

Somerset Gardens Trust

A member of the The Gardens Trusts

Issue 65

Autumn 2017



Featuring

Why Humphry Repton is important
to us today – p.5

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From the Editors

The wet Summer has slipped away. What leaf growth – and how much have some flowers, such as dahlias, have enjoyed it. Best of all – no watering! This Autumn edition is full of articles on some surprising Somerset gardens – from small to large; we celebrate Repton’s anniversary; bring you up to date with the survey, education and events activities of the Trust; look ahead to the Garden Tour of Herefordshire next year and members provide their tried and tested practical tips. A celebration of Somerset gardening, of the Trust and of its Members.

Christopher and Lindsay Bond
bondchristopher@btconnect.com



From the Chairman

Dear Members,

It is sad to report the death of Michael Liley, he was a good friend and supporter of our Trust and we shall all miss his enthusiasm and kindness.

The visit next year is not to Northern Ireland as I had hoped, but to Herefordshire, where there are some lovely gardens to visit in a beautiful, quiet county. I still hope to go to Ireland in 2019. It was explained that because of the troubles over so many years there are few hotels, very



little competition and the hotel I did find was already booked and that was last May!

Our AGM was generously hosted this year by Mary and Jorgen Nielsen, the stripes on their lawn were magnificent, those who took the opportunity to see the garden before the meeting were delighted but the rain came after our meeting and we were

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grateful to have a good-sized room to hold the party.

There have been a lot of planning applications this Summer affecting our listed gardens in Somerset. At Brympton d'Evercy, Barwick Park, Hatch Court, Marston Park, Hazlegrove House and at Periton Mead, Minehead. I am indebted to Jenny Kent our Planning Officer for Somerset and to Margie Hoffnung, the Gardens Trust Conservation Officer. We had no knowledge about Periton Mead until someone from Minehead Conservation Group e-mailed me to ask what I was doing about it! We were able to help pass on a message from Devon GT about Blackwell Down Manor, where a Veitch garden and Meyer rockery were

about to be dug up by Bristol Water Board, the importance of this garden was not known. Anne Hills, one of Avon's Planning Officers and a SGT member, was able to save the rockery but some damage was done to the Veitch garden.

I announced at the AGM that the Survey Committee was non-existent but since then, Ian Clark has offered to take it on, and there is to be a meeting at my house near Castle Cary, on Tuesday, November 28 at 10am. Everyone interested in Survey work is welcome. Council will be delighted with this news as it is the most important part of Somerset Gardens Trust's work.

Camilla Carter

The Trust welcomes the following New Members

Mrs Dinah Close, Taunton

Captain & Mrs J J Howard, Queen Camel

Mrs Alison Mayall, Dinder, Wells

Mr & Mrs S O'Connor, Hemington, Radstock

Dr Ingrid Popplewell, Oake

Mr & Mrs T Sanderson, Marston Bigot

Mr & Mrs F M Willmouth, Broadway, Ilminster

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The Bicentenary of Humphry Repton's Death on 24 March 1818

Diana Hebditch, Chair of the Events Committee, explains why it is important

Why does Launcelot “*Capability*” Brown steal all the limelight in garden history when Humphry Repton left as indelible mark on our gardens and arguably has a greater influence in our own gardens today?

Brown was the master of the big construction carried out with large teams,

while Repton often left it to others to put his plans into fruition. Repton planned and set down his designs in his Red Books (so

“Repton planned and set down his designs in his Red Books (so called because of their bindings) with flaps showing ‘before and after’”

called because of their bindings) with flaps showing ‘before and after’ to present his proposed plans, drawings, maps and description of improvements.

He started out designing ‘naturalistic’ gardens, where he thought that the evidence of human interference should be concealed, so that the garden appeared to be the product of nature only. Later he re-introduced formal terraces and flower gardens around the house and also themed garden areas, such as a Chinese garden, and thus paved the way for



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much of the gardening in the coming centuries.

