

Birkbeck Garden History Group Newsletter



Summer 2023 No 64

Study Day: Gardens of the Czech Republic

BGHG Study Day 25 March

After two years of adapting Study Days to run over Zoom, it was a great pleasure to return to an in-person event. This year's Study Day was presented in association with the Friends of Czech Heritage and we were fortunate to have two expert speakers from the Czech Republic.

Ina Truxová, landscape architect and member of the Directorate General of the National Heritage Institute in Prague, set the scene by giving us an overview of some of the magnificent baroque palaces and castles and their gardens found in the Czech provinces of Bohemia and Moravia. She began in Prague and showed us no less than seven palaces, starting with Wallenstein, an important early baroque palace built to rival Prague Castle with a beautifully restored garden in the Italian baroque style.

Other splendid examples outside Prague included Český Krumlov, one of the largest formal gardens in the Czech Republic and now a UNESCO World Heritage site, and Buchlovice, again huge, with its original Italian baroque garden extended in the French style before the mid 18th century plus a large landscape park added in 1867. Jaroměřice Nad Rokytinou, completed in 1735 and one of the great baroque castles of central Europe, retains many garden features of the period, such as the statuary and carved stone benches, in its park.

Ina gave us some background to the noble families building these palaces and her lecture was illustrated with engravings or plans of the original landscape accompanied by beautiful photographs and aerial shots of the present, restored, site. It was an excellent introduction to the history and great baroque heritage in the Czech Republic.

In the second lecture, Michael Symes, well-known garden historian and author, started by giving the historical context of the development of gardens in the Czech Republic and identified characteristic features of the Czech baroque style, showing us examples from four gardens: Krásný Dvůr, Kroměříž, Vlašim and Veltrusy. Although inspired by Italian and, later, French baroque, the Czech baroque style can be regarded as a genre of its own. The gardens were often situated on hilly, narrow sites with steep slopes or several levels. There was often a long central axis or spine to the garden; this is very evident in the pictures of Kroměříž, Krásný Dvůr and Veltrusy. Turquoiserie garden buildings and decoration were added, as at Krásný Dvůr and Kroměříž, possibly in reference to the frequent Ottoman attacks on the country. The chateau or palace often had a *sala terrena* on the ground floor, a central European concept of an open-sided loggia-like room that connected the garden to the house. These rooms were usually decorated in the style of the garden and, incidentally, could serve as an aid to the restoration of the site. Both Buchlovice and Jaroměřice Nad Rokytinou, described by the previous speaker, had a *sala terrena* and Michael illustrated two more at Krásný Dvůr and Kroměříž.

Michael went on to show how the English landscape garden, often called the English park, became fashionable in the late 18th century and gave examples at Krásný Dvůr, Vlašim and Veltrusy. Veltrusy (1785) also included a *ferme ornée*. Krásný Dvůr now has many restored garden buildings of the period: a rotunda, temple, Chinese and Turkish pavilions, plus an ornate neo-gothic summer house, possibly the earliest example in the Czech Republic.

Joan Pateman

In the third lecture we heard accounts of two of the many remarkable feats of restoration achieved in recent decades. Our speaker Kamila Krejčířiková is an expert in landscape design and restoration.

Pernštejn, a heavily fortified castle dating from the 13th century, is sited on a steep and rocky eminence with gardens laid out below the walls by successive owners. The restoration team faced formidable challenges. The gardens had not only been neglected for more than a century but were in danger of falling down the hillside owing to the instability of the soil. Surviving buildings were derelict and the water supply to water features destroyed. A first task was a detailed analysis of the site from the few documents and images which could be found. A ground-penetrating radar survey revealed evidence of water gardens surrounding the Chinese pavilion and of the



Pernštejn, looking down on the parterre and Chinese pavilion

Photo: ©Hugo

layout of paths. The decision was taken to restore to the early 18th-century design. Stabilising the site required the clearance of 500 trees and other dangerous growth, and in this and the planning generally the restorers had to maintain an acceptable balance between horticulture and 'nature'. But in the final aerial views of the completed restoration we were able to admire the success of the project.

