



Compton Beauchamp and Buscot Park

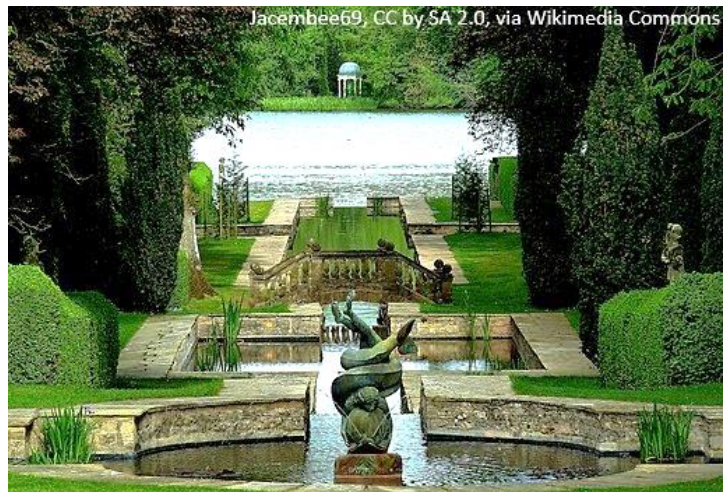
BGHG Visit 29 June

This visit did not start too well with heavy rain overnight for some of us, but luckily the further west we travelled, the sunnier the day became. We joined a coach at Swindon station, Oxfordshire, and made our way to Compton Beauchamp House where we were welcomed with tea and cake in the courtyard by the owner Erik Penser, the head gardener Jane Roberts and Stephen Smith, the BGHG member who had facilitated this visit. Erik gave a brief history of the house which the family have owned since 1976. The house itself has been altered much and added to over the centuries. It is built round a courtyard and set in a moat. Three sides dating from the 16th century are made of brick; the fourth side, the entrance range, dates from the early 18th century, is built of stone and is one storey higher. There is evidence that the property belonged to the monks of Abingdon Abbey in the 11th century.

Jane, Stephen and members of the family took us through the garden with its very long, beautiful borders, high yew hedges and lawns in sheltered places. It is essentially a terraced walled garden with a huge variety of plants. There are smaller areas, like the ornamental rose garden with its scented roses and the David Hicks 20th-century garden, located where the tennis court used to be, which has two rills and box knot beds. The rain from the previous night emphasised the wonderful scents and the whole effect of the broad lawns, borders and gentle terraces back down to the moated house was charming.

After a hearty pub lunch, we travelled to Buscot Park, Faringdon, for a tour of this extensive park and gardens with Richard Wheeler, landscape historian and expert on Buscot Park and the Faringdon Collection.

Lucinda Henderson, Lord Faringdon's daughter-in-law and Amy Lim, Curator of the Faringdon Collection, joined us and answered questions on the way. Richard shared several stories about previous owners and their business enterprises, not all of which were successful, such as the Australian owner in the 1850s–1860s who tried to grow sugar beet to make brandy to sell to France! We walked down the Harold Peto water garden (1904–1913), a long and beautiful series of pools and cascades running down to the river. Continuing up one of the avenues in the park, we came to an unusual modern sundial/obelisk designed by Mark Lennox-Boyd. Past the house with another vista over the park, we went down the narrow hollyhock avenue



Peto Water Garden, Buscot Park

with a view in the distance of a clever mock cascade (faux fall) of metal sheets running with water, a modern echo of Peto's cascade, before entering the present Lord Faringdon's Four Seasons walled garden, the former kitchen garden. This was laid out in 1978 in quadrants with a central lily pond; the mixed borders around the walls are packed with colour. The park is large (300 acres); it felt that we barely saw half of it and there was still the Faringdon Collection inside the house – all worth another visit.

Trijntje Ytsma

Three Gardens in Kent

BGHG Visit 12 July

The three prospective gardens in neighbouring Kent villages could not have been in greater contrast. Hole Park is a large private estate; the garden of Balmoral Cottage is small but celebrated, while Delos at Sissinghurst Castle is a daring experiment at the National Trust's most visited site.