Repton was a man of Suffolk. Having been unsuccessful in the textile business, his social contacts began to give him jobs improving the landscapes of their estates. The first two landscape jobs were in Norfolk and he went on to work on hundreds of English estates, for instance Tatton Park in Cheshire (which SGT visited in 2014); Uppark House in West Sussex; Welbeck Abbey in Nottinghamshire; and Woburn Abbey in Bedfordshire. Repton notably designed flower gardens nearer the house, such as at Ashridge Estate in Hertfordshire; Endsleigh Cottage in

Devon; and Valleyfield Estate in Fife. He also laid out Bedford Square and Russell Square in London. In his memoirs Repton said: *“In every place I was consulted I found that I was gifted with a peculiar facility for seeing almost immediately the way in which it might be improved.”* He also made some delightful prints of social life in Bath.

There are events planned across the Country to mark Repton’s bicentenary. We are planning to start our 2018 programme with a lecture on him and include in our fund-raising visits some Repton gardens in the South-West. Ston Easton is his only garden in Somerset - and I hear they do a good tea there.

My Garden

Ann Cook describes how a small town garden can meet the heart’s desire

Six years ago, I moved from our old family house in West Pennard, with its large country garden, to a Victorian terrace town house in the centre of Wells, with a tiny south facing plot. Although missing the space and open views of our old garden, I have grown to love dearly the intimacy and immediacy of the new space, and it is now filled to bursting with old favourites and new discoveries.

Transported to Wells, peonies, and delphiniums thrive magnificently. hollyhocks, self-seeded, to places one never would have considered, now stand Triffid-like ready to lash out at

“I have grown to love dearly the intimacy and immediacy of the new space, and it is now filled to bursting with old favourites and new discoveries.”

unsuspecting visitors. Not so successful were poppies, including a much-loved ‘Patti’s Plum’, only lasting one season, and favourite *Hostas* had to be dispatched after being reduced to tatty lace by the stealthy

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slithering snails lurking gleefully in the stone walls.

Redesigning the plot with curved borders, the space between was paved. A pergola already had a wisteria planted in a pot, struggling up one pillar with sad shriveled blossoms. Replanted in the ground, it quickly rampaged everywhere! Now the flowers hang down in pink clouds inside the pergola, the scent of heaven greeting visitors as the garden door opens. A lovely cool place to sit on hot days, where ferns seem to do well in pots, as do camellias who seem to like the dappled shade.

In Spring, there are *Hellebores*, tulips, mini daffodils, bluebells and *Alliums*. Later bursting forth from Winter sleep, dahlias, stocks, and geraniums that spread, climb and are a total delight. Two 'Prince Charles' clematis, form blue backdrops to one border and *Pelargoniums* spill over in old pots giving weeks of bright colour. Italian *Cypress*, Box balls, a bay tree pyramid, a fatsia, a palm, variegated ivy and Portuguese Laurels, keep my view from the house interestingly green all Winter long.



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Digitizing the Trust's historic records

Ian Clark of the Survey Group explains how this opens up a number of advantages over the present paper records based system.

It's no easy matter to digitize over 25 years of records but if achieved it would provide a number of benefits. The main advantage would be to provide improved access to records held either

privately or at the Somerset Heritage Centre for members, other County Trusts and interested parties. This will allow them to research and discover more about their particular interests from the comfort of their armchairs.

Once digitized the information can be checked and updated easily as new information comes forward and, depending on how the information is stored, it may be possible to interrogate the data by subject matter, such as, gardens that contain wall gardens or by historic period, such as, Victorian gardens, or by designers, such as,

“Capability” Brown. The interrogation of the data could also be used to find areas of the County not well represented or surveyed and allow the Trust to prioritise where it focuses its attention.

Gardens provide many in-roads into discovering the World around us both for children and the digitized records could be easily adapted as an education tool. There may be scope in the future for providing teachers with packs on how to use the data.

