



SUFFOLK GARDENS TRUST

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NEWSLETTER • AUTUMN 2016

Suffolk Gardens Trust AUTUMN 2016

Newsletter 44

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**Contributions to the Spring
Newsletter should arrive no
later than 20th January 2017
sent to:**

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From the Chairman

I enjoy the Suffolk Gardens Trust and hope you do too. Amongst our members there is a wealth of knowledge with experts only too happy to impart their expertise to members on many different subjects. I am also struck by what a friendly organisation it is; after only 10 years I have made some good friends.

I have visited some wonderful gardens, been to some very interesting winter lectures and have even become interested in research – not something I am known for elsewhere!

So, taking all my personal experiences as above into account, I ask myself, why is the Suffolk Gardens Trust not better known?

I have asked all sorts of people in the County if they know of SGT, but so very few do. The Wildlife Trust – yes, the Preservation Society – yes, but SGT – no.

Many express an immediate interest in joining and, indeed, some of these follow this up, but our membership numbers, though healthy, remains largely static.

I am pleased to report that the Walled Garden Group is resurgent. For many years the regulars met and researched Walled Gardens throughout the County and this led to the publication of *The Walled Gardens of Suffolk*; all but a handful of the 700 printed are now sold.

After the “retirement” of Polly Burns and Nigel Surry there were concerns that the knowledge and enthusiasm of the group might dissipate but we needn’t have worried. The stewardship of Peter Cunard has encouraged new members to join the group which will be as busy as ever this winter. (See page 9)

Similarly our Capability Brown Day drew over 100 