Our arrival at Hole Park was through extensive farmland leading to an elegant Queen Anne house facing an oval pool enclosed by yew sentinels. Here we were met by Edward and Clare Barham, the fourth generation of the family to run the 200-acre estate which, Edward tells us, was purchased in 1911 by Colonel Arthur Barham, proprietor of the Dairy Supply Company (originally part of the Express Dairy Company).

Map in hand, we were free to wander through the formal Millennium Garden, the Walled Garden, Vineyard and the Garden Walk that wrap around the house, divided by high yew hedges, each garden with its own character. At the most southerly tip of the garden, past the Long Borders formerly planned by Christopher

Lloyd, is the landmark bronze statue of the Eagle Slayer first seen at the Great Exhibition of 1851. Taken from Aesop's *The Eagle and the Jackdaw*, it is placed to dramatic effect against the sky and landscape beyond.

This is a garden of many parts, themes and family memories. The Memorial Gate to the rose-filled Walled Garden commemorates Captain Wilfred Barham who died in 1915 at Ypres. Amongst many remarkable trees is the largest-recorded Lucombe oak, *Quercus x hispanica* 'Lucombeana'. At its fiery July prime was the Tropical Border, newly designed by the head gardener.

'Come back in another season', Edward says as we board the coach. Indeed, we should, to see the autumn colour, the collection of rhododendrons, camellias, azaleas and magnolias, the wildflower meadows and the bluebell woods which are reputed to be outstanding.

The path to Balmoral Cottage, off Benenden Green, approaches a weathered picket gate opening to a narrow path bordered by tall boxwood hedges sporting pompom finials, giving us a hint of the pleasures to come.



Topiary at Balmoral Cottage

Photo: Caroline Foley

Once the gardener's cottage and kitchen garden of plant hunter Collingwood 'Cherry' Ingram, the garden was started from scratch in 1983 by Charlotte and Donald Molesworth. Yew and boxwood cuttings were laid out in nursery beds and now form the towering topiary for which this garden is famous. Imposing yew hedges, topped by magnificent clipped peacocks and other creatures, divide the garden which runs downhill to a pond. Incidental topiary accents around the garden come in the form of crowns, spirals and other topiary shapes.

Charlotte, a countrywoman born and bred, fine artist and topiarist, walks us through the vegetable gardens with beds of gourmet salad leaves, past the hen house, following winding grass paths. She points out the many cultivars of common boxwood which, she says, have 'many possibilities', 'Elegantissima'

being the fairest. An aged Bramley apple tree has been cut into a sculptural shape. Old roses, on their original rootstocks, scramble through the trees. A fine specimen of *Myrtus communis* was grown from Charlotte's wedding bouquet. Against the dark hedging are the airy Japanese maples, the wedding cake tree *Cornus alternifolia* 'Argentea' and the silver pear *Pyrus salicifolia* 'Pendula'. Cherry trees are featured, most particularly the great white cherry of Japan, *Prunus* 'Taihaku', which 'Cherry' Ingram famously reintroduced to its native Japan.

Troy Scott Smith, head gardener at Sissinghurst Castle, is on a mission to return the garden, which last year had a footfall of 150,000, to how it was in Vita and Harold's day. The most ambitious project is to realise Vita and Harold's unfulfilled dream of a Cycladean landscape at Sissinghurst. Their efforts had met with little success in Kent's cold clay and Vita had written wistfully that perhaps, one day it would come right.

The new Delos, led by Dan Pearson and involving much research and earth moving, was opened in 2021 and two years later it looks astonishingly authentic. First to strike the eye is the whiteness in the winding paths of stone chips and the broken columns, loose stone walls and rough chunks of marble that lead down to the central agora and village well. Trees include cork oak, *Quercus suber*, and Judas tree, *Cercis siliquastrum*, with a specimen pomegranate, *Punica granatum* centre stage. The myriad drought-resistant perennials, predominantly in blue, silvers and acid yellows, were sourced from a specialist Mediterranean nursery in the south of France.



Delos, Sissinghurst

Photo: Caroline Foley

What did the others think of Delos? I found it a conceit brilliantly executed but curiously out of context set in the English countryside. One thing that is beyond even the best designer to provide is the dazzling sunlight and heavenly azure of the Aegean sea and sky.