Barrington Court, Grade II* - *Early C20 formal gardens designed by J E Forbes and partly adapted and planted to a scheme by Gertrude Jekyll.*

Barwick Park, Grade II* - *Late C18 pleasure grounds and a park with a collection of associated follies.*

Bishops Palace, Wells, Grade II* - *Early C19 pleasure grounds created in and around the medieval precincts of the Palace of the Bishop of Bath and Wells, together with a deer park of C12 origin which was landscaped in the early C19.*

Brympton d'Evercy, Grade II* - *C19 and C20 gardens developed within the surviving framework of a late C17 formal garden.*

Burton Pynsent, Grade II - *A mid C18 landscape laid out by Lancelot Brown and William Pitt, Earl of Chatham, together with early C20 formal gardens designed by Harold Peto.*

The Chantry, Grade II* - *Early C19 picturesque pleasure grounds incorporating a group of grottoes, associated with an early C19 villa.*

From an original document courtesy of Parks & Gardens UK

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University students might be tempted to study particular areas of interest – both of interest to themselves and the Trust. A number of years ago James Harris, working with Taunton Deane Borough Council, helped select a list of very interesting conifers for establishment in the Nynehead Pinetum. The trees are now semi-mature and a fine resource to have within the County - but only if you know what is there.

A key challenge for the Trust is protecting what we already have from inappropriate planning applications. This has been undertaken by a number of volunteers by checking relevant planning applications and their potential impacts on important gardens. This is time consuming and not a very productive use of our volunteers' time. The Somerset Wildlife Trust, in liaison with Somerset local planning authorities, have developed a software program to identify relevant wildlife sites from the position and type of planning applications registered by the planning departments. No time is wasted in trawling through the hundreds of irrelevant applications that are processed by the local planning authorities on a monthly basis. Given the limited resources of the Trust this has to be an important

piece of work, otherwise critically important gardens and garden features could be lost or damaged irreparably.

Work has already started to identify where the important gardens are located, and it is not just the gardens listed on the Historic

“Given the limited resources of the Trust this [digitizing of records] has to be an important piece of work, otherwise critically important gardens and garden features could be lost or damaged irreparably.”

Gardens Register that need to be recorded, but also those of county and district importance.

How can we work towards such a system? Besides the obvious lots of hard work and diligence it needs members coming together to help start assessing what records we have and then record them in a way that allows them to become more widely available. There may even be a chance of lottery grant funding if we can make a successful bid. If you would like to find out more please contact Ian Clark at oliveleafdesign@yahoo.com or phone him on 07455 193875



Members Forum – Gardening Tips

Neale Hatherell

I rashly suggested to the Editors that a column featuring members' practical gardening tips could be of interest. They replied, "Why don't you do one!"

Here are a few random tips of mine. I hope that this will encourage other Members to follow suit.

1. I grow only *Viticella* Clematis now as wilt never seems a problem. I do not cut down much in March, but leave to ramble. This avoids slugs, or some other pest, devouring the new shoots.
2. Do not cut *Penstemons* back in the Autumn. Frost damage is much less likely to occur if this is done in the Spring.
3. When dead-heading roses, cut deep.
4. Plant seeds in the open considerably later than seedsmen suggest - they will catch up. Wait until the soil has warmed up.
5. Tread ground firmly before planting brassica.
6. I have purchased butterfly netting and supports from 'Gardening Naturally' following advice from the gardener at South Wood Farm which several members visited in July. I no longer have cabbage white problems.
7. Do not prune plum trees after the basic desired shape has been achieved. I prune

for this when the first tiny fruits have formed in the Spring and seal the cuts. Older plum trees prune themselves (courtesy of Mervyn Wilson).

8. Onion sets should be no larger than one's thumb nail.

"My source of spent cartridges having dried up, I find small plastic fruit/ water bottles a good substitute atop canes and

I recall as a boy hearing the widow of the former incumbent of Portlemouth, Devon telling my parents that where the parsley grows well, the woman is likely to be wearing the trousers. This is perhaps more of a warning than a tip!

Hazel Ricketts

1. My source of spent cartridges having dried up, I find small plastic fruit/water bottles a good substitute atop canes and stakes. Another option is to use plastic pots if appearance is a consideration.
2. I used to find surrounding lettuces with used coffee grounds kept slugs away but if the layer is thick it does no good for the soil. In recent years the very large slugs seem immune.
3. I always add some water when adding material to my compost containers as this appears to hasten the rotting process and increase the worm population.

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4. Marigolds – *Tagetes* too – seem good companions for tomatoes in the greenhouse and help prevent white and back fly.

5. Teabags in place of crocks at the bottom of pots, particularly those with small holes, are good and helps when emptying into the compost as there is no fear of crocks going in by mistake.



