



*President: Lady Wroughton*

## **Trustees' Annual Report for 2014/15**

### **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

Although we have traditionally held our AGM in the autumn, the Trust's year runs to the end of March. Therefore this Report is concerned with activities within the year from 1st April 2014 to 31st March 2015. However, I shall comment on developments since then where relevant.

In June 2014 we visited the garden at Upton Grey about which we heard from the owner Rosamund Wallinger in our March lecture. We were very fortunate to have detailed information about the design of the garden and its planting, following the original design and planting scheme of Gertrude Jekyll. It was a lovely day and we had lunch in a local pub, arranged by Ben Viljoen, who also drew up a scheme for car sharing.

Our next event was the Autumn Lecture, which followed the AGM. We were fortunate to have a talk by the renowned landscape architect and designer, Hal Moggeridge, who spoke about his work. He had carried out a restoration of the gardens at Blenheim, which had been laid out by Capability Brown. Thus he led us into the celebration of Brown's tercentenary in 2016.

Combining the Lecture with the AGM seemed to work satisfactorily and all the members who attended the AGM stayed on for the Lecture. The Committee will follow this practice this year; it enables us to pay for a venue and speaker. We propose to continue to use Purley Barn for meetings, although we do want to use other venues too.

The Trust has been supportive of the aspirations for the restoration of Shaw House in Newbury and we had the opportunity to hold our Spring Lecture there. Shaw House is an Elizabethan mansion and its gardens would have been predominantly Tudor. Sadly much of that has been lost. The grounds are much reduced with sales off for building, and latterly the mansion was housing a school. That has now ceased and the building has been beautifully restored with the aid of a Heritage Lottery grant.

The gardens have had some work done on them with the assistance of the Community Payback scheme workers. The West Berkshire District Council, who own Shaw House, would love to do more, but these are times of financial restraint. Our Spring Lecture was given by Kate Harwood, who has done research into Tudor and Stuart gardens and is a professional lecturer. She covered the way in which gardens had developed and changed in these times with much erudition.

Although the Trust has traditionally held meetings on a Friday, we decided, following the straw poll at last year's AGM, to change to a Thursday. We did this for our Spring Lecture and the improved traffic conditions on the M4 were appreciated. We propose to continue this practice.

We have continued to refine our procedures for dealing with planning applications. The Garden History Society receives notification of planning applications affecting historic gardens and has arranged for notice to be sent on to the County Garden Trusts. Our Secretary receives these and one or more members of the Committee then look at the application in detail, and prepare any observations. These are sent to the relevant Unitary Authority. We have been able to assist Planning Authorities with regard to some applications; some we support while for others we may suggest modifications.

During the year under review, we have spent some time on the proposed merger between our parent body, the Association of Garden Trusts, and the Garden History Society. There have been a number of questions about the detail even when the merger had been agreed in principle. Our Secretary, Fiona Hope, has been a member of the Transitional Body working out the detail. I am pleased to say that the merger to create The Gardens Trust was finally agreed at the AGMs of the Association and the Society in July.

Last year we started on two research projects. The First World War Memorials in garden settings has not progressed due to a lack of such memorials in Berkshire. The CB 300 project, which is a nationwide project in relation to Capability Brown for 2016, has progressed through a working group of Ben Viljoen, Fiona Hope and Bettina Kirkham. More has been done since the year end, so watch the website for information. Ben had hoped to give a lecture after the AGM on Brown in Berkshire, but there are copyright issues with some of the images he wished to use and these have been waived for 2016, so the Lecture will be our Spring Lecture 2016.

The Gazetteer, a catalogue of all the gardens in Berkshire which have historical or contemporary significance, has reached the completion of the first stage with gardens now graded to take account of their status and the potential risks they face. Now we need to move on to completing a fuller entry for those most at risk, which will be a useful resource for planners and conservationists. The Committee are discussing how best to do that with our limited resources of time, manpower and money. Offers of help will be gratefully received.

Ben Viljoen has been the leader of this project and has helped all of us who have taken a part in it. The bulk of the work has rested on his shoulders. He was one of the founders of the Trust, but has now decided he wants to devote more time to research and less to the day-to-day running of the Trust. So he will not be offering himself for re-appointment at the AGM. The loss to the Trust will be immense, for he has maintained the website, formatted the Newsletter, cajoled us into research and done so much more himself. He will be greatly missed, but we recognise that he has other interests to pursue and we are only grateful to him for giving us so much of his time and expertise over the last 8 years.