Caroline Foley

Holdenby House and Cottesbrooke Hall

BGHG Visit 10 August

Holdenby House and gardens in Northamptonshire have an unusual history and, as we discovered, many interesting traces remain. The house, once a grand Elizabethan palace, is still very large and overlooks the valley on the south side. We approached the gardens with our guide, head gardener Matt Hughes, through the stable courtyard to the right of the house. The gardens appeared to be a series of separate rooms, connected by lawns

often surrounded by tall hedges. Some interesting modern sculptures are placed as eyecatchers. We passed across the huge lawn at the back of the house to the formal, very attractive Pond Garden, with its symmetrical beds again surrounded by tall hedges. The long Silver Border runs at right angles from the side of the house, planted entirely with grey-leaved or white-flowering plants. On the other side of the house was the Tous Tous border (named after a family pet), a narrow path between borders of scented plants, and King Charles' Walk running to the edge of the deer park. King Charles I was imprisoned at Holdenby before his execution and we were told he regularly walked along this border and on into the surrounding countryside.

Holdenby is well known for its historical connections and what we had really come to see – the most exciting part of the day really – were the traces of the magnificent Elizabethan garden across the back and side of the house. It was almost eerie to be walking down the seven now-grassed terraces, still quite visible, and to be looking across the meadow with its huge Elizabethan arches still standing. The Banqueting House in the corner has now gone but the Elizabethan fish pond to the west, on the other side of a long ha-ha, is still there. The whole expanse was an amazing sight. David Marsh was on the trip and has written up much more of the history of Holdenby house and gardens in a recent Gardens Trust blog. To learn more, see [Holdenby | The Gardens Trust](#).

Some of us felt it could only be an anticlimax to see nearby Cottesbrooke Hall in the afternoon but Cottesbrooke has its own, later, history and beautiful gardens and parkland. Like Holdenby, the gardens were distinct rooms each with their own style. Originally designed in the 1930s by Robert Weir Schultz (1860–1951), many of the rooms and borders have been modified by later designers at different periods and it was interesting to see the changes.

Our guide, head gardener Gráinne Ring, started with the grand view from the front of the lovely Queen Anne house over the parkland with avenues leading to different viewpoints in the far distance. We continued to the Statue Walk with an array of statues originally from Stowe and delicate graceful borders by Arne Maynard. The walled Pool Garden was an interesting pastiche. After Schultz, Sylvia Crowe added the pool and summerhouse in the 1950s and Arne Maynard later added the long border.



Reflecting Pool Garden by Arne Maynard, Cottesbrooke Hall
Photo: Joan Pateman

There were several more garden rooms, pools, pergola and terraces, all interrelated and beautifully planted, plus some impressive cedar of Lebanon trees (*Cedrus libani*). Fortunately the tour included a walk down to the wild garden which was hardly wild, but a delightful garden along both sides of a stream crossed by a Chinese bridge – quite a different atmosphere to the rest of the garden.

There was a lot to take in at Cottesbrooke at several levels: history, garden design and horticulture. The gardens merit further study, and another visit. All in all, it was a very rewarding day.

Joan Pateman

Beale Arboretum

BGHG Visit 5 October

Members of BGHG who attended the Beale Arboretum tour in Enfield, north London, are sure to recommend a visit to this extensive collection of interesting trees, many very beautiful, and to suggest taking the guided tour. We were blessed with a sunny, mild and dry October day but, sadly, were a month early for an autumn colour display owing to current seasonal distortion. Apparently May is also a very rewarding month to visit for spring colour.

West Lodge Park is part of the original Enfield Chase, once an area of about 8,000 acres enclosed in 1136 as a hunting forest. The Chase passed to the Crown in 1421 and remained under the control of the Duchy of Lancaster until 1776 when most of the Chase, but not West Lodge Park, was granted to adjoining parishes. In the late 19th century, John White Cater, a distinguished banker, resided at West Lodge and planted a nucleus of American trees. The Beale family, who bought West Lodge Park as a private hotel in 1945, started developing the 35-acre site as an arboretum in 1963. It now has well over 800 trees and, apparently, is the only hotel in the world with an arboretum.