Annabelle Chisholm

Tulip eating mice

Detterent (courtesy of Norri Pope of Hadspen): Shake chilli or cayenne pepper over bulbs when planting (listen to the sneezing!)

Destruction: Use long-handled spoon or knife to put teaspoonful of mouse-poison half way along section (cut to 12 inches) of plastic piping (diameter 1 and a half inches). They'll find it, other animals and birds can't.

The garden that just grew and grew.....

Dave and Prue Moon describe their journey

We moved into 9 Catherston Close, Frome in 1970, a typical new build house with a garden. Our rear garden was no more than 50 feet wide by 30 feet deep, this extra width was to be a bonus in later years.

The front garden is home to a magnificent pure white *Magnolia*, now over 60 years old. Originally it was bought by Prue's Mum, after her sad passing her Dad decided we were to

have it. Being a non-gardener, he dug it up at the wrong time of year and managed to break the centre branch in the process giving it its unusual shape; after careful nursing it now has pride of place in our garden.

The rear garden was laid out originally with a square of grass and a small vegetable plot. We purchased some extra land to give us approximately 1/3 acre of blank canvas.

“New for 2017 is the changeover from the normal way of digging and planting to the no dig organic gardening method as practiced and promoted by Charles Dowding.”

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What a welcome pleasure this brought us as keen gardeners. A list was drawn up, featuring all our wants for our dream garden. After many months of doodling and piles of paper later, a basic design was agreed upon and the fun then began.

The garden is South West facing, dropping away as you proceed down through the garden, revealing magnificent views over the countryside towards the Mendips. A bog garden was created

using the pond overflow to keep it damp - even with it being lined we do have to water this focal point during prolonged dry spells.

To one side of the garden, a vegetable plot was laid out. New for 2017 is the changeover from the normal way of digging and planting to the no dig organic gardening



method as practiced and promoted by Charles Dowding. So far, this year's crops seem to be healthier looking and cropping earlier than normal, another success for the garden. Perhaps this is the way to go!

The two meadows were sown using wild flower seed mixes, one being a Spring meadow and the other a Summer meadow

**Share your Garden with other Members!
Email or send your photos to the editors
Publication on Website or in Magazine
Make up your own caption
Portrait format preferred**

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which, this year, has been planted up with 700 tulips and along with the *Camassias* have given a wonderful display.

Numerous colour themed flower beds were laid throughout the garden, with each one being made smaller than we had planned so it would be easier to enlarge and reshape them when the first planting was established. Using all curves we wanted create a meandering walk throughout the garden.

Seven years ago, we answered a publicity article from the recently rebranded 'National Garden Scheme' for anyone with a garden of quality, character and interest in our area to open for the public. After our 'inspection', we felt incredibly privileged to be invited to join. We get lots of pleasure from our openings, meeting many keen friendly garden visitors, and in the process raising many thousands of pounds for, in the main, Cancer, Caring, and Nursing Charities that the NGS supports.

Atlanta Botanic Gardens

James Harris is impressed

Last Autumn I was in Atlanta and I took the opportunity of visiting the Botanic Gardens. Following a petition of the citizens of Atlanta, the Garden was incorporated in 1976 as a not-for-profit organization. It comprises about 30 acres and is now one of the leading Botanic Gardens in the US. A welcome is given to visitors by volunteers - Friends of the Garden.

The Garden is composed of a number of smaller themed gardens, a formal garden, a

rose garden, a children's garden and two woodland areas. It is entered through a fine modern building in the centre of which hangs a sculpture in the form of a chandelier from the ceiling. It is one of a



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“Within this rainforest there are a number of tropical birds, turtles and poison dart frogs”

number of glass sculptures throughout the Garden by Dale Chihuly. The Centre leads out to the Kendeda Canopy walk – a 600 m sky walk 40 feet above the floor through the tree tops of Storza Woods, enabling one to view not only the oaks, hickories and poplars but also the woodland garden below which contains a fine collection of shade loving plants and undergrowth.

A large conservatory contains indoor exhibits of plants from the tropical rainforest and the desert. Within this rainforest there are a number of tropical birds, turtles and poison dart frogs. The Orchid Centre is home to the largest collection of orchids in the US and has some wonderful specimens. It has a high

elevation section which provides a perfect habitat for montane orchids. The Children’s Garden features whimsical sculptures, fountains and interpretive exhibits on botany and ecology.

