

Birkbeck Garden History Group Newsletter

Spring 2019 No 51



Seventeenth Annual General Meeting

The BGHG Annual General Meeting was held on 21st February with 47 members present. The Annual Report, the Financial Report and the Annual Accounts had been circulated to all members in advance. It was announced that Brent Elliott, retired RHS Historian, has agreed to take on the role of honorary Vice-President.

The Study Day had been on the theme of *The Paradise Garden* and had been well received, as had the Annual Lecture, *Windblown*, a thought-provoking, retrospective look at the effects of The Great Storm of 1987, delivered by Tamsin Treverton Jones.

Initiatives for 2018 had included funding towards the publication of *Repton in London* by the London Parks & Gardens Trust. The BGHG's own publication *Digging Deeper – Postgraduate research papers in Garden History*, by MA graduates from the Institute of Historical Research, was announced. It was pleasing to learn that the BGHG's contribution to the Professional Gardeners' Trust to finance further training had been taken up by three gardeners in 2018.

The Treasurer reported that the finances were intentionally slightly down due to these donations. The Membership Secretary reported that there were 181 members. Subscriptions are now due and the deadline for payment is April 28th. Details on how to pay are on page 4 under News.

A revised constitution was presented to the AGM. A notable change was that the criteria for membership would be widened to include all interested persons who support our aims. The committee would continue to be voted in by members at the AGM but the officers would now be selected by the new committee at the first meeting after the AGM. Following points raised from the floor, it was decided that the first meeting should be within a month of the AGM and that outgoing officers should stay in post until then. The new constitution, with the amendments, was agreed and the committee was duly elected: Joan Pateman (Chair), Susan Jellis (Vice Chair), Francine Gee (Secretary), Barbara Deason (Treasurer), Margaret Scholes (Membership Secretary), Caroline Foley (Newsletter Editor), Lucy Baron, Carmela Bromhead Jones, Ruth Brownlow, Sue Coulbeck, Margie Hoffnung and Pippa Temple. Caroline Foley and Pippa Temple were welcomed as new committee members.

Following the launch of *Digging Deeper – Postgraduate research papers in Garden History* introduced by its editor, Barbara Simms, was a lively and enjoyable lecture by Helen Haugh whose research into Achamore garden is one of the collection of papers in this book.

The AGM Lecture

Achamore: the Garden on God's Island

Helen M. Haugh

Helen Haugh likes visiting islands and she also studied for an MA in Garden History at the Institute of Historical Research. So the garden of Achamore House on the Hebridean island of Gigha was an ideal choice of subject, especially when she discovered the wealth of archive material never previously examined held by the Achamore Garden Trust (AGT) and the Borthwick Institute, University of York. The name Gigha comes from an Old Norse word probably meaning 'god', hence the title of her talk.

James William Scarlett purchased Gigha in 1965 and it is thought to have been his family that had planted mixed woodland close to the house in order to shelter game for hunting. In 1911 the house was put on the market and the walled garden was described as including 'quaint, old Herbaceous Borders ...well stocked with 'Fruit Trees and Bushes and a small Greenhouse'. It was not sold until after the First World War. The most permanent resident was Colonel James Horlick who purchased it in 1944 and remained in residence until his death in 1972.

A great part of the research carried out by Helen related to the time of Horlick's ownership and the input to the gardens of Kitty Lloyd Jones* (1898-1978) and James Russell (1920-1996), both of whom designed gardens for the rich, and both of whom, whilst working at Achamore, developed a friendship with Horlick.



The garden at Achamore

In his records about the garden, Horlick mentioned being helped 'by a professional gardener, Kitty Lloyd Jones', who had worked with him at Sunninghill, his other home in Berkshire, during the war. In 1925 she was awarded a National Diploma in Horticulture and she went on to develop a business giving advice to owners of large estates. Whilst advising clients she would often reside with them and would be treated as a house guest. She was particularly interested in shrubs including rhododendrons of which Horlick had a large collection, the soil in Gigha being very suitable for acid-loving plants. Helen found five sources of evidence about her input to the garden. In a piece Horlick wrote about camellias, he described her as 'a very highly-skilled professional gardener'. When Achamore House was redesigned, plans showed a suite of rooms allocated to her. A delivery note from Wm Bates Nursery in 1948 was addressed to her on Gigha. A photograph of her on the estate exists and in the interviews with the residents of Gigha, she is remembered with affection (AGT). No references to her at Achamore after 1956 have been discovered.