The Cultural Landscape of Lednice-Valtice, 200 km² in extent and a UNESCO World Heritage Site, presented a strikingly different prospect. Now the property of the state, the site was owned by the Dukes of Liechtenstein from the 13th century until the Second World War. Over the centuries the family created and constantly remodelled the gardens. Kamila recounted the history of the gardens from the 17th-century baroque through the early 19th-century English-influenced landscape park to the present day when the vicissitudes of the post-war decades rendered necessary a programme of restoration. One part of the project was the restoration of the Palm House of 1843, one of the largest in Europe, together with the recreation of a lost parterre of the same date. Extensive research established the technology and construction of the Palm House, now completely restored, and the varieties of plants grown.

The final lecture, given by Caroline Cannon-Brookes, art historian and lecturer, explored two gardens dating from the inter-war period of the 20th century: the Prague Castle gardens and the garden of the Villa Tugendhat in Brno, both gardens designed by modern architects.

The first President of the Republic, Tomáš Masaryk, formed a twofold ambition for Prague Castle: to restore the Castle to its historic and symbolic importance in the national life and to open the complex to the city and people. This formidable task was entrusted to the Slovene architect, Jože Plečnik. Between 1920 and 1934 Plečnik remodelled the series of gardens, courtyards and stairways laid out at different periods on the southern slope of the Castle mound. A monumental new walkway, the Bull Staircase, led through gardens and belvederes giving panoramic views over the city and access to the castle interior. New structures were introduced, notably a copper-roofed pavilion and giant concrete basin. Plečnik's aim throughout – and achievement – was the integration into a harmonious whole of new and existing elements, especially those with historic significance. Mature trees and baroque fountains were incorporated into his design. He retained the memorial to the famous Defenestration of 1618 while installing a granite obelisk to commemorate the Great War.

We turned from the public to the private sphere with a house, Villa Tugendhat, celebrated as an 'Icon of Modernism' for its revolutionary use of space and industrial construction techniques. Designed in 1928 by Mies van der Rohe for Fritz and Greta Tugendhat, members of a leading Jewish family, the objective to interconnect interior and exterior was achieved through several elements of the design. The steeply sloping site commanded views of the historic landmarks of the city, uniting the house with the wider landscape. The south-west aspect allowed light to flood in, while the famous wall of glass could sink into the floor, physically integrating the open-plan living spaces with the garden. Large terraces were accessible from all rooms: a private family space with children's play area on the bedroom floor and an outdoor dining terrace on the living area below, with a broad external staircase to the garden. Creepers over the base of external walls reinforced the illusion of the house rising from the garden which was chiefly given over to sweeping lawn. Plants were, however, important to Mrs Tugendhat; her conservatory, complete with pool and lush planting, ran from front to back of the house with doors to garden and living area. In 1938 the family were forced to flee from the Nazi invasion. Years of military and institutional use brought the house to a sorry condition but now it has been immaculately restored and is a designated UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Margaret Scholes

Gatton Park and Ramster Hall Garden

BGHG Visit 12 April

We set out to visit these two gardens in Surrey on a stormy day with high winds threatening to curtail our trip. **Gatton Park**, our first destination, has a rich history in its buildings, parkland and gardens. The site is now a school and our approach was through a cluster of unremarkable modern school buildings. Gatton Hall, however, has a beautiful, unusual, deep portico added in 1891, with tall slender Corinthian columns. Passing through the Hall, we were immediately struck by the grand Victorian parterre beyond with its views over a magnificent, classic 'Capability' Brown landscape. Created in the 1760s, a series of ponds run down through the park feeding a typical Brownian serpentine canal leading into the enlarged lake, the rolling landscape enhanced by Brown with spoil from the lake.

From the parterre we proceeded to the Japanese Garden, developed in 1909 by the landscape architect Edward White and subsequently rescued from the wilderness and restored in the 1990s. There is a tea hut, stone lanterns, Japanese bridge over the stream and an extensive plantation of cherry trees around. On the other side of the park is the rock garden, built by James Pulham and Son in 1901–12, again neglected and overgrown over the years and now beautifully restored and replanted. Although the grotto was made of Kentish ragstone, Pulhamite was used in the lily pond. There was much more to see and learn about Gatton and its park, all in all a most interesting visit.