In March, I was lucky to find myself back in Atlanta and to be able to pay another visit to the Garden in the Spring. It was a beautiful day and we were able to have an excellent lunch in a very good restaurant. My first impression was that the trees and plants were not much further forward than at home. Oaks and other trees were barely beginning to move. Nevertheless, the Garden was very colourful with many woodland plants and the formal bedding in front of the glasshouses. At the time of our visit there was an excellent display of Bonsai by a local Society although not many exhibits were labelled. The Garden was looking very attractive with Spring plants and flowers in full bloom, Honeysuckles, Redbuds, Viburnum, Anemones and many others. If you are anywhere near, the Garden is well worth visiting.

Somerset Gardens Trust Visit To Herefordshire

**Monday, July 9th to
Thursday July 12th 2018**

Three nights at

The Three Counties Hotel, Hereford.

A coach will leave the Church car park at Hatch Beauchamp, stopping possibly at Cleveland to pick up those in the northern

part of the County. We will make a comfort stop on the M4 before arriving at Kentchurch Court, which has been in the Lucas-Scudamore family for almost 1,000 years. There we will have an escorted visit to the house, lunch and visit the garden at our leisure. There will be a short drive to The Old Rectory, Thrupton, with unusual perennials and roses, vegetable parterre and gazebo; we will be given tea before heading to our hotel and dinner.

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On the second day, we leave for Newport House, Almeley, a Nesfield garden, with three terraces of large mixed borders, backed by formal hedges, a lake and over 2 acres of walled organic garden under restoration. The head gardener will show us around, we will be given coffee. Hergest Croft is our next stop with 70 acres of parks and gardens, many champion trees, vegetable garden, and a late Victorian rockery. Members will be able to buy their lunch in the old dining room before we leave for Rhodds Farm. This garden was started in 2005 and has wonderful views, a formal garden leading to a new dovecote and double herbaceous borders of hot colours. We will be given tea before heading back to our hotel and dinner.

On Wednesday, we head north for Glan Arrow garden, pretty, in a charming village, and take coffee before going on to Croft Castle, home of the Croft family since before the Domesday Book. The

house, walled garden, historic glasshouse and vineyard are all open. Members will be able to purchase their lunch at the NT café. We return early to Hereford where our members could visit the cathedral, the Mappa Mundi, there is a pretty garden in the cloisters or take tea at the Castle Hotel beside the old moat.

We set off for Brockhampton Cottage on our last day; this is Peter Clay's garden of Crocus fame and was successfully designed by Tom Stuart Smith. We will be given coffee and a tour by the head gardener before heading for Grendon Court, also designed by Stuart Smith, planted on two levels with mass planted perennials and grasses, there we will be given lunch with wine before heading home.

Included - three nights at the hotel, three dinners, two lunches, two teas and three coffees. There may be a small change to the itinerary.

Booking will be in the New Year, papers will be sent out by e-mail. Those members not on e-mail should make their interest known to me by telephone and I will post the booking forms.

How are garden visit prices calculated?

John Townson and Diana Hebditch explain how much they cost

Ever since the founding of the SGT, members have had the pleasure of numerous events, garden visits and longer trips away, both in England and abroad. We have been lucky to have had so many

enthusiastic people over the years, both on the Events Committee and individually, prepared to organize and nurture these evenings, days and trips away to a successful conclusion. Organisers charge little in the way of expenses, occasionally postage and something for food or fuel, and we must be grateful to them for their contribution to the enjoyment of members and for the funds raised for the Trust.



Which one do you want?

Ticket prices for events and day trips can vary considerably and there can be the occasional adverse comment about the expense of an individual event or trip. The Editors talked to several key persons to describe how the costings are done.

First it needs to be emphasised that all events and trips should not make a loss, as outings for members are not one of the charitable purposes of the Trust. At one time prices were fixed on a more or less breakeven basis, but that was when substantial sums were raised for the Trust from the annual plant sales. Instead we now add a small profit element for events and garden visits and these are the main form of fund-raising. The profit element for longer trips away might be slightly higher to reflect the large amount of work (and anxiety!) that the organisers put in to ensure a successful outcome. Even so, the cost is well below those trips organised by tour companies.

