



Eyecatcher

The Association of Gardens Trusts

*The national charity representing the 36 County Gardens Trusts
in the care and conservation of the historic designed landscape*

Newsletter No. 24, Autumn 2010



Working Together: Opening All The Gates Project

One of the major reasons we are all involved in the gardens trust movement is to make historic gardens accessible to more people. So it was a 'no-brainer' when AGT was invited to be part of this project, and given the opportunity to work with the National Trust, Historic Houses Association and the Royal Horticultural Society. Representatives from each organization have formed a Project Board for 'Opening All the Gates', a project funded by a grant from English Heritage. This will hopefully keep alive the inspirational ethos and remarkable legacy of the Gateway Gardens Trust spearheaded in the west by Bettina Harden which came to an end in 2009. Six regional seminars/workshops in

the coming year will follow on from those already held in the North West (Arley Hall, Cheshire), South East (Gatton Park, Surrey) and South West (Westonbirt Arboretum).

This road show programme will address access and widening participation in garden heritage by encouraging community groups, historic gardens trusts, individual garden owners and managers and larger heritage organisations to create their own access projects by building 'teams around gardens'. Adam Clarke has been appointed as Project Leader to co-ordinate the free seminars designed for garden owners and managers as well as those wishing to bring schools and community groups to historic gardens. He can be contacted on 0116 2830363 or 07834 537 569 or amdc@sky.com. I am hopeful that county gardens trusts will support this 'joined-up' initiative by sending a representative to their nearest seminar, to help connect new audiences with gardens, hopefully from more urban areas and in particular for people who have traditionally not visited them before. You are such good grassroots conduits for opening garden gates and connecting people with gardens.

Steffie Shields, AGT Vice-Chairman

Opening all the Gates. Venues and dates:

13 October 2010, Boughton Hall, East Midlands

4 November 2010, NT Gibside, North East

26 November 2010, NT Saltram, South West

9 December 2010, NT Anglesey Abbey, East

13 January 2011, Spetchley Park, West Midlands

27 January 2011, RHS Harlow Carr, Yorks and Humber



above: OAG Project Manager Adam Clarke (left) and House Manager Charles Lister (right) admire 'Orpheus' in Boughton Park



Ramsey Abbey walled kitchen garden

A long lost walled kitchen garden in Ramsey, Cambridgeshire has been brought back to life and is now open to the public on Sunday afternoons (*see photo above*). It was opened by Lord Fairhaven in May 2010. The restoration project was initiated by the Cambridgeshire Gardens Trust after a member 'discovered' the garden, completely overgrown, in the late 1990s.

The garden is located within the grounds of the former medieval Ramsey Abbey, but it dates from the early 19th century. After the dissolution, the site was acquired by Richard Cromwell, and in 1737 the estate was purchased by the Fellowes family. In 1804, Sir John Soane was commissioned to modernise the old house and construct a new garden. This walled garden flourished for over a hundred years, producing vegetables, fruit and flowers for the Fellowes estate. In the late 1930s the site became a school, and since the 1960s, the one acre site had been almost abandoned until the Cambridgeshire Gardens Trust was told about it.

A new charitable trust, with Garden Trust members as trustees, was set up to manage the restoration and maintenance of the garden. Since then, a dedicated team of volunteers has been clearing the site, removing enormous brambles, self-seeded saplings, buddleias and weeds, weeds and yet more weeds. Parts of the walls could not be seen because the box hedges had turned into box trees. Work progressed slowly, but all that has now changed. The lease was finally signed, a grant was obtained from the Heritage Lottery Fund and things took off.

Original features of the garden, such as the apple tunnel, have been restored and planted with locally-bred apple varieties. As far as possible, traditional Cambridgeshire

varieties will be grown to demonstrate the development of horticulture in the county. For further information please visit www.ramseywalledgarden.org

Jane Sills

A letter from the Chairman:

I am delighted to welcome our new newsletter editor Liz Robinson. Some members may already have come across



her as editor of the vibrant Victorian Society magazine. (Please forward this e-newsletter to your members with email, and perhaps link it to your own website. Where necessary, please download copies to give those members who are not yet online, or include a précis in your own newsletters.) We hope county gardens trust committees will understand AGT trustees' decision to make this edition

an e-newsletter while we concentrate our efforts and funding into producing the first AGT Yearbook to help raise the profile of grassroots garden heritage country-wide. It would be great if every trust would contribute a short 500-word article. Let Liz know your happenings by the end of November for this new initiative at gardens@gasholder.co.uk. Our newly-designed AGT website is on the verge of launching. These are busy times ... so enjoy reading our news!