The garden at **Ramster Hall** was a complete contrast. Although it also has a red-painted Japanese bridge, it is a woodland garden. It was laid out in 1890 by the owner Sir Harry Waechter, helped by Gauntletts of Chiddingfold, nurserymen and specialists in Japanese plants. Sir Henry and Lady Norman bought Ramster in 1922 and Lady Norman greatly enhanced the garden which has remained in the family, passing down through the female line. Miranda Gunn, granddaughter of Lady Norman and mother of the current owner Rosie Glaister, introduced us to the garden and described its history and development. The garden is full of azaleas, magnolia,

bamboos, rhododendrons and acers. There are over 300 different varieties of rhododendron, many bred by the family. One variety of acer, *Acer palmatum* 'Dissectum' is remarkable even in spring, with its multi-stemmed twisted trunk. There are three ponds and streams running through the woodland, a bog garden with gunnera and a camellia walk. A centenary garden was created in 2022 to celebrate 100 years of the family's ownership; it was planted with the varieties of plants present in the garden when they bought it. When we were there, the bluebells were just beginning to show a blue carpet under the trees. Fallen tree trunks were carved into wooden sculptures; a magnificent redwood dragon rests by the centenary garden, elsewhere a fox and chickens, and some beavers.



Ramster Garden, dragon bench

Photo: Joan Pateman

Fortunately, the wind held off and the rain did not deter us from enjoying the delights of this magical woodland landscape.

Joan Pateman

Easton Walled Gardens and Belton House

BGHG Visit 18 May

From the moment Lady Ursula Cholmeley stepped onto our coach to welcome us to **Easton Walled Gardens** in Lincolnshire, it was clear that this was to be a special visit. Under her supervision the walled gardens, once abandoned and completely overgrown following 50 years of neglect, have undergone a remarkable transformation. The hard landscaping had become engulfed within a wilderness of woodland and brambles when restoration work started in 2001. Lady Cholmeley confessed she had started the project with 'no budget, no gear, and definitely no idea', but today there is no suspicion of this.

Part of the magic of the gardens lies in their setting with the terraces running down the valley and the great walled garden with the orchard and rose meadows rising up the opposite slope. Part of the magic is due to their imaginative planting.

Walls around the kitchen garden date from the 17th century, and now enclose a Cottage Garden, the Pickery for their collection of sweet peas, and vegetable beds, together with restored garden buildings. Informal planting within a formal framework is evident throughout, with an 80-metre-long mixed border showcasing traditional flowers. In the Cedar Meadow, a splendid 32-metre-high *Sequoiadendron* holds court with the cedars; wildflower terraces boast cowslips, knapweed, wild marjoram, scabious and clovers. A yew tunnel of over 100 trees, once a hedge, runs up the middle of the orchard and rose meadows which include David Austin roses and rare lilacs underplanted with long grasses and bright blue *Camassia*. The White Space Garden, designed by Lady Ursula, was inspired by the work of Charles Jencks. Rolling curves of box hedging offset the simple white and silver colour planting scheme, with various sculptures reflecting our understanding of the universe.



Looking towards the great walled garden at Easton

Photo: Joan Pateman

The river Witham runs through the Easton estate and flows on through **Belton**, now run by the National Trust, which was our second destination. The 300 fallow deer which graze the vast parkland are direct descendants of a wild herd, established for hunting by the Brownlow family in 1688. In the 1740s–50s a ha-ha between the formal gardens and the park was introduced, and the landmark Bellmount Tower plus Gothick ruins and Cascade constructed.

We enjoyed a tour of the grounds with Belton's Head Gardener Abigail Pickersgill, starting with the Wyattville-designed Italian Garden with its Lion Exedra, formerly the site of the kitchen gardens. It contains the Orangery, the first iron and glass domestic conservatory ever built; it has underfloor heating now fuelled by a biomass boiler. The Dutch Garden once featured a huge monolith and a Grand Canal, removed after flooding in 1879. Much of the hedging is blue box, thought to be unique to Belton, and so far disease resistant. We continued down Statue Walk beside part of the Eastern Avenue, one of the original avenues through the parkland still surviving, to the Pleasure Grounds. These were a wilder part of the garden, completely carpeted with snowdrops, daffodils and bluebells in spring.

