



President: Lady Wroughton

Trustees' Annual Report for 2016/17

Chairman's Report 2016/17

This Report covers the year to the 31st March 2017. The past year has been particularly busy and has been the most active and successful since the Trust was founded. Ben Viljoen has been the main driver of that work, built on his research into Lancelot (Capability) Brown.

I reported last year on the success of his lecture in March 2016, which attracted large numbers and yielded a good surplus, thanks to his generosity in giving the lecture free. He followed this with a number of lectures to other groups and societies in 2016, some of which led to donations to the Trust.

Ben then coordinated three visits to Caversham Park, one of the properties in Berkshire at which Brown had worked, for members of the Trust and their guests and members of the public, which all sold out. After an initial talk about the House and Park, BGT committee members led groups round the Park. We also had the opportunity to see some of the principal rooms of the mansion, which is occupied by the BBC.

In conjunction with the visits, Ben wrote and produced a booklet about Caversham Park and this was sold, any profits going to the Trust. In fact it was completely sold out. Apart from Ben, these visits would not have been possible without the help and commitment of members of the Committee of Trustees and their spouses. I should also like to record our grateful thanks to the BBC and its staff for allowing us to use the rooms in the mansion and mounting security and providing tea. The visits to the mansion were led by Jill Wallace, who formerly worked at Caversham Park and donated her services for the benefit of the Trust.

Although Brown dominated the work of the Trust last year, we also visited Rousham where the indefatigable Ben Viljoen led us around the garden. We then went into the House for a guided tour. Preceded by lunch at the Holt Inn, this was another successful visit.

In July the Vice-Chairman led a visit to Eton College gardens. We were privileged to be given access to the Provost's garden, the Headmaster's garden, the Fellows' garden and Luxmoore's Garden. Fortunately, we had lovely weather for this visit which concluded with a splendid tea served on the lawn in the Fellows' garden. Prior to the garden visit, some of the party were taken into the College Chapel, a real highlight of the College.

For our AGM and Autumn Lecture we returned to the Purley Barn and had a most amusing and interesting talk by Timothy Walker former Curator of the Oxford Botanic Garden and Harcourt Arboretum, on the subject of the Arboretum. Enthused by his talk and photographs, we arranged a visit to the Arboretum in May. That falls after the end of the period covered by this Report.

Our Spring Lecture was given by Andrew Williams, the Park Manager of Kensington Gardens and the Brompton Cemetery. He has worked for the Royal Parks for several years, and gave us an interesting insight into two very different areas for which he is responsible. Unfortunately, the Purley Barn generally now has regular bookings each day of the week and we can no longer use it. For the Spring Lecture we used a Hall at Mortimer. It had good facilities, but clearly some members did not want to travel to this area south of Reading and the numbers attending were sadly rather low. This was a great pity as our lecturer had given us his time and expertise on what proved to be a fascinating subject.

The year saw some changes among the Trustees, who operate as the Committee. As I reported at last year's AGM, Kaye Warner, our membership secretary, left the BGT committee and took on greater responsibilities with the local National Trust Group. We have been very fortunate to recruit as our membership secretary Janet Fuller, who took up the role in time for the 2017 programme and membership renewal process. Janet's background in garden history and her business career have made her an ideal replacement for Kaye.

Peter Thorn resigned at the end of the year, as he had been appointed a governor of another school in Maidenhead and could not maintain both posts. As a former head of the Berkshire College of Agriculture at Burchetts Green, and on the footpaths committee of the Royal Borough, Peter was ideally placed to keep a watch on developments in that area. Sadly his expertise did not stop the Unitary Authority granting permission for a large development within the grounds of the College, despite objections from BGT and a number of other conservation societies.

Planning has been one of our strengths this year, under the guidance of Bettina Kirkham. The help of the Garden Trust in monitoring and referring applications to the County Garden Trusts has been excellent and has saved us from scouring local newspapers. Some still slip through the net, indeed that was true of the application for Hall Place, but we picked it up and referred it to the Garden Trust and in turn to Historic England. On the whole, our contributions have been positive in putting forward improvements to applications and

thereby helping to preserve the ethos of a garden for future generations. It is not the policy of BGT to object just because it is on a heritage garden site. With the one exception of Hall Place, our objections have generally been successful. Since the end of the year our planning team has been joined by Helen Parvin, a BGT member who is the Conservation Officer for Hampshire.

While we have been very busy on the planning front, work on research is slower. With Janet joining the Trustees and Sarah Randolph, another garden historian offering her help, I am hopeful that we will make progress in researching some properties in depth. Ben's work in classifying the properties on which preliminary work has been done is the basis of our choice of properties to research. As might be expected the bulk of the properties are in the relatively rural and less densely populated West Berkshire District of the Royal County.