Our excellent guide Andrew Beale, Managing Director, has enormous knowledge and interest in all the trees, which are clearly labelled with name, origin and planting year, if known. Lists of the trees forming part of the Arboretum's three Plant Heritage National Collections, *Taxodium distichum* and cultivars (swamp



View in the Pinetum, Beale Arboretum

Photo: Joan Pateman

cypresses), *Carpinus betulus* cultivars (European

hornbeams) and *Catalpa* species (Indian bean trees), are displayed nearby. A few trees have a second label as Tree Register Champion Trees, like the *Betula pendula* ‘Laciniata’ (Swedish birch) which has grown very tall since its 1972 planting (owing to its being shaded by the hornbeams) and so became a champion in height in 2018.

On our tour special characteristics of many of the trees were clearly pointed out as well as interesting facts on their history and evolution. Among the many examples were that

- *Ginkgo biloba* can tolerate dense carbon pollution and heat, owing to its survival through ancient climate changes, and so is becoming a successful street and city tree.
- *Sequoiadendron giganteum* (giant redwood), possibly the most massive tree in the world, has a thick soft moist bark which acts as a fire blanket making it resistant to forest fires.
- The huge lower branches of *Cedrus atlantica* (Atlantic cedar) are pulled down by gravity which probably explains why such trees die after 300 years or so. Our guide shook a lower branch of the 250-year-old specimen near to the hotel and clouds of pollen wafted out.

Without a conducted tour you would miss such entertaining explanations but a printed guide which includes a map is available at the hotel reception. The hotel is easy to get to, has a car park and is a short bus ride from Cockfosters underground station, altogether an unmissable opportunity for a rewarding visit.

Angela Herbert

Study Visit to Twickenhamshire

BGHG Visit 25 October

The day included visits to Marble Hill house and garden, Pope’s Grotto, Radnor Gardens and Richmond Terrace, which were not only conveniently close geographically but were also connected to the riverside cultural community that flourished around Twickenham during the 18th century. Both Chris Sumner and Michael Symes, editors of the book, *Twickenhamshire: A Riverside Realm of Gardens and Villas in the Age of Enlightenment* (Redcliffe Press, 2021), accompanied our tour. In his introduction to the day, Michael Symes explained that the name ‘Twickenhamshire’ referred as much to the network of people as to the physical location along the Middlesex bank of the Thames.

Our first stop was Marble Hill house and garden. They were both created from the 1720s onwards by their owner, Henrietta Howard (1689–1767), later Countess of Suffolk, who was a central figure of the Twickenhamshire community. Her garden became a municipal park in 1903 and for many years the house was little more than an adjunct to the park. The house was partially restored at various times but it was not until the recent restoration was completed in 2022 that the common origins of house and garden were re-established.

The house, well known as one of the finest examples of English Palladian style, has been carefully restored to emphasize the elegant proportions and symmetry of the rooms, and the decorations and furnishings chosen to represent their appearance during Henrietta’s ownership. The results are certainly impressive.

The restoration of the garden was a major and complex undertaking, having to incorporate the concerns of the park users, ecological and safety issues, and the desire for historical authenticity. More details about the project, historical sources and restored features are given in the report of the BGHG Winter Lecture below.

The next major stop on our visit was the grotto belonging to Henrietta’s riverside neighbour, the poet Alexander Pope (1688–1744); the grotto is all that remains of Pope’s once famous villa and garden. Pope came



Pope’s Grotto, main passage

Photo: Briar Silich

to live in Twickenham in 1719, started on the grotto in 1720 and continued working on it until his death in 1744. He used the grotto with its two side chambers as a space for both writing and entertaining. The grotto was originally decorated with shells and glistening semi-precious stones. After a visit in 1739 to the mines of Bath and Bristol, Pope transformed it into a celebration of minerals and the walls were redecorated with stalactites and glittering metallic rocks. The grotto ends in a tunnel under the main road to give access to Pope’s garden on the other side and originally it would have been open on the river side, with inner wooden doors.

Like Marble Hill, Pope’s grotto has recently been the subject of a major restoration supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Conservation and management are carried out by Pope’s Grotto Preservation Trust, a voluntary organization, some of whose members showed us around. The restoration has been an amazing project involving a massive amount of painstaking work which has transformed the grotto and brought it to life. Many of the stones were individually removed, cleaned and resecured to the walls. Parts of the cement floor were removed to reveal the original historic bricks, laid in patterns, and now very fragile. It is appropriate that the grotto is now due to be removed from the Heritage at Risk Register.

There is still some discussion about the way the lighting worked in Pope’s time and what sort of water feature there might have been, so further changes may be possible.