Helen's research into James Russell's input to the garden yielded a great amount of information. He was a horticulturist and in 1942 he joined the family business, Sunningdale Nurseries, Berkshire, which belonged to his father and a cousin, and which specialised in woodland plants, trees, particularly large shrubs like rhododendrons. Horlick had been purchasing plants for Sunninghill from the nurseries prior to owning Gigha, so he was already acquainted with Russell. A lot of correspondence together with plant lists, some including prices, and garden plans for Achamore, came to light at both the Borthwick Institute and AGT. From all of this it appears that Russell visited Gigha on several occasions.

Large unsigned detailed plans of the garden exist and there was a mystery about who executed them. Russell admitted, in letters which Helen discovered, that he was not good at drawing and had employed the landscape architect Walter Brugger to do them. Subsequently the plans were discussed with Horlick and the final version was completed and delivered in 1955.

After his death, following various private sales, eventually in 2002 the community bought the island with a loan which was partly paid off by the sale of the house to a private owner. The Achamore Garden Trust was established in 2016 to look after the garden and encourage visitors.

Helen's lecture was almost like a detective story. She was very fortunate in her research to find such rich sources of archive material and as a result the history of the garden is much more clearly understood.

**In October 2019 (date yet to be fixed) the BGHG will be visiting Upton House in Warwickshire where Kitty Lloyd Jones had a great input to the design of the garden.*

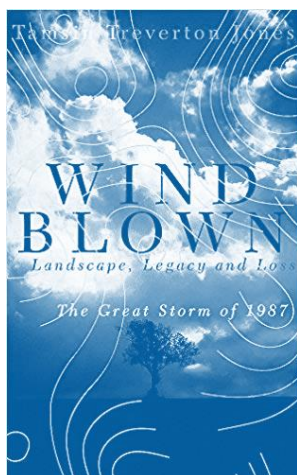
Ruth Brownlow

The Annual Lecture

27 November 2018

Windblown: Landscape, Legacy and Loss – The Great Storm of 1987

Tamsin Treverton Jones



Hodder & Stoughton, 2017

In the early hours of 16th October 1987, a storm that had been brewing in the Bay of Biscay made landfall on the Dorset coast and travelled east, intensifying as it went. By daylight it had irrevocably changed our landscape from Weymouth to the Wash.

By the time the storm passed through Sussex into Kent, it was toppling up to 95 per cent of the trees in its path and in a few hours Britain lost 15 million trees. Thirty years after the event, when storms are more frequent and severe, Tamsin Treverton Jones took stock. She placed that night in its meteorological context, summarised the dozens of interviews she had conducted, and suggested what we can learn from the collective national event we call The Great Storm.

The Great Storm was part of a long-term pattern of destruction and renewal, successor to a storm that killed 8,000 people in 1703. Bad weather was predicted, but famously – or infamously – the public was assured that there would be no hurricane. Britain was unprepared for a 70 mph sub-tropical cyclone in which roofs lifted and ships' hawsers broke. After a wet summer and a mild, wet autumn, our trees were still in leaf and stood in sodden ground, defenceless.

To restore cherished landscapes, some custodians undertook aggressive clearing and replanting. Heartbroken staff at Kew, where 500 rare, curated trees were lost that night and a further 500 would be lost from storm damage afterwards, opted for new planting, rejuvenation and remedial care.

Deemed beyond help was the historically and botanically important Turner's Oak, which had been planted in the reign of George III. Already in poor health, it had been lifted by the storm and dropped back in its planting hole. But a few months later it was thriving, with newly aerated roots spreading into what was now decompacted soil. As a result, Kew developed a new protocol, to be adopted worldwide, for maintaining old trees.

Devastated woodlands which, by choice or circumstance, were left alone never regained their former appearance. However, in their own time and in their own untidy way, they regenerated, with the loss of mature canopy encouraging new flora and different wildlife.

Kew sponsored three projects through which the wealth of rare, exotic wood left strewn on the ground could celebrate the once-living trees. One was a complex, exuberant carved mural of Kew defying the storm, initiated and executed by 16-year-old Robert Games and designed by Tamsin's father, the artist Terry Thomas. As a tribute to fathers, Tamsin ended with her poem, *Father and Son*, about Robert Games's father, Gilbert, passing his craftsmanship to his son.

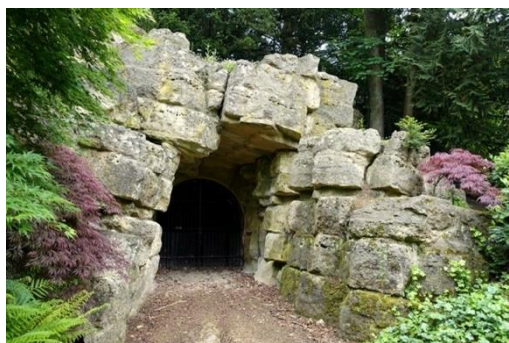
Tamsin's talk – lively, widely and impeccably researched and well-illustrated – drew pertinent questions and informed observations. The Kew Mural now hangs in Kew's Victoria Gate visitors' centre.