Financially too the year has been a good one, although that owed much to the failure of the BBC to provide tea on the first of the Caversham Park occasions and their subsequent waiving of certain charges. Generally, our events are costed to break even or make a modest surplus.

In conclusion, the year was a satisfactory one. But none of this would have been possible without the support of a number of people. Our members, without whom we would not exist. The Trustees and their spouses, who together with some support from other members have contributed so much, whether financially through our Vice President's lectures or in so many ways exemplified by Ben Viljoen, a researcher, lecturer, author and guide and a former Trustee and co-founder of the Trust.

We have been fortunate to have Richard Griffiths-Jones as our Vice Chairman, Hugh Simon as our Treasurer and Fiona Hope as our Executive Secretary. They with the other Trustees hold the Trust together. A particular debt is owed to Fiona, a co-founder of the BGT, who has served as our Secretary throughout our existence and who keeps us linked into the Gardens Trust. I owe them and the other Trustees a huge debt of gratitude for all that they do. Finally, may I thank our President Lady Wroughton and Vice President Christina Hill-Williams DL for their personal support and always being available to advise and encourage when necessary.

Charles Elly DL

Chairman of the Berkshire Gardens Trust

BERKSHIRE GARDENS TRUST COMMITTEE

Current Committee members / Trustees are:

††Gaila Adair	Fiona Hope (Executive Secretary)
*Charles Elly (Chairman)	Bettina Kirkham
**Janet Fuller (Membership Secretary)	Hugh Simon (Treasurer)
Richard Griffith-Jones	Indra Townsend

** standing for re-election at the 2017 AGM under the provisions of the Articles*

*** standing for election, having been co-opted by the Trustees' committee in January 2017*

†† not standing for re-election

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

†Charles Elly, Chairman
Richard Griffith-Jones, Vice-Chairman
Hugh Simon, Treasurer

†subject to his being re-elected as Trustee

TREASURER'S REPORT 2016-17

FINANCIAL SUMMARY (financial year ending 31st March)

	£ 2017	£ 2016
INCOME & EXPENDITURE		
Incoming Resources	5,999.61	3,634.80
<i>less</i> Resources Expended	3,668.34	2,116.99
Net incoming resources for year	2,331.27	1,517.81
NET ASSETS as at 31st March		
Fixed Assets (display stands)	-	-
Cash at bank	15,954.46	14,670.44
Other current assets	325.00	517.25
Total Current Assets	16,279.46	15,187.69
<i>less</i> Creditors	284.00	1,523.50
Net Assets	15,995.46	13,664.19

The Trust's net assets, which are predominantly held as cash, increased by £2,331.27 over the year. Subscription income and donations of £1,943.11 for the year (including Gift Aid £295.29) and a surplus of £919.17 on events were offset by operating costs of £902.06. In addition there was a net surplus of £71.05 on sales of a Trust booklet '*Lancelot Brown and the landscape of Caversham Park*' by Ben Viljoen and a grant of £300.00 from the Capability Brown Festival partnership for research carried out by Ben Viljoen on Lancelot 'Capability' Brown gardens in Berkshire.

There were 88 paid-up members in the subscription year ended 31st March 2017, an increase of 4 members compared with the previous year.

My thanks to Brian Tubman ACMA, who has examined the accounts for 2016-17. 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**

	£ 2017	£ 2016
Incoming Resources		
Donations and Gift Aid	919.11	803.80
Membership subscriptions	1,024.00	984.00
Sale of publications	341.50	-
Grants	300.00	-
Events	3,415.00	1,847.00
	<u>5,999.61</u>	<u>3,634.80</u>
Resources Expended		
Promotion and website	224.41	166.70
Publications	270.45	-
Insurance and GT affiliation	412.25	419.75
Administration, travel and AGM	265.40	262.66
Events	2,495.83	1,165.00
Depreciation	-	102.88
	<u>3,668.34</u>	<u>2,116.99</u>
Net incoming resources for the year	2,331.27	1,517.81

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31st MARCH

	£ 2017	£ 2016
TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS (NET)	-	-
CURRENT ASSETS		
Debtors	130.00	105.00
Prepaid expenditure	195.00	412.25
Cash at bank	15,954.46	14,670.44
	<u>16,279.46</u>	<u>15,187.69</u>
LIABILITIES		
Deferred income	284.00	1,523.50
	<u>284.00</u>	<u>1,523.50</u>
NET CURRENT ASSETS	<u>15,995.46</u>	<u>13,664.19</u>
NET ASSETS	<u>15,995.46</u>	<u>13,664.19</u>
FUNDS		
At start of year	13,664.19	12,146.38
Net incoming resources for the year	2,331.27	1,517.81
At end of year	<u>15,995.46</u>	<u>13,664.19</u>

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1. **The full Directors' Report and Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2017 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 2017 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 2017 and the balance sheet as at that date show a true and fair view of the Trust's affairs.