Belton House gardens and parkland are extensive, full of specimen trees, ponds and eye-catchers. When funding permits, planned future projects include redesigned maze and shrubberies, and the replanting of lavender borders and the old rose garden. Then it will be time for another, longer, visit.

Janet O'Donnell

Cumbria Gardens BGHG Study Tour

Yewbarrow House, Grange-over-Sands

23 May

At Yewbarrow House the owner Jonathan Denby has created a series of spaces following the very steep contours of the hill on which they are sited. Our visit took us across a level terrace where the house is built and then into a series of connected gardens linked by retaining walls and wandering paths, as we encountered a range of exotic



Yewbarrow House, New glasshouse Photo: Ailsa Sleigh

planting the owner is proud to be able to grow. The azaleas were in full flower providing bright smudges of colour against the green and grey of the stone. We admired the extensive fruit and vegetable patches which supply the owner's group of hotels, and looked up at the glasshouse and summer house, the latter containing a lap pool down its centre, both constructed in 2015 in a mix of pastiche Victorian and modern styles. We frequently retraced our steps as we variously encountered an acer walk, a Japanese garden with an infinity pool, a lookout tower, a set of terraced beds ready to receive Jonathan's celebrated dahlias, and a path which led us through a garden shed with stained glass windows behind the aeoniums ready to plant out.

Each time we turned from looking at the garden the view across the estuary to Morecambe Bay took our breath away. The gardens are full of contemporary statues and inscribed stone slabs, mostly using locally sourced materials, much in the styles of William Shenstone at The Leasowes or Ian Hamilton Finlay at Little Sparta. Like those gardens this is the work of a single personality whose inspiration is inscribed across the landscape, a project still very much in the making.

Ailsa Sleigh

Levens Hall, Kendal

23 May

We toured the gardens at Levens Hall with Head Gardener, Chris Crowder. Their most famous feature, the topiary garden, said to be the oldest of its kind in the world, was originally laid out by King James II's gardener, Guillaume Beaumont, between 1689 and 1712. Most of the yew topiary dates back to this time, while much of the box is Victorian. Topiary features in historic gardens were mostly ripped out long ago but, happily, those at Levens have survived. It is thought the owner's heirs never updated the gardens' design because they lived elsewhere much of the time.

Today, Levens has four full-time gardeners plus a team of volunteers. Chris has carte blanche in managing the gardens but, for him, making them a visual experience for visitors while respecting their history is important. In keeping with tradition therefore, the topiary is underplanted. At the time of our visit 15,000 brightly-coloured spring bedding plants were flowering, although they were soon to be replaced with a summer display. Topiary maintenance is an all-consuming, year-round exercise, especially clipping and spraying against box blight. As some die-back has occurred, Chris experiments with alternatives including disease-resistant *Buxus* varieties. Fortunately, box caterpillar has not yet been seen.



Levens Hall, topiary with spring underplanting

Photo: Paula Sewell

Of course, there is so much more than topiary to enjoy at Levens Hall. There are ancient giant beech hedges, rose gardens, a shrub border, vegetable garden, and even the UK's first recorded ha-ha. The historic 'wilderness' is today echoed by mown paths amongst lime trees and wild flowers, while the original bowling green is used by the local croquet club.

Paula Sewell

Blackwell, Bowness-on-Windermere

24 May

The house at Blackwell is one of the finest surviving examples of the work of architect Mackay Hugh Baillie Scott. It was built as a country retreat for Sir Edward Holt in 1901; the family visited regularly until the start of World War One, and then sporadically until 1928, when the property was rented out. In 1999 it was acquired for restoration by Lakeland Arts; the absence of owner-occupiers meant it was never substantially altered inside or out and thus retains many of its original features. Our visit to the house focused particularly on the natural motifs used in the friezes of the downstairs rooms, the stained glass windows and the William de Morgan tilework. These link the inside with the outside of the building, which was situated to face south at a time when most such houses

faced squarely onto the lake. The effect is to provide views of the surrounding parkland as well as the lake with some carefully defined clumps of trees to frame such vistas.