In Radnor Gardens, situated close by Pope’s Grotto and now a public park next to the river, our guides at this point, Chris Sumner and Sandra Pullen, filled in more of the background to the world of Twickenhamshire.

The Gardens were created at the beginning of the 20th century from now-demolished 18th-century properties such as Radnor House and they retain a bath house and little gothic pavilion from those properties. The wonderful view up the river to St Mary's church in Twickenham remains today.

Our wide-ranging tour ended on Richmond Hill to see the famous view down the river towards Marble Hill, the only English landscape view protected by Act of Parliament (1902). In the autumn light the view was magical, a very fitting end to an impressive day.

Joanna Roll

The Winter Lecture

9 November

The BGHG Winter Lecture was given by Emily Parker, landscape advisor to English Heritage. She has been researching the landscape at Marble Hill for nearly 10 years and has been heavily involved in its recent restoration by English Heritage, with the help of a £5 million grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

The Restoration of Marble Hill, Twickenham

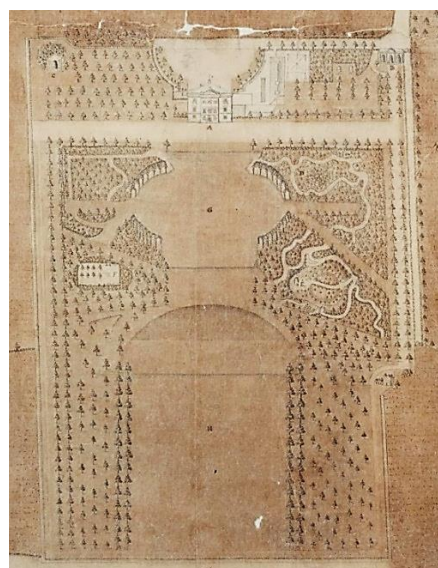
The lecture began with a description of the garden's historical context and the project's research findings before describing the restoration itself, finishing with a virtual tour of the restored garden.

Emily told us that the white neo-Palladian Marble Hill house still stood within a landscape that had retained almost the same boundaries that it had at the end of the life of Henrietta Howard, Countess of Suffolk, who created the original house and garden in the 1720s. The house was built in the fashionable neo-Palladian style by architect Roger Morris, who was also responsible for construction of much of the garden, including a ha-ha around most of the boundary and at least four garden buildings. His involvement was known from records of accounts and was considered central, although others were also involved. The classical style of both house and garden buildings was among the factors that had led English Heritage to conclude that they were conceived as a unified design; the chief aim of the restoration of the garden was to restore this unity.

The question of who designed Henrietta Howard's garden had given rise to much research and the extent of Henrietta's own involvement remained uncertain. A key figure was Alexander Pope, Henrietta's neighbour. His involvement was well documented through correspondence, accounts and an unsigned plan of 1724. This plan could be attributed to Pope as a result of the evidence uncovered during the restoration project. The involvement of the professional garden designer, Charles Bridgeman was also documented although no plan of his had survived. It therefore seemed likely that Bridgeman took Pope's ideas and turned them into a workable design, adding his own experience and ideas.

A survey plan of c.1749 had been discovered, like Pope's plan, some years previously in the Norfolk Record Office and was carefully scrutinized for the restoration. It was attributed to a surveyor employed by the third Duke of Argyll, one of Henrietta's trustees. This plan covered a larger area than Pope's plan, probably because more land had been acquired in the meantime, but many of Pope's features were still to be seen. So it was this c.1749 survey plan that was used as the basis for the restoration in addition to results from a plethora of new non-invasive landscape surveys, excavations and other research.

The original layout of the garden, axial but asymmetrical, was clearly retained in the restored garden. There were two primary axes: the terrace across the front of the house and the axis down to the river. Within this layout were formal areas of groves as well as wilderness areas and serpentine paths. This landscape reflected Pope's 'ancient' and classical principles and was thus an appropriate setting for a Palladian villa. Terraces that stepped down to the Thames, and the grotto, new details of which were uncovered during the project, also fitted well into an 'ancient' style of garden.



