful visit to Purley Hall, led by Ben Viljeon, and a visit by our research group to Folly Farm. At the AGM Berkshire Garden Trust's Awards were made to four schemes.

At the AGM Christina retired as our Chairman and the Committee had elected me to succeed her. Christina was one of the founder members of the Berkshire Gardens Trust. Berkshire was the last of the 'shire' counties to form a Garden Trust and the then chairman of the Association of Garden Trusts had rightly identified Christina as the person to lead the project of establishing a Trust in Berkshire.

The Committee and members of BGT have a great deal to thank our founder-chairman for. After setting up the Trust and establishing a Committee to guide it, Christina first concentrated on the Trust gaining financial stability. This was done initially with a grant from English Heritage and then through membership subscriptions and lecture ticket sales.

The Award scheme to recognise the work of local authority and public body efforts to improve their local environment has attracted a number of entries each year it has run. It is restricted to smaller bodies, Parish Councils or their equivalent, as we do not have the manpower to take on larger schemes like schools or hospitals or the Unitary Authorities. Her involvement as High Sheriff with the towns and villages led her to the need to refresh the Hungerford Tragedy Memorial Garden, which was approaching the 25th anniversary of the tragic circumstances which led to its original planting. This led to hands-on work by our members.

We thank Dr Christina Hill Williams DL for her leadership, enthusiasm and dedication to the BGT. At the AGM last year she was elected honorary Vice President of the Trust. Her role has been unique and very difficult to follow.

For the period from the last AGM to the end of our year, we have had two events for members. The first was a talk by Tim Richardson on the subject of the Chelsea fringe. Tim is the founder of the fringe and a writer for the Gardening section of the Saturday edition of the Daily Telegraph. He gave a most informative and well-illustrated talk. Unfortunately the event was not well-supported. We

had decided that we should use a venue in the east of the county and chose Holyport Memorial Hall. This proved an excellent hall with good facilities and plenty of parking. Whether it was the concern of finding the Hall, just off the M4 near Maidenhead, or the timing, which was closer to Christmas than we wished, we had few members attending and a consequent modest deficit.

The second event was a talk by Rosamund Wallinger about her garden at Upton Grey in Hampshire, which had been designed by Gertrude Jekyll. We used the Purley Barn for this event, which is a regular venue for us, and with a popular topic and clement weather, this proved to be very popular and more than made up the financial loss we had incurred in December. We followed up this event by a visit to Upton Grey in June to see the garden. Although this falls into next year's Report, I would like to record our thanks to Mrs Wallinger for her lecture and allowing our visit, and to Ben Viljeon for making the arrangements for both the lecture and the visit, and arranging an excellent lunch at a local pub for those who wanted it.

We had hoped to have a second visit to Folly Farm, which only opens for a restricted number of days and for groups of only 12. This did not prove possible, but we have been able to secure priority for 2015 if the garden is opened that year.

Your committee has been considering the future pattern of activity, bearing in mind that they are all volunteers and the need to ensure financial prudence. Last year the date of the AGM had restricted the dates for an autumn lecture. Whilst we have been fortunate to have a venue at Watlington House and speakers willing to give talks free at our AGMs, we recognise this cannot continue.

So we decided that although the AGM remains free for any member to attend, we should charge for those who wish to attend the lecture and refreshments afterwards. I hope the flyer inviting you makes that clear. We also plan to hold a Spring Lecture in March, details of which will be circulated as soon as they are firm. In 2015 the AGM will again be at Purley, subject to the Hall being available, and there will be a talk afterwards. We are also planning to make more garden visits than previously. These will be arranged at cost, so our income will be from subscriptions and any profit on lectures.

We will be inviting entries for Garden Awards next year, following the pattern of presenting these in alternate years. Work continues on the Gazetteer under the leadership of the indefatigable Ben Viljeon, and we have two special topics being researched at the moment, the garden settings of War Memorials commemorating the casualties of the First World War, and the 300th anniversary of the birth of Capability Brown.

Work on the garden at Watlington House, led by Gaila Adair, continues and I am grateful to her in particular but also to those members who have taken part in the preparation of the beds for planting. We also acknowledge the work of the Community Pay-back scheme in undertaking some of the heavier work on the site. Hopefully this work will be completed in 2015. When it is done there will be a celebration on site for members to view it. The Committee is open to any suggestions of other similar schemes, although any project has to be self-supporting financially and could only be undertaken if resources allow.

The Committee have also been refining our handling of planning applications. We receive notice from the Association of Garden Trusts/Garden History Society joint scheme and Fiona Hope then

circulates them for information. One of us then leads on the response. I am grateful to all the Committee but particularly to Bettina Kirkham and Fiona and for the work they do in connection with applications.