The garden was planned by Thomas Mawson, who worked closely with Baillie Scott to achieve a unity of design, of which only the broad outline remains. We walked along a series of terraces, the lower ones edged with low stone walls. The largest of these, now mainly laid to lawn, had two tennis courts; a smaller upper terrace housed a croquet lawn. There were originally flower beds around the house, but now the planting is limited to the buttress walls and some small perennial beds around the house. The views, however, remain magnificent.



Blackwell, terraces with view of Lake Windermere Photo: Ailsa Sleigh

Ailsa Sleigh

Brantwood, Coniston

24 May

We travelled by ferry down Coniston Water to the home John Ruskin made at Brantwood. In 1871, after a period of bad health, he bought the house and grounds and remained there for the rest of his life. Remarkably he bought the property without seeing it. He then set about enlarging it and creating gardens from the estate. When he moved in, he brought with him his married cousin Joan Severn. Between them they were to create a series of gardens.



Brantwood, view to Coniston Water

Photo: M G Jones

These were not to be shared as joint projects but as separate and different gardens and apparently they would often quarrel over each other's decisions.

Ruskin tried to keep his gardens naturalistic. He made and re-made pathways through the woods and created a Moorland Garden; he added stone seats to watch a tumbling beck; placed stone steps to reach a precipice with moss-covered rocks and added a pond where he could sit and observe the movement of fish. Perhaps the greatest of his schemes was the zig-zag path, the Zig-Zaggy – which he regarded as a 'paradise of terraces' based on Dante Alighieri's seven deadly sins. However, with time and changes of ownership, what we see today is a modern interpretation.

His cousin Joan Severn had different ideas. Influenced by William Robinson (with whom she corresponded), she designed in the 'wild garden' style. After Ruskin died in 1900, Joan Severn inherited and remained at the house until the late 1920s. It is her contribution of terrace walks and views – of lake and hills – along with azaleas, rhododendron, orchard and kitchen garden that make the gardens of Brantwood today.

M G Jones

Holehird Gardens, Windermere

25 May

Holehird is a 10-acre fellside garden with wonderful views from its higher terraces out across to Lake Windermere. The walled garden at its centre contains beautifully kept herbaceous borders and island beds, while collections of rhododendrons and hydrangeas flourish in the garden's beneficial climate. Holehird also houses six National Plant Collections and in 2022 was a finalist in the RHS's Partner Garden of the Year.

Originally part of a larger estate dating back to the 1630s, it wasn't until 1885 that formal gardens were laid out. Subsequent owners continued the development of the grounds until 1945 when Holehird was 'gifted' to the local council. Since 1969 it has been leased to the Lakeland Horticultural Society who currently maintain the garden with 50–60 regular volunteers, many of whom work in the garden weekly. Working in teams, the volunteers have the freedom to develop and plant as they wish, although the Society's Garden Committee always has the final say!

With no formal tour of the garden, one highlight for me was the small glasshouse within the walled garden containing beautifully displayed collections of succulents, pelargoniums and tropical flowering plants. Another was the 'Purdom Bed' located high up the garden on one of the terraces and named for famed plant-hunter, William Purdom, a local lad. The volunteer team working on this bed were able to show me examples of some of the plants Purdom collected during his Chinese expeditions, including the rare *Indigofera amblyantha*, the pink-flowered indigo.

Paula Sewell

Holker Hall, Haverthwaite

25 May

Holker Hall, set in the microclimate of the Cartmel Peninsula, was one of various houses owned by the Dukes of Devonshire; it is now in the hands of cousins who live there and seek to make it a homely and ever-changing space. The family money came from slate mines, which still operate, and slate and stone are used creatively around the garden. It has a currently non-functioning cascade which, after a major overhaul due this year, will emulate

the one at Chatsworth. The house historically was only used in the spring so there was much emphasis on spring planting; the new team is expanding this to introduce all-year interest, for example with its topiary. Beyond the lovely wildflower meadow the huge slate sun dial designed by Sir Mark Lennox Boyd emulates one from 2,300 years ago. Paths through the 'no mow May' fields lead one into the woodland area, which has some astonishing old trees – of their type the oldest in the country and some outliving their norm by over a century. The great lime tree is one of the country's 50 greatest trees. A sunken garden designed by Thomas Mawson has a more structured planting in blues and purples on various levels. The more formal parts of the garden around the house – most dating from the 17th century – and the modern topiary are all best seen from the main rooms in the house. The house itself is open; a visit from Queen Mary apparently prompted the installation of the first ensuite bathroom.