Part of plan of Marble Hill, circa 1749
Norfolk Record Office, MC 184/10/1

Our virtual tour, started with an aerial view of the restored garden comparing this with the features shown on the c.1749 plan. This tour was of particular interest to those of us who had been on the BGHG tour in October (see report above) because Emily explained why the changes had been made and how they linked to the c.1749 plan and further research on the landscape. The oval lawn in front of the house was returned to the shape visible on the plan, also determined by the earthwork survey.



Marble Hill aerial view
© Historic England/English Heritage Trust

The arcade of hornbeams around each side of this lawn, clearly seen on the plan, was restored, as was the orchard and a grove of trees near to the surviving, but overgrown, ice house. The ninepin alley, thought to be lost, could be reconstructed since it was on the plan and its location was exactly determined by archaeological excavations. The grove down to the river was newly planted with black and white poplar trees and a central avenue of pest-resistant Indian horse chestnut trees. The orchard on the east side of the house was identified and recreated complete with beehives as shown on the plan. The flower garden in the wilderness area was replanted, somewhat unusually, in a 1720s design based the style of planting described in *New Principles of Gardening*, written by Batty Langley in 1728. The wilderness area was extended back down to the grotto again which had a restored network of sinuous paths and planting, as a result of the evidence of the plan and archaeological investigations.

The whole garden at Marble Hill is a rare survivor of a fleeting moment in the history of garden design, a transitional phase when formal gardens were becoming unfashionable but before the aspirations and ideals of the landscape movement had become established. It was marvellous to see it now being painstakingly restored to its original design.

Joanna Roll

Flowerpots in Ancient Greece

I was a linguist and student of ancient civilisations before I was a garden historian and on a recent visit to Santorini I found something to stimulate both my interests in the excellent modern Museum of Prehistoric Thera, which showcases finds from Akrotiri, the city buried in the volcanic explosion of Thera in ancient times. Among the wonderful frescoes and marvellously preserved artefacts of all kinds, I found two large 17th-century BC terracotta flowerpots. At least that's what the English label said they were.

Cultivated gardens in Ancient Greece do not feature greatly in the garden history timeline, with 'sacred groves' being the main historical green spaces mentioned, perhaps with a spring. So a flowerpot sounded interesting and unusual. The terracotta pots were tapering, decorated with white lilies and closed with a solid disc, fixed just below the rim, which was punctured by a large central hole with 16 smaller holes ringing it (see photo). However that seemed tricky for planting up. I had closer look at the label, where the Greek word was quite clearly that for a vase. These elegant containers were not for growing flowers but for displaying them.

I was intrigued enough to dig a bit deeper when I got home, and found an Akrotiri fresco of a similar vase, standing on a window sill, with five blue-stemmed red lilies positioned in the central hole. I have found no visible clue as to how the 16 smaller holes might have been used, though possibly for smaller flowers. The vases are decorated with coloured lines, not flowers. You can see an example at <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/280630620509264140/>.

Although there were large and lively frescoes with floral themes on display, there was no evidence in any of the wall paintings that the flowers had been deliberately grown. In one fresco found at Akrotiri but now kept in Athens, groups of red-flowered lilies are seen growing in clumps in a rocky landscape and clearly waving in the breeze on their long slender stems. In another fresco, women are out in the rocky hills collecting crocuses in numbers and bringing them back as an offering to a goddess and presumably also for their use as saffron. Flowers were clearly culturally important if not actively gardened. Other vessels and jugs had plant decoration, many with crocus, but also ivy, reed and, what must have been cultivated: grapes and barley. In the ash of the volcanic crater the fossilised leaves of cultivated olive, mastic, pistachio and tamarisk trees were found, as well as dwarf palm and Cretan palm. Another group of intriguing objects, of no known use, were *kymbai*. To me they looked like ideal window boxes or planting troughs.

As I was visiting in late September after a punishingly hot summer, any present-day floral glories on the hills of Santorini were lacking, but the remains of what must have been a truly stunning display of foxtail lilies across an otherwise barren hillside made me sorry I had missed it.

Susan Jellis



Ancient Flowerpot Photo: Susan Jellis



Crocus decoration



A kymbe



Fossilised olive leaves

In Memory

We are very sorry to report the recent deaths of two former members of the BGHG committee: Marilyn Carter and Rita Goodwin. Marilyn died on 30 September; Rita died on 5 November.