Sally Walker, AGT Chairman

World Wide Gardens Weekends

This year over 200 gardens and over twenty-five different categories of gardens took part in the London Trust's Open Garden Squares Weekend on June 12–13. The event was very well attended and continues to grow in importance in London's calendar of heritage events. On 3 July, the Dublin Civic Trust arranged a Garden Squares Day for the first time, which proved to be a great success; in Prague, three gardens opened which are not normally open, and these received over 1,500 visitors. Next year, as well as these three cities, it is hoped that Clifton in Bristol, Bratislava and Nitra in Slovakia, and San Diego will join them. Approaches are also being made to Oxford, Cambridge, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Liverpool, Birmingham, Belfast, Lübeck, northern Portugal, Barcelona, Savannah, San Francisco and Singapore.

The idea is to mirror for gardens what Heritage Open Days/London Open Days do for buildings.

If anyone has any useful contacts in any of these towns and cities (or suggestions for others), or would be interested in helping to launch events, please get in touch with Ian Kennaway at ian@kennaway.net. Our website www.gardensweekends.org will shortly be up and running.



above: Geraldine Walsh, Director of Dublin Civic Trust, leading a tour outside Fitzwilliam Square.

below: Gates at Cadogan Square, London



Celebrating twenty-five years!

Over 160 people attended an evening garden party to celebrate twenty-five years of the Wiltshire Gardens Trust. It was held by kind permission of Trust members, Mr and Mrs John Manser, in their beautiful garden at Chisenbury Priory, on Friday 23 July 2010. Walking into the forecourt with the wide, newly-planted borders and on through a large metal rose-covered pergola with topiary yews, we came to a wonderful Indian tent. This had an unusually decorative lining and tasselled edging. A jazz quartet made a very happy introduction to the party spirit, adding a pleasant sound and theme to a special evening. We walked in the late summer sunshine down towards the lower lawns through which a small chalk stream flowed under a willow tree and past a small island on which stood a bronze statue of a girl. The garden looked quite magnificent with many late flowering plants and, despite the dry summer, the borders all looked very fresh and full of colour. The elegance of the setting was enhanced by the many guests strolling through the different and varied areas and it was clearly enjoyed by them all. We look forward to many more years of the Trust and it was a pleasure to be able to mark our quarter century on such an evening.

Ilse Ashurst, Secretary, Wiltshire Gardens Trust

Grants schemes: information request

Warwickshire Gardens Trust vice chairman Robin Pearson would like to hear from garden trusts which operate any form of a small grant scheme to promote their objectives.

Robin says, "I am aware that one or two trusts will support horticultural students by the award of small bursaries, give grants to schools to encourage children to 'grow your own' for a healthy diet, or help with donations for research or restoration work on historic landscapes."

He is anxious to know how any trusts operate such schemes with regard to financial limits and in particular whether any changes were required to a trust constitution to comply with charitable status. Robin Pearson can be contacted on 01675 470040 or at jeaniewade@yahoo.com

Historic Gardens and Parks in the Czech Republic

A lecture on their restoration and management by Inka Truxová on **Monday 15 November 2010, 6.30 for 7pm**. Inka Truxová is a specialist in the conservation and protection of historic gardens and works for the National Monuments Institute in Prague. She is in charge of conservation work on sites designated as national landmarks. The lecture will be held in the Gallery of Alan Baxter & Associates, 70 Cowcross Street, London EC1M 6EJ. This event is being held in association with the Garden History Society. Tickets cost £15 including wine. Please book in advance, sending payment with an SAE to: Pamela Dawson, 264 Middle Road, Southampton SO19 8PB. Cheques should be made payable to: 'The Friends of Czech Historic Buildings, Gardens and Parks'. For further information please see www.czechfriends.net