I am pleased to say that the other Trustees whose term expires at the AGM have offered themselves for re-election and I commend them to you. The Trust were invited by the Trustees of Watlington House to become involved with the re-creation of the garden at that beautiful property, which had its origins in the Tudor period. The present house, a William and Mary design, requires a garden to

match its splendour. My predecessor Christina Hill Williams accepted the challenge, and Gaila Adair, one of our Trustees and a noted garden designer, started work. The garden was funded by the late Geoff Hill, but practical work has been slow due to Thames Water acquiring some land and could not take place until Thames Water had completed their underground site works.

Since then, with the aid of the Community Payback scheme, and some volunteers, but principally by Gaila's own hard work, the project has been completed. As with any garden there is always more planting to do, and plants need time to develop. However, the Trustees of Watlington House formally opened the Geoff Hill Memorial Garden on the 31st July 2015 and a number of members were present.

So it has been a busy year, and we plan to continue to find visits and lectures to interest our members and to invite them to become more involved in the work of the Trust, especially research and planning matters, for which training will be provided where appropriate. The Committee joins me in thanking our retiring Trustee, the volunteers who have done research or practical work in the garden, but above all our members for their support.

I would like to record my personal thanks to all the members of the Committee, who have taken on tasks willingly and been the backbone of the Trust. We owe them all a huge debt of gratitude, but to our Executive Secretary, Fiona Hope, this is doubly so. Without her enthusiasm and dedication the Trust could not operate. Thank you to you all.

***Charles Elly, DL***

*Chairman of the Berkshire Gardens Trust*

*August 2015*

## 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 2015 AGM under the provisions of the Articles*

*\*\* not standing for re-election*

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 2014-15

### FINANCIAL SUMMARY (financial year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March)

	£ 2015	£ 2014
<b>INCOME &amp; EXPENDITURE</b>		
Incoming Resources	<b>2,610.99</b>	4,013.67
<i>less</i> Resources Expended	<b>1,565.51</b>	2,557.00
<b>Net incoming resources for year</b>	<b>1,045.48</b>	1,456.67
<b>NET ASSETS as at 31<sup>st</sup> March</b>		
Fixed Assets (display stands)	<b>102.88</b>	205.74
Cash at bank	<b>11,737.25</b>	10,749.91
Other current assets	<b>552.25</b>	457.25
Total Current Assets	<b>12,289.50</b>	11,207.16
<i>less</i> Creditors	<b>246.00</b>	312.00
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>12,146.38</b>	11,100.90

The Trust's net assets, which are predominantly held as cash, increased by £1,045.48 over the year. Subscription income and donations of £1,687.49 for the year (including Gift Aid £266.27) and a surplus of £201.44 on events were offset by operating costs of £843.45, including £102.86 depreciation of display stands, which are being depreciated over five years. Donations of £385.22 included £265.00 from Dr Christina Hill Williams DL.

There were 88 paid-up members in the subscription year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015, a decrease of 2 members compared with the previous year.

My thanks to Brian Tubman ACMA, who has examined the accounts for 2014-15. 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**

	£ 2015	£ 2014
<b>Incoming Resources</b>		
Donations and Gift Aid	651.49	694.67
Membership subscriptions	1,036.00	1,052.00
Events	923.50	2,267.00
	<u>2,610.99</u>	<u>4,013.67</u>
<b>Resources Expended</b>		
Publications and website	117.49	94.92
Insurance and AGT affiliation	427.25	431.75
Administration, travel and AGM	195.85	425.74
Events	722.06	1,501.73
Depreciation	102.86	102.86
	<u>1,565.51</u>	<u>2,557.00</u>
<b>Net incoming resources for the year</b>	<b>1,045.48</b>	1,456.67

**BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31<sup>st</sup> MARCH**

	£ 2015	£ 2014
<b>TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS (NET)</b>	<b>102.88</b>	205.74
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Debtors	30.00	30.00
Accrued income	77.50	0.00
Prepaid expenditure	444.75	427.25
Cash at bank	11,737.25	10,749.91
	<u>12,289.50</u>	<u>11,207.16</u>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
Deferred income	246.00	312.00
	<u>246.00</u>	<u>312.00</u>
<b>NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>12,043.50</b>	10,895.16
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>12,146.38</b>	11,100.90
<b>FUNDS</b>		
At start of year	11,100.90	9,644.23
Net incoming resources for the year	1,045.48	1,456.67
At end of year	<u>12,146.38</u>	<u>11,100.90</u>

## NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1. **The full Directors' Report and Accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015 may be found on the Trust's website: [www.berks-gardens-trust.org.uk](http://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 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015 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 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015 and the balance sheet as at that date show a true and fair view of the Trust's affairs.