Holker Hall terraces

Photo: ©Andrew Abbott

Caryn Mackenzie

Gardens in Lucca, Italy

A stroll along the four kilometres of Renaissance walls, now a walking and cycling route, that surround Lucca provides a convenient way of discovering this lovely Tuscan city. Three attractive gardens catch the eye and all are worth a visit.

The first is the amazing rooftop garden on the 45-metres medieval Guinigi Tower, clearly visible from across the city. The garden, certainly planted by the 1600s, is small, boasting just a few holm oaks but it is worth climbing the 233 steps to see them and the magnificent views.

The Palazzo Pfanner lies on the north side of Lucca. Built in the 1660s for the Moriconi family, the Palazzo was extended by the Controni family from the 1680s onwards before being acquired by Felix Pfanner, a



Palazzo Pfanner Garden

Photo: Sheila Poole

German brewer who established his brewery at the property in the second half of the 19th century. The brewery closed in 1929 but the Pfanner family still live at the Palazzo and opened it to visitors in the 1990s after restoration. The delightful Italian-style formal garden, full of Mediterranean and exotic plants, is attributed to the baroque architect Filippo Juvarra (1678–1736) and extends from the great staircase at the Palazzo entrance to the city walls. An octagonal basin with fountain sits where the two main paths cross. Citrus trees in large earthenware pots, interspersed with 18th-century statues, line the path from the Palazzo. In winter the trees are stored in the handsome lemon-house tucked under the city walls for shelter.

The Lucca Botanical Garden is much larger (two acres) and lies in the south-east corner of the city, again partly tucked up against the walls. Founded by Maria Luisa of Bourbon in 1820, construction in 1822–23 was overseen by the Royal Architect Lorenzo Nottolini (also responsible for the Lucca aqueduct) and a flourishing botanical school was established. But the early 20th century saw the start of a long period of decline. Scientific activities were discontinued and the garden was managed as a public park. Restoration began in the 1970s: new collections of plants were introduced, botanical activities were restarted, the 19th-century greenhouses were renovated and modern ones were built. The garden is now in excellent condition and

proudly celebrated its 200th anniversary in 2020. The varied collections have much to offer throughout the year and there are some splendid old trees, including a magnificent cedar planted in 1822, a huge 3-trunk ginkgo and, in the pond, an American bald cypress (*Taxodium distichum*) surrounded by its 'cypress knees'. The botanical section includes some 300 medicinal plants and a sensory garden, while a small museum houses old books and drawings and the 19th-century herbarium.

Sheila Poole

News

Tour of the Czech Republic

As a result of the recent Study Day in March, the Wessex Fine Art Tours have organised a trip to the great palaces and gardens of the Czech Republic from 13 to 20 May 2024. The historic provinces of Bohemia and Moravia have an outstanding collection of chateaux, villas and grand hunting lodges with their associated gardens, now

restored to their former grandeur. The tour, which is open to the public, will visit many of the gardens described during the Study Day. It will be led by Barbara Peacock, who has extensive knowledge of the area and she will be accompanied by a Czech tour guide.

The 8-day tour will cost £2985 per person in a twin-bedded or double room with a £275 single supplement. The price does not include the air flight. Wessex Fine Art Tours have produced a brochure with booking form which has been circulated by email to all BGHG members. The brochure includes a full description of the programme and details of the costs and terms.

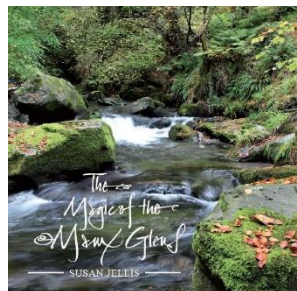
The Czech Republic has a rich heritage of great houses and gardens, as we learned on the Study Day, and this will be a wonderful opportunity to visit and learn more about them. Places on the tour are limited, and numbers will be capped at 15. Note that the deadline for booking with payment of a small deposit is the **end of August**.