Schools Education Report

This year has been very interesting in the development of gardening within school grounds. The emphasis has been on the growing of vegetables rather than flowers, and the requests have been for help with the funding of materials needed to build raised beds. These make good sense when you look at the school grounds and their possible sites for growing anything. Raised beds enable children to work outside in most weathers without getting wet or muddy feet, which seem to be the nightmare of some urban school cleaners. It also means that whatever the area chosen, whether on bare earth or tarmac, plants can be grown. If they are built with a wide lip then you have seating, as well as an easy height to work from and the area can be used as an outdoor classroom. Planning to build them in different shapes and materials can be used as a task within the curriculum which appeals to some teachers and in most schools there is a family member who would be prepared to help make them. The eating of more fresh vegetables is certainly on the increase, with increased demand for allotments; in some communities, we are finding joint enterprises springing up between schools and local garden clubs. Space being at a premium, this can help adult and child alike and once set up, can be a long term arrangement which is of great benefit to the school, with free expertise willingly given.

We had two unusual successes this year, with one of our Wiltshire primary schools producing the winning entry for the junior design of a garden to be incorporated in the Olympic park 2012, and another school in Buckinghamshire opening for the NGS yellow book. Fame indeed!

Two very successful Education Meetings were held this year. It was the ninth one for the South West, held at Hestercombe and hosted by Somerset. The fourth for the South East was held at Painshill and hosted by Surrey. Both meetings were a great success, with speakers on many subjects, and the counties represented had time to talk about their different ways of helping in schools, learning a great deal from each other and having a thoroughly encouraging day. I know that meetings amongst some of the other County Trusts would be such a benefit for them. If I can help set these up then please let me know (juliet.wilmot@zeronet.co.uk), and as we take it in turns to move around the counties, it really is not hard work. The S.E. meetings started around the kitchen table, so why not the Midlands or North?

We really should be ready to give help and advice to cover all schools in our counties even if we do not have the funds. Money is not all that they need, as there are plenty of grants out there from big or small local businesses. Please could all Gardens Trusts try to find someone to help children to become keen gardeners. It will not just benefit the environment, but the health and well-being of the children, and give them the pleasures that we all enjoy. *Juliet Wilmot*



Eyecatcher editor, Liz Robinson:
gardens@gasholder.co.uk
Coming soon: the *AGT Yearbook 2011*,
in association with Hall-McCartney



Study Day at Westonbirt School, Gloucestershire, 21 October 2010

A study day at Westonbirt School near Tetbury organised by the Gloucestershire Gardens and Landscape Trust (GGLT), together with the Association of Gardens Trusts (AGT), to explore the 19th century pleasure grounds created by Robert Stayner Holford (1808-92) and embellished with numerous architectural features designed by Lewis Vulliamy.

The restoration and replanting of the gardens is part of a Heritage Lottery Fund phase 2 bid currently being prepared by the Westonbirt Partnership.

The study day will provide an important opportunity to debate new research into the gardens against the background of the HLF application and explore what (hopefully) makes a successful HLF bid. The day will be chaired by Gilly Drummond, AGT President and Trustee of the Holfords of Westonbirt Trust. The programme includes sessions on: *Italianate Gardens of the Early Nineteenth Century* (Dr Jane Bradney, garden historian), *The Holford family and their Italian influence* (Jenny Band MBE, Conservator to the Holfords of Westonbirt Trust), *The History of Westonbirt's Pleasure Grounds* (Dr Sophie Piebenga, garden historian), *Today's Management of the Westonbirt Gardens and the Replanting of the Italian Garden* (Lady Mary Keen, Trustee of the Holford of Westonbirt Trust and Chair of its Gardens Group & Peter Dennis, Head Gardener, Westonbirt), *The Westonbirt Project, the Landscape Plan and the HLF application* (Miranda Winram, Director of Westonbirt Project & Clive Matthews, arborist), and making HLF applications (Richard Bellamy, Development Manager, SW Team, HLF).

Cost: £40 per person, to include lunch and refreshments, study pack and guided tour of the pleasure ground. £75 for two people sharing one study pack.

For further information contact Jane Bradney on 01989 750862 or at hvhac@aol.com. To book a place contact Ann Summerhayes at the Association of Gardens Trusts, 70 Cowcross Street, London EC1M 6EJ. Tel: 020 7251 2610 or email gardenstrusts@agt.org.uk



A date for your diary: The AGT AGM & Annual Weekend Conference, 'Power Gardening', will be hosted by Oxfordshire Gardens Trust, 2-4 September 2011