This year we were heavily involved with Benham Valence, a property whose grounds were laid out by Capability Brown, and which was visited by a small group of us, but we have submitted responses to all other applications in respect of which our views were sought. We do have this link through the ACT, but also rely on members to alert us to any planning issues, as they are not invariably picked up nationally.

So the period since Christina retired has been an active one and the Committee are grateful to all the members for their support, and I am indebted to the Committee whose enthusiasm for hard work and their knowledge of the history and designs of gardens fills me with admiration. I also want to record my thanks to the President for her support, and to our Treasurer and Membership Secretary for their work in keeping the finances on a sound footing and coping with the demands of circulating members and handling subscriptions and bookings. Finally our Executive Secretary keeps us up to date with local and national activities as well as coping with the demands for information and responses, often at very short notice, and running the Trust. A remarkable job for which much thanks.

Charles Elly

BERKSHIRE GARDENS TRUST COMMITTEE

Current Committee members / Trustees are:

*Gaila Adair	Hugh Simon (Treasurer)
*Charles Elly (Chairman)	*Peter Thorn
Richard Griffith-Jones	Indra Townsend
Fiona Hope (Executive Secretary)	Ben Viljoen
Bettina Kirkham	Kaye Warner (Membership Secretary)

** standing for re-election at the 2014 AGM under the provisions of the Articles*

In accordance with the provisions of the Articles, the following officers have been re-elected by the Trustees for the forthcoming year, to take effect at the conclusion of the AGM:

†Charles Elly, Chairman
Hugh Simon, Treasurer

†subject to his being re-elected as Trustee

TREASURER'S REPORT 2013-14

FINANCIAL SUMMARY (financial year ending 31st March)

	£ 2014	£ 2013
INCOME & EXPENDITURE		
Incoming Resources	4,013.67	2,959.00
<i>less</i> Resources Expended	2,557.00	3,093.21
Net incoming / (outgoing) resources for year	1,456.67	(134.21)
NET ASSETS as at 31st March		
Fixed Assets (display stands)	205.74	308.60
Cash at bank	10,749.91	9,730.63
Other current assets	457.25	75.00
Total Current Assets	11,207.16	9,805.63
<i>less</i> Creditors	312.00	470.00
Net Assets	11,100.90	9,644.23

The Trust's net assets, which are predominantly held as cash, increased by £1,456.67 over the year. Subscription income and donations of £1,746.67 for the year (including Gift Aid £148.09) and a surplus of £765.27.96 on events were offset by operating costs of £1,055.27, including £102.86 depreciation of display stands, which are being depreciated over five years.

There were 90 paid-up members in the subscription year ended 31st March 2014, a decrease of 3 members compared with the previous year.

My thanks to Brian Tubman ACMA, who has examined the accounts for 2013-14. The income and expenditure account and balance sheet are set out in the following pages.

Hugh Simon ACMA, Treasurer

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (see note 1 below)**INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT**

	£ 2014	£ 2013
<u>Incoming Resources</u>		
Donations and Gift Aid	694.67	214.09
Membership subscriptions	1,052.00	1,080.00
Events	2,267.00	1,664.91
Total Incoming Resources	4,013.67	2,959.00
<u>Resources Expended</u>		
Publications and website	94.92	887.76
Projects and research	-	168.58
Insurance and AGT affiliation	431.75	383.00
Administration and AGM	425.74	516.06
Events	1,501.73	1,034.95
Depreciation	102.86	102.86
Total Resources Expended	2,557.00	3,093.21
Net incoming / (outgoing) resources for year	1,456.67	(134.21)

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31st MARCH

	£ 2014	£ 2013
TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS	205.74	308.60
<u>Current Assets</u>		
Debtors	30.00	75.00
Prepaid expenditure	427.25	-
Cash at bank	10,749.91	9,730.63
Total Current Assets	11,207.16	9,805.63
<u>Creditors</u>		
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Deferred income	312.00	470.00
Total Creditors	312.00	470.00
NET CURRENT ASSETS	10,895.16	9,335.63
NET ASSETS	11,100.90	9,644.23
FUNDS		
At start of year	9,644.23	9,778.44
Net incoming / (outgoing) resources for year	1,456.67	(134.21)
ACCUMULATED FUND	11,100.90	9,644.23

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1. **The full Directors' Report and Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2014 may be found on the Trust's website: www.berks-gardens-trust.org.uk**
2. In accordance with the provisions of the Trust's articles of association, the Trustees have elected for the financial statements for the year ended 31st March 2014 to be examined in lieu of a full audit. Mr Brian Tubman ACMA, the Trust's independent examiner, has certified that in his opinion the financial statements for the year ended 31st March 2014 and the balance sheet as at that date show a true and fair view of the Trust's affairs.