Find the Past of Lower Bowden Manor

This beautiful house and garden in Berkshire date back to the 1900s. When the current owners, the Cox-Nicols, bought the property in 2016 they found a very neglected garden with, however, a collection of mature trees. They also knew the long wisteria and rose walk dated back to the 1930s and the rill was contemporary with the house. Juliet Cox-Nicol, a garden designer, set about reviving the garden, restoring the rill, creating a new Japanese-style water garden and underplanting in the old orchard. A stumpery is the latest addition.

BGHG became interested in visiting the garden at which point Robert Cox-Nicol asked us if we could research the history of the garden, uncover its past and find out what it looked like in the beginning and over the years since. If you are interested in taking on this research project, please contact Joan Pateman, joan.pateman@zen.co.uk.

New Book about the Glens of the Isle of Man



BGHG members will recall that our first overnight trip was to the gardens and glens of the Isle of Man in July 2013, guided by Susan Jellis. Susan has recently written a book, *The Magic of the Manx Glens*, which celebrates the beauty of all eighteen national glens. The book includes some history and a description of each glen and is beautifully illustrated with photographs and original artwork by local artists. It reflects the varying character of the glens and highlights the continuing appeal of the semi-wild seclusion to be found in many of them. Brent Elliott wrote the Foreword setting the development of the glens as pleasure gardens in the Victorian period in a wider context.

Susan Jellis has a few copies of the book for sale; contact susan.jellis@outlook.com. It can also be ordered online from the Isle of Man at bridge-bookshop.com or manxnationalheritage.im but these shops charge more for postage.

Celebrating Marnock

Robert Marnock (1800–1889) was a well-respected landscape gardener, horticulturalist and garden writer of his time. He designed, and was the first curator of, both the Sheffield Botanical Gardens and the Royal Botanic Society Garden in Regent's Park, London. He worked at Regent's Park for over 20 years after which he concentrated on his landscape design commissions. He designed public parks and a substantial number of private gardens in England and in Europe. Sheffield Botanical Gardens have organised a Celebration of Marnock's life with an online exhibition on their website and celebratory events taking place over the summer at sites around the country associated with Marnock. The website includes a large number of articles about his life, style of landscape design, stories about his commissions, his publications and more. See <https://www.sbg.org.uk/celebrating-marnock>. The events taking place in London are listed on the Events page below.

RHS Digital Dig Project

The RHS is running a large project to document and make accessible its collection of more than 28,000 plant nursery catalogues dating back to 1612. Supported by a grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, more than 165 volunteers working remotely around the world are taking part. One part of the project is to build a map online showing the location of plant nurseries. Another part is to digitise a selection of nursery catalogues with images and plant lists. A group of students in England, aged 16–25, contributed short films inspired by RHS nursery catalogues relating to their locale. The project was awarded the ARA Archive Volunteering Award for 2023.

The project is ongoing. The map of plant nurseries can be found at RHS Digital Dig plant nursery locations – Google My Maps. It is searchable by name or you can browse down the list of names or click on a location to find the name of the nursery. The map can be enlarged to zoom in on an area. About 2,000 nurseries have been mapped so far. The much smaller collection of digitised early nursery catalogues forms part of the growing RHS digital collection of resources; see RHS Digital Collections | Browse. Each catalogue can be searched. The short films made by students cover a range of subjects from Loddiges Nursery in Hackney to the story of how wisteria came to England and another on plant nursery seed catalogues as a window to the past. The films are available on YouTube; go to RHS Digital dig project - YouTube

Events

BGHG Programme 2023

10 August	Holdenby House and Cottesbrooke Hall, Northants
21 September	Riverhill Himalayan Garden and The World Garden at Lullingstone Castle, Kent
5 October*	Beale Arboretum, Enfield *NOTE change of date
25 October	Marble Hill, Pope's Grotto and Radnor Gardens, Twickenham
November	Winter Lecture on the restoration of Marble Hill House with Emily Parker

Strawberry Hill House Garden Tours

Mondays 24 July–25 September 10.30 am Guided tour of the garden. 268 Waldegrave Road, Twickenham TW1 4ST, Tel: 020 8744 1241, Email: enquiry@strawberryhillhouse.org.uk, <https://strawberryhillhouse.org.uk>

Gardens Trust Lectures Online

Tuesdays 12 September–24 October 10.00–11.30 am Series of seven lectures on UNESCO World Heritage Landscapes.