Marilyn served on the committee for six years, retiring in 2015. During that time she organised trips, contributed to the newsletter, assisted with the Study Days and was enormously helpful in mentoring new committee members. Members still speak about the walk Marilyn organised around Vauxhall in 2010. Any donations in memory are for Chelsea Physic Garden which was close to her heart.

Rita was a member of the committee for two years, 2015–2016, during which time she helped organise trips. Sadly, Rita had to retire on health grounds at the end of 2016.

Both Marilyn and Rita were keenly interested in the history of gardens and landscapes and both were long-standing members and supporters of BGHG. They will live on in our memories.

News

BGHG Committee Support

We are seeking additional help with organising our annual programme of garden visits. Visit organisers do not need to commit themselves to becoming full committee members but should be prepared to help organise just one visit a year. Initially, you would be fully supported by an experienced committee member and you would only lead a trip unaided when you felt ready to do so.

You are most likely to enjoy this role if you are naturally organised, unfazed by IT, can keep accurate records of bookings and are happy working collaboratively. In the first instance, please contact Sandra Pullen, spullen6@outlook.com, for an informal chat and more information.

If you would like to make more of a contribution, please consider joining the Committee itself; we will be inviting nominations for new members in the new year. The Committee meets every two months in central London in the daytime for about two hours. For more information about our work, get in touch with Joan Pateman, joan.pateman@zen.co.uk.

New Book

Conversations in Garden History: New Research, New Ideas, New Approaches,



edited by Pippa Potts

This publication contains a new collection of research papers written by scholars and practitioners who have contributed to the series of history of gardens and landscapes seminars at the Institute of Historical Research, London. The ten papers are grouped into five themes which had been discussed in the Seminar over the past five years. They cover a diverse range of topics from plants to politics and from economics to urban greening and admirably reflect the multidisciplinary nature of garden history studies today.

The collection, published by the History of Gardens and Landscapes Seminar, IHR in conjunction with the Birkbeck Garden History Group, also serves as a celebration of the first 20 years of the Seminar itself. It is available from Amazon Print on Demand at the website *Conversations in Garden History: New...* by Potts, Ed. Pippa (amazon.co.uk)

Grotto at Beckford's Tower, Bath

Beckford's Tower is a 47-metre tower located in Lansdown Road outside Bath in Somerset. Completed in 1827, it was built for the wealthy slave-owner William Beckford (1760–1840), novelist, art collector, art critic and a rather controversial figure at the time. The Grade I-listed Tower and surrounding landscape have been subject to an extensive restoration project, mainly funded by a Heritage Lottery Fund grant. The project included plans to regain access to the grotto tunnel built in the 1820s near the Tower. Its location had become completely lost over time but was rediscovered by the Bath Preservation Trust in 2021. Originally built in part of a ditch going into an old quarry, the grotto tunnel consisted of carved bedrock covered with a constructed vault. Recent excavations, begun in September 2023, have revealed that the grotto is twice as big as previously understood. Archaeologists have uncovered a cavity 7 metres long with rock work walls, cleverly shaped and cut to appear naturalistic. The winding pathway descending to the grotto helps to create an air of mystery. The grotto tunnel is scheduled to open to the public in March 2024, as part of Beckford's Tower and Museum.

Landscapes from a different viewpoint

The digital artist Daniel Ambrosi has applied artificial intelligence and computer graphics to the familiar landscapes of 'Capability' Brown to present a 'refreshing twenty-first-century interpretation' according to the exhibition catalogue. The resulting art works are on display at the Robilant+Voena Gallery in Dover Street, London W1S 4NL until 15 December. To view the images online, refer to the exhibition catalogue at the website Daniel Ambrosi. AI and the Landscapes of Capability Brown by Robilant+Voena - Issuu. See also the news article: AI and the landscapes of Capability Brown – in pictures | Technology | The Guardian.

Events

BGHG Programme 2024

A full programme of events is being planned for 2024. This list only shows those dates that are now confirmed (plus the AGM).