The main variable in ticket price is whether a coach is needed, or indeed

feasible, as many gardens cannot cope with one. For a longer day trip, the price can be more than £500 and this needs to be spread amongst as many people as possible, or the economics of the trip are in question. Another variable is the amount that individual garden owners charge. Some will wish to support the Trust, as a gardens charity, and kindly charge a minimal fee, while others will charge up to £15 a head. The latter are often very special gardens, may include the house as well, and we feel that the visit is still worth it. In the case of longer trips, the main variable is dinner, bed and breakfast at the hotel and a lot of work (and worry) goes into finding somewhere that can provide enough rooms, many of them singles, at reasonable cost and comfort.

Finally, a response to another comment often made as to why our garden visits are usually made during the week. Most owners prefer not to take groups at weekends, hotels often have weddings and traffic can be very uncertain then. Apologies to those who cannot join us!

“The main variable in ticket price is whether a coach is needed, or indeed feasible, as many gardens cannot cope with one.”



Some events so far

Our first garden visit of 2017, was when we saw the garden which Jenny Langford talked to us about in November. Our enthusiastic guide gave us an interesting insight into Montacute house, its history and its owners. As there was a chill in the air, most of us also sampled the delights of the National Trust café for soup or coffee.



Munstead Wood. Iconic Gertrude Jekyll plants, white foxglove and an edging of lamb's ears



In the afternoon we had a warm welcome at Veddw House from Anne Wareham and Charles Hawes and were amazed at the amount of gardening they did. The reflective pool in the centre of the garden encouraged us to sit by it – so many at a time that someone quipped it looked like we were waiting for a bus.



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Old Orchard, Goathurst

Mervyn Wilson discovers Peter Evered's box of surprises

Not a big garden: $\frac{1}{4}$ acre of what was once part of an orchard belonging to the Halswell estate, running behind the cottages and only becoming private property when the estate was sold up in the 1950s. Peter Evered opened it for the NGS this year for the first time and was hugely pleased when visitors said “*it's the best garden we have ever seen*”. It is his pride and life consuming interest. He has lived there most of his life, but really got



into it while working on Hinkley Point Power Station, confined and inside. It was relief and recreation to work outside. So began the transformation of this space, into somewhere intricate and brimming

“And Peter has all their names, Latin and English, ready on his tongue. The Latin Mass gave him an early fascination with language, and his present recall would put many to shame.”

with colour and variety of plants. He reckons to have over one hundred *Clematis*, chiefly *viticella*, but some *texensis*, and many are now crossed, some with tubular hanging flowers, some open with patterned petals. He likes to have a full garden, with places to get lost in. *Clematis* are grown on pergolas to screen and provide high colour.

But it is not all *Clematis*: there is hidden away a splendid stand of perennials, *Heleniums* and *Rudbeckias*, backed by 6ft high lilies, left undisturbed. And he loves to find interesting new plants, frequenting shows and plant stalls. There is a striking *Lobelia* ‘Cardinalis Comptons Pink’, and elsewhere rather hidden, a *Podophyllum*, lurking under a tree. There are hedges:

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Lonicera and golden privet, beautifully cut and smooth. With these, a recently built short stone wall and pergolas covered with blossom, the area is intricately articulated. Elsewhere, by the house is a mound, open planted and colour co-ordinated, inspired by Gustav Klimt's garden painting. Nearby is *Robinia* 'Lace Lady', picturesquely pruned. Sculptures provide eye-catchers.

There is no space here to describe all the treasures. And Peter has all their names,

Latin and English, ready on his tongue. The Latin Mass gave him an early fascination with language, and his present recall would put many to shame. He told me his habit is to read a garden encyclopedia from cover to cover. An enthusiast with a mind and memory and the physical skills and energy equal to his enthusiasm. When I visited, he was off next day to the Taunton Show and had picked up some good plants recently at Bridgwater market.

The Annual General Meeting

Susie Thorne reports

The Annual General Meeting was held in September at Henley House, the home of Mary and Jorgen Neilsen. Fifty members enjoyed seeing their lovely garden and also visiting Sally Gregson's nursery next door.