Charlotte Frost

James Pulham and Son

This company was well known in Victorian and Edwardian times for its range of artificial landscapes such as rock gardens, grottos and follies and quite elaborate water gardens. In the 20th century, to meet changing fashions, the firm expanded its range to make high quality garden ornaments including vases, balustrades, fountains and benches.

The Pulham company was set up by the first James Pulham (1793-1838) and continued to be run for over 100 years by three more generations of Pulham sons, each named James, until the firm faded and finally went out of business during the Second World War. In 1865, James III joined his father James II in the firm which was renamed Pulham and Son. The firm and its manufactory were based in Broxbourne, Hertfordshire, but undertook commissions all over the UK. They worked with renowned landscape designers of the period including William Broderick Thomas, Robert Marnock, Thomas Mawson and Edward White. With White, they built the first design of the rock garden at RHS Wisley. Perhaps the largest and most impressive site is at Dewstow House, Monmouthshire. Here there are over six acres of beautifully landscaped streams and water gardens with a fantastic maze of tunnels, grottos and ferneries underneath. Another fine display of Pulham work is found at Danesfield House, Buckinghamshire, which demonstrates their range of designs and features, from the formal Edwardian terrace and large parterre fountain, to a magnificent rock and water garden and an Italianate water garden. The Pulham firm built the rock garden and bridges at Buckingham Palace and the boat cave and surrounding rockwork at Sandringham, all still visible today.



Pulham rockwork at Waddesdon Manor

There are about 78 Pulham sites in London alone, although many are small ferneries or rockeries mostly in private hands. However, the pelican islands in St James's Park, the rocky waterfall at Battersea Park and the boathouse folly and rocks around the lake in Gunnersbury Park can be seen. Parts of the ground-floor façade of the Victoria & Albert Museum Henry Cole Wing are early Pulham work.

James Pulham and Son were well known for their artificial stone called Pulhamite developed in the 1820s and used until the late 1870s. This consisted of a brick and rubble core coated with the company's own brand of cement. This render could be sculpted to simulate the colour and texture of different types of natural stone. The so-called 'rock builders' employed by Pulham

were very skilful and their constructions were not only very durable but also very realistic.

Garden structures made of Pulhamite can still be found all over the country; over the years BGHG have visited several gardens containing Pulhamite and other works by the Pulham firm. These include the rockery, ponds and waterway at Audley End, Cambridgeshire, which we visited in 2003 and again in 2018. Westonbirt School (2016 visit) has a Pulham lake, rockery, grotto and dropping well although the fernery and alpine garden have been lost. At Titsey Place (2013 visit) there is a small waterfall and a dilapidated bridge. Pulhams put in the splendid grottos, archway and water garden at Waddesdon Manor (2012 visit). There is still a rock garden with pools at Gatton Park (2012 visit). The grotto and Japanese rest house at Batsford Arboretum (2011 visit) were done by Pulham and remain in good condition. Benington Lordship (2010 visit) has one of the earliest examples of a Pulham folly in its fake Norman gatehouse. The real sandstone rockery laid out by Pulham at Nymans (2009 visit) was rebuilt in 2011. Wotton Park in Surrey (2005 visit) has a revetted stream, large grotto and fernery, all now restored. At Sheffield Park (2004 visit), the artificial waterfall, stonework of the Top Bridge and a fountain are by Pulham. We will be visiting one of their most charming examples of a rock garden landscape at Leonardslee later this year.

Joan Pateman

Turn End, the film

1 March 2019

Turn End is one of a group of three houses designed by Peter Aldington in the village of Haddenham, Buckinghamshire, in the Vale of Aylesbury. The houses and gardens were created on the site of a Victorian garden. The garden was recently registered Grade II and the house is listed Grade II*. The aerial view shows the houses, now 50 years old, snuggled in amongst mature trees.

After a brief introduction by Jackie Hunt, the gardener, the first half of the film concentrated on the house giving tantalising glimpses of the garden through the windows or bifold doors. What an indulgence to lie in bed and look straight out into part of the garden! Inside, the use of modern materials is not disguised, while outside the boundary wall is in the local style using wychert, a material made of chalk and clay mixed with straw, and needing damp-proof footings of local brick and capping to preserve the wall from the weather.