February	AGM and Lecture
9 March	Study Day on the theme of water in 20th and 21st-century designed landscapes
28 May	Winterbourne and Botanical Gardens, Birmingham
14 August	Eythrope and Waddesdon Manor and Archives, Bucks

William Morris Gallery Exhibition

21 October–18 February *Radical Landscapes: Art inspired by the land*. Lloyd Park, Forest Road, London E17 4PP, Tel: 0208 496 4390, <https://wmgallery.org.uk/event/radical-landscapes/>

Hertfordshire Gardens Trust Lecture Online

Monday 8 January 2.30–4.00 pm *Last Landscapes: The landscapes of British Cemeteries over the last 4 centuries*, Kate Harwood. <https://hertsgardenstrust.org.uk/event/last-landscapes-the-landscapes-of-british-cemeteries-over-the-last-4-centuries-presented-by-kate-harwood/>

Victorian Society Talk Online

Tuesday 9 January 7.00–8.30 pm *Great British Parks – A Concise History*, Paul Rabbitts. Email: events@victoriansociety.org.uk, <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/great-british-parks-a-concise-history-a-talk-by-paul-rabbitts-tickets-748589891517?aff=Website>

IHR History of Landscapes Seminar Hybrid

Thursdays starting in January 6.00 pm

11 January 6.00 pm *Control or subversion? The contemporary experience of fountains in early modern Tuscan and Dutch gardens*, Davide Martino. Email: gardenhistory.ihr@gmail.com. The Winter term programme will be issued in December on <https://www.history.ac.uk/seminars/history-gardens-and-landscapes>.

Garden Museum/ The Gardens Trust Course
Saturdays 20 January–10 February 10.30 am–4.30 pm In-person and Online. *An Introduction to Garden History 2024*. Days can be booked singly. 5 Lambeth Palace Road, London SE1 7LB, Email: info@gardenmuseum.org.uk, <https://gardenmuseum.org.uk/events/an-introduction-to-garden-history-2024/>

Editor: Joan Pateman,

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Assistant Editors: Sheila Poole, Caroline Foley

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London Parks & Gardens Winter Lectures

Mondays 6.00–7.00 pm In-person and Online
8 January, 5 February and 11 March.

For the full programme, go to <https://londongardenstrust.org/whatson/talks/>

Oxford Botanic Garden Winter Lecture In-person

Thursday 25 January 7.00–8.30 pm *Saving the blossom: Cherry Ingram and his rich legacy*, Naoko Abe. Lecture Theatre, Oxford University Museum of Natural History, Parks Rd, Oxford OX1 3PW, <https://www.botanic-garden.ox.ac.uk/event/winter-lecture-2024-naoko-abe-0>, Tel: 01865 286 692, Email: ciara.shaw@obg.ox.ac.uk

Gardens Trust Discussion In-person and Online

Monday 29 January 6.30–8.00 pm *London Round Table – Why Garden History?*, chaired by Chris Blandford. 77 Cowcross St, London EC1M 6EJ,

Email: enquiries@thegardenstrust.org, <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/london-round-table-why-garden-history-tickets-741498521037>

Oxford University Department for Continuing Education Courses In-person

Mondays 22 January–25 March 2.00–4.00 pm *The Buildings and Gardens of Portugal: From Rome Through to the Romantic*, David Boswell. Ewert House, Ewert Place, Banbury Road, Oxford OX2 7DD, Tel: 01865 280900, Email: weeklyclasses@conted.ox.ac.uk.

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

Gardens Trust Lectures Online

Tuesdays 30 January and 6 February 10.00–11.30 am *John Singer Sargent and Gardens*, Elaine Kilmurray. <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/john-singer-sargent-and-gardens-tickets-763512806357>

Essex Gardens Trust Lecture In-person

Saturday 10 February 11.00 am–13.30 pm *Golden and Delicious – Edwardian Gardens*, Caroline Holmes. Writtle University College, Lordship Road, Writtle, Essex CM1 3RR, Email: essexgardenstrust@gmail.com, Web: "Golden and Delicious - Edwardian Gardens" - A lecture by Caroline Holmes Tickets, Sat 10 Feb 2024 at 11:00 | Eventbrite

Cambridge University Botanic Garden Lecture

Thursday 15 February 6.30–8.30 pm Online

Chinoiserie: Tea, trade routes and a taste for the 'exotic', Laura Mayer. Tel: 01223 336265, Email: enquiries@botanic.cam.ac.uk, Web: ONLINE COURSE *Chinoiserie: Tea, trade routes and a taste for the 'exotic'* - Cambridge Botanic Garden