Chairman Camilla Carter reported that the SGT had had another good year. The outings and lectures had been well supported and bursaries and a contribution to the cascade at Halswell Park had been

“A previously unknown historic garden, Blackwell Down Manor, near Bristol, was nearly bulldozed, but the Meyer rockery there was saved”

given. She said that the Survey Committee was sadly not functioning at the moment, due to a shortage of members, although Ian Clark has done great work on digitizing the Trust records [and see her message on page 2 for update]. The Trust is very grateful also to Jenny Kent, our planning officer, for all her work on the many planning applications through the year.

The SGT decided at the last Council meeting to remain as a County Member of The Gardens Trust and this has meant that Margie Hoffnung, National Conservation Officer and Statutory Planning Consultee, is available and, with help from Jenny and from Camilla, she has made many excellent responses to planning applications throughout the County. A previously unknown historic garden, Blackwell Down Manor, near Bristol, was nearly bulldozed, but the Meyer rockery there was saved, although a water mains pipe did go across the Veitch garden. Minehead Conservation Trust had been in touch about the garden at Periton Mead, so

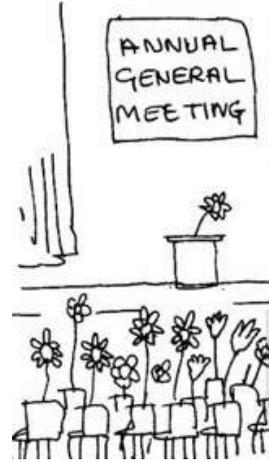
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there is survey work still to be done and the Chairman is hoping to resurrect the Survey Committee.

Camilla also thanked John Townson for his help in organising the trip to Herefordshire planned for next year and also John Commins from the Herefordshire Gardens Trust and Carey Goode. Mary ter Braak had been put forward for the Gardens Trust Volunteer of the Year Award, but had just missed out. Each of the Committee Chairman gave reports and Stuart Senior, Treasurer, gave a clear picture of the accounts. Members heard that David and

Rosemary Freemantle had stood down as members of the Council and a vote of thanks was passed. Julian Gibbs was elected onto the Council.



Parks & Gardens transfer valuable garden data base to Hestercombe

Anthony Pugh-Thomas explains

Parks & Gardens UK (P&GUK) was launched in 2009 with the support of a £1 million grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), “*to advance the education of the public in particular but not exclusively by providing resources and performing research into parks, gardens and designed landscapes*”. Its primary objective was to establish a database and website for this purpose – see www.parksandgardens.org - that currently holds over 9100 records for parks and gardens, 2,400 biographies of people and organisations associated with historic parks and gardens, special sites dealing with topics of current interest such as the Lancelot (Capability) Brown tercentenary, World War One Memorial

Landscapes and the Inventory of Conservation Management Plans, nearly 6000 digital images of maps and modern and historic photographs. Many of the records were contributed by the County Gardens Trusts (although not, sadly, the Somerset GT), NADFAS and individual researchers throughout the United Kingdom. P&GUK were well served by Rachael Stamper and Maria Beck who assiduously kept the contributions up to date on the database.

The website and database have fulfilled the hopes and expectations of their founders. It has attracted wide interest and the most recent annual statistics record that they were visited by 444,370 users from 187 countries; however because HLF had stipulated that the website should provide Open Access, P&GUK had to rely for its continuing operations on grants from various charitable bodies and, as it could

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no longer afford the £22,000 a year running costs, its future operation and development were in doubt.

The director-trustees therefore explored the possibility of transferring its enterprise to a like-minded charity and after considering various possible partners engaged in discussions with the Hestercombe Gardens Trust (HGT): and with financial support from Historic England and a further grant from the HLF, terms for the transfer of the database and website to Hestercombe were agreed and the transfer was completed in June this year.

The Hestercombe archive, with its own archivists, contains an important collection of documents, photographs, plans and manuscripts relating not only to Hestercombe itself, (with its 18th century, Lutyens and Jekyll gardens), but to many other parks, gardens and designed landscapes. The combination of the two databases will offer a powerful – and possibly unique- research resource for those interested in landscape history and design.