The maturity of the garden has resulted in some problems. A fully mature walnut was moved and its root ball space is now a pool. Jackie battles with a lawn in the shade of a horse chestnut and invasive enchanter's nightshade, *Circaea lutetiana*, elsewhere. However, she does have the use of a Victorian coach house as a potting shed. In this restricted site, the area is used to create an illusion of space with courtyards, a series of garden rooms which are sunny or shady depending on aspect and planting. There is even a small formal garden. The idea of a film show was a first for BGHG and worked well, given the introduction and a question-and-answer session at the end with Jackie Hunt. It certainly whetted the appetite for our visit on June 27th – I must remember to find out what became of that walnut tree.

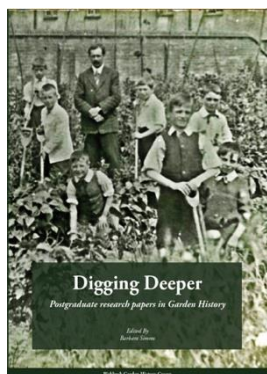
Elaine Bimpson

News

Subscriptions The £10.00 annual subscription per member is due. The final date for renewal is April 28th, 2019. Payment can be made by BACS bank transfer to account number 01471228, sort code 30-97-81, payee reference 'Subscription'. To pay by standing order, download the form to give to your bank from the BGHG website: <https://birkbeckgardenhistorygroup.wordpress.com/join-us/>. Cheques are payable to Birkbeck Garden History Group and should be posted to BGHG Membership Secretary, 9 Walcot Square, London, SE11 4UB. Please email the Membership Secretary if you have set up a new standing order or if your details have changed at bghgmembership@gmail.com

The new BGHG publication

Digging Deeper – Postgraduate research papers in Garden History. Edited by Barbara Simms, 2019.



This is the third publication of postgraduate research papers drawn from the dissertations of MA students at the Institute of Historical Research,. Topics of the seven papers cover the complexity of circuits in 18th century landscape gardens; John Hay's search for the ideal glasshouse heating system; women philanthropists who made use of gardens to improve the lives of the poor (1850-1910); gardening in schools (1900-1971); the French gardening craze of 1908-1914; influences on the designed landscape of Crowe Hall, Suffolk and the development of Achamore Gardens on the Hebridean island of Gigha, 1900-2016. At £19.90, including postage, the book can be purchased by BACS payment account number 01471228, sort code 30-97-81, payee reference 'Book Payment'. Payment by cheque should be made out to Birkbeck Garden History Group. All orders can be sent to Barbara Deason, 20 Springfield, London E5 9EF. Email: bghginfo@gmail.com

Michael Symes retires from the Gardens Trust with Oxford University Conferences This year, Michael Symes, BGHG President, retires as the Gardens Trust's co-director of the annual garden history conference at the Department of Continuing Education, University of Oxford. Since 2001, Michael has sought out a fascinating and imaginative range of themes. However, this year's theme, for the weekend of 31 May – 2 June, has been chosen by his successor, Oliver Cox, and his co-director from Oxford University of Continuing Education, Paul Barnwell. Entitled *The Picturesque Garden in England*, the theme is in Michael's honour as it reflects his interests as the author of *The Picturesque and the Later Georgian Garden*, which was published in 2012 by Redcliffe Press.

Results from the 2018 BGHG donation to the Professional Gardeners' Trust The PGT reported that one gardener who works for the National Trust at Castle Drogo, Devon, attended the Gardens Trust Historic Landscape Assembly in York in November to develop his career in the heritage and botanical gardens sector. The part-time head gardener working on the restoration of Pitchford Hall, Shropshire, completed the online course, *English Landscape Gardens, 1650 to the Present*, with the University of Oxford Department of Continuing Education to develop specialist skills in garden restoration. Another gardener who works for the National Trust at Polesden Lacey, Surrey, completed the same course to further her ambition to become a garden adviser or curator.

Restoration of Bishop Compton's garden at Fulham Palace Henry Compton's responsibilities as Bishop of London, from 1675-1713, included overseeing the missionaries in the colonies. He took advantage of his position to create a remarkable collection of some 1,000 exotics in the stoves and greenhouses of Fulham Palace. Thanks partly to the National Heritage Lottery Fund, research into herbarium pressings in the Hans Sloane Herbarium by Curator, Mark Spencer, and the hunting down of seed from botanic gardens and specialist nurseries as far as Cape Town, by Head Gardener, Lucy Hunt, some 80 species are being replanted this year. The garden will be officially opened in May.