Wednesdays 13 September–11 October 6.00–7.30 pm Series of five lectures on Head Gardeners at Historic Sites to be followed by a second series.

Tuesdays 14 November–5 December 10.00–11.30 am Series of four lectures on American Moderns. For details, see <https://thegardenstrust.org/events/>

IHR History of Landscapes Seminars

Weekly Thursdays 28 September onwards 6.00 pm The programme will be issued in August on www.history.ac.uk/seminars/history-gardens-and-landscapes. Email: gardenhistory.ihr@gmail.com

London Parks & Gardens Winter Lectures

Mondays 6.00–7.00 pm In-person and Online
9 October *St James's Park: Plants, Pelicans and Processions*, Mark Wasilewski.

13 November *Highgate Cemetery – Rethinking a historic cemetery for the 21st century*, Ian Dungavell.

11 December *The Early Life of Alexander McKenzie, the 19th century Horticulturist and Designer*, Lisa White, Email: office@londongardenstrust.org, <https://londongardenstrust.org/whatson/talks/>.

Plant Heritage Lecture In-person and Online

Tuesday 12 September 6.30–7.45 pm *The Mulberry: A Very English Tree*, Peter Coles. University Women's Club, 2 Audley Square, London W1K 1DB, Email: Erika.krish@gmail.com, <https://www.plantheritage.org.uk/events/london/>

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Celebrating Marnock London Events

Sunday 17 September 1.00–4.00 pm *Open Day at Inner Temple Gardens*. 11 Kings Bench Walk, London EC4Y 7HL.

<https://www.sbg.org.uk/celebrating-marnock-events/sept-open-day-at-inner-temple-gardens>

Wednesday 20 September 7.30–9.30 *Robert Marnock – Giant of 19th Century Gardening*, Brent Elliott. St Leonard's Church, Streatham High Road, London SW16 1HS. www.streathamsociety.org.uk

Sunday 24 September 2.00 and 3.00 pm *Tour of Henry Tate Gardens*. Henry Tate Mews, London SW16 3HA. Email: streathamsoc@gmail.com, <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/streatham-society-31488784265>

Cardiff University Course Online

Wednesdays 4 October–6 December 10.00 am–12.00 pm *The Modern British Garden: the interwar years*, Stephen Parker. Email: learn@cardiff.ac.uk, Tel: 029 2087 0000, <https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/part-time-courses-for-adults/courses>

Oxford University Department for Continuing Education Courses

Wednesdays 27 September–29 November 10.30 am–12.30 pm *The Making of the Landscape: Up to 1600*. Ewert House, Ewert Place, Banbury Road, Oxford OX2 7DD, Tel: 01865 280900, Email: weeklyclasses@conted.ox.ac.uk.

Saturday 28 October 9.45 am–5.00 pm *A Tribute to WG Hoskins: the Father of Landscape History*. Online or in-person at Rewley House.

31 May–2 June 2024 *New Perspectives on Botanical Gardens* in association with the Gardens Trust in-person at Rewley House, 1 Wellington Square Oxford OX1 2JA. Tel: 01865 270368, Email: ppdayweek@conted.ox.ac.uk, <https://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/search/?s=landscape&sort=relevance>

Essex Gardens Trust Lecture In-person

Saturday 18 November 2.00–4.00 pm *The Life of Artist and Gardener Humphrey Waterfield Revisited*, Jean Cornell. Writtle College, Lordship Road, Writtle CM1 3RR, Email: essexgardenstrust@gmail.com, <https://www.essexgardenstrust.org.uk/our-news-2>

City Lit Course In-person

Saturday 11 May 2024 11.00 am–4.00 pm *Archaeology of London Gardens*, Jill Hummerstone. Keeley Street, London, WC2B 4BA, Email: humanities@citylit.ac.uk, Tel: 020 4582 0414, <https://www.citylit.ac.uk/courses/archaeology-of-london-gardens/hlw223-2324>

Garden Museum Film Online

Charlotte Molesworth in conversation with Non Morris. One hour talk, watch online. <https://gardenmuseum.org.uk/film-library/charlotte-molesworth-in-conversation-with-non-morris/>