So – look at and enjoy the website, search the database and sign up for the regular informative and witty blog about designers, gardeners, gardens and plants.

Dr Barbara Simms, chair of P&GUK: “Both organisations have worked hard over the past months to secure the successful transfer of Parks & Gardens UK to Hestercombe Gardens Trust. It is very exciting that Parks & Gardens UK has a new home that will allow its expansion as the leading on-line resource for historic parks and gardens.”

Philip White, Chief Executive of the Hestercombe Gardens Trust: “I am delighted that Hestercombe will have the opportunity to develop and expand on the considerable work achieved by P&GUK over more than ten years and look forward to working with the County Gardens Trusts and others in realising the database’s considerable potential.”

What does a memorial garden mean to a school?

Sheila Rabson, chair of the Education Group, gives two moving examples

Recently the Education Group had to visit two schools that wanted to create memorial gardens. Both schools had invited the pupils to provide ideas for their space. The

first school wanted to remember the Headmaster who had died unexpectedly and the second wanted to create an area for children to be quiet, pray and reflect on the problems in peoples’ lives.

The first school is only three years old and is blessed with a huge amount of land with plenty of space for recreation, horticulture and outdoor learning. It has already

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planted an orchard and created areas for each class to grow vegetables and flowers and is continuing to create a 'Forest School' area. The school had consulted the bereaved parents as to the sort of memorial that would reflect the interests of their son. An area that all the children could use in as many educational ways as possible was chosen. The children were then consulted and had decided they would like a pond, a willow tunnel, fire pit and story-telling chair with log seating. Two different professional companies had been asked to deliver plans for providing these features. We were able to see one of these sets of plans. They had produced a very good layout and the area to site the garden would be within the area of the Forest School. The school teachers are all enthusiastic about the plans and will drive the creation of this area forward using parental involvement as the hard labour. The plans will cost a lot of money to provide all the scheme's elements but they can be developed in stages and every finished part will add to the memorial element, the education value for the pupils and the horticultural development for this school's grounds.

The second school had a small area of green in a corner of a large playground – the main playing area is on the other side of the school building. It is a square site set with one corner pointing at a busy main road with a house either side. It is cut diagonally into two halves with one triangle being a hard surface and the other having a raised grass bank with a few trees and shrubs on two of the sides. The diagonal has a semi-circular niche outlined

“The plan is to create an area of quiet reflection with a statue surrounded by shrubs on the bank, small log seats, a Jesse tree for prayers and hopes for the World”

with heavy timbers. The plan is to create an area of quiet reflection with a statue surrounded by shrubs on the bank, small log seats, a Jesse tree for prayers and hopes for the World and a softening of this hard area. This will also, hopefully, improve the wildlife corridor between the two house gardens by providing the missing link. The art teacher had drawn up the plans and we were able to provide some additional horticultural ideas for the area. This was a small-scale scheme that can be achieved relatively cheaply but it will make a significant boost to the well-being of the pupils, the wildlife and the school grounds.

Two schools needing different solutions to create the reflective and memorial gardens they want. We were very happy to contribute to the horticultural aspects of these schemes with some extra ideas. Children will see the areas being developed and then use them. They will see what can be done to improve something sad into something beautiful.



Sherborne Gardens, Litton

News from the Council Meeting on 12 October

We welcomed Julian Gibbs to his first Council meeting. Julian is an ex-National Trust curator and is on the Conservation Committee of The Gardens Trust. He has undertaken to work on Grants and he has already started by visiting The Shell House near Ilminster, where restoration is well under way. He would welcome suggestions from Members, especially for our towns where small amounts of money would make a difference.

Ian Clark, until recently the Landscape Officer at Taunton Borough Council, was

invited to the meeting to outline plans to digitize our survey records. (*see article later on page 8*). He accepted the Council's invitation to chair the Survey Committee.

Planning for events for 2018 is under way. As events have been extremely well supported it was agreed that a member's guest may only come to two outings a year. We need to put our Members first, but be able to encourage new members to join.

As mentioned at the AGM, the Editors would welcome ideas for articles and contributors to the Magazine. Email address on page 2.



Front Cover: courtesy of the Editors

Back Cover: courtesy of Diana Hebditch

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