Events

BGHG Programme 2019

16 March	Study Day. <i>Music and Gardens</i>
11 April	Ousden House, Suffolk and Madingley Gardens, Cambridgeshire.
2 May	Leonardslee and High Beeches, West Sussex.
27 June	Turn End and Tythrop Park, Buckinghamshire.
2 July	Fuller's Mill, Suffolk and Chippenham Park, Cambridgeshire.
August	Deepdene and Hannah Peschar Sculpture Garden, Surrey.
4 September	Hatfield House, Herts.
17– 19 Sept.	3-day garden trip, Dorset.
October	Upton House, Warwickshire.
November	Annual Lecture.

RHS Lindley Library Exhibition

4 March – 6 May *Hidden Horticulturists – training gardeners at the RHS*. 80 Vincent Square, London SW1P 2PE. Tel: 020 7831 3050
<https://www.rhs.org.uk/shows-events>

Institute of Historical Research Seminars Thursdays 6.00 pm

28 March *Money, Morality and Gardens* Michael Symes. **Summer Seminars** every other Thursday
25 April – 20 June. **25 April** *Detroit. Re-defining urban landscapes* Michael Ann Mullen.

23 May *The money behind Saltaire, a model Victorian village* Ruth Quinn.

Wolfson Room, North Block Senate House, University of London, Malet Street, WC1E 7HU.

June Visit Greenwich Park and the Queen's House. Email: ihr.gardenhistory@gmail.com

<http://www.history.ac.uk/events/seminar/history-gardens-landscapes>

Garden Museum

19 March 6.30 pm In conversation

Christopher Thacker: a tribute and celebration with Min Wood, Brent Elliot and David Jacques.

9 April – 9 June Exhibition

Kiftsgate Court Gardens, 100 years of Women Gardeners. Tel: 020 7401 8865.

Lambeth Palace Road, London, SE1 7LB.

16 May Visit 10 am – 4.30 pm. *A Royal*

Landscape in Windsor Park, Berkshire. The Savill Gardens and Valley Gardens. Led by John Anderson, HM Keeper of the Royal Gardens.

<https://gardenmuseum.org.uk/events/>

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Assistant Editor: *Sheila Poole, smpoole4@gmail.com*

Gardens Trust Bath Lecture and Walk

Wednesday 15 May 6.30 pm *The Pleasure Gardens of Bath* preceded by walk around Sydney Gardens. Museum of Bath Architecture, Countess of Huntingdon's Chapel, The Paragon, The Vineyard, Bath BA1 5NA. <https://thegardenstrust.org/events>

City Lit Course

4 – 5 April *Botany on the Page: exploring illustrations, manuscripts and early printed books* Letta Jones. Keeley Street, London, WC2B 4BA. Tel: 020 7492 2652 <https://www.citylit.ac.uk/courses>

Surrey Gardens Trust Study Day

Saturday 11 May *George London: Discovering his Gardens*, Fetcham Park, nr. Leatherhead, Surrey KT22 9HD. Email: eventssgt@gmail.com
<http://www.surreygardenstrust.org.uk/events>

Ace Cultural Tours 8-day Study Trip

15 – 22 May *Gardens of the Republic of Ireland*, led by Letta Jones. Tel: 01223 841055
 Contact: julia@aceculturaltours.co.uk
<https://www.aceculturaltours.co.uk>

The Gardens Trust with Oxford University Department for Continuing Education

31 May – 2 June *The Picturesque Garden in England*. Rewley House, Oxford, OX1 2JA. Tel: 01865 270380, <https://thegardenstrust.org/events>

Cambridge University Institute of Continuing Education Course

Saturday 8 June *Plant Hunters that transformed our gardens* Sandy Primrose. Madingley Hall, Madingley, Cambridge, CB23 8AQ. Tel: 01223 746 262. <https://www.ice.cam.ac.uk/courses/>

Highgate Literary and Scientific Institute Course

13 – 14 June *The Early 18th Century English Garden*. Gosling Room, 11 South Grove, Highgate, N6 6BS, Tel: 020 8340 3343, Email: admin@hlsi.net
<http://www.hlsi.net/history-of-art-and-garden-history/>

Kent Gardens Trust Visit

Thursday 11 July 11 am *Godinton Revisited*, Godinton House, Godinton Lane, Ashford, Kent TN23 3BP. Email: alison@thephilips.co.uk This is one of a series of garden visits and lectures from 26 March onwards. Tel: 07432 633697
<http://www.kentgardenstrust.org.uk>

Gardens Trust Annual Conference 2019

6 – 8 September The Queen's College, Oxford OX1 1AW. Email: enquiries@thegardenstrust.org
 Details and booking: <http://thegardenstrust.org/events>

Gardens Trust Trip to Australia

November three-week trip. Expressions of interest wanted. Organised by Robert Peel. Information from rma.peel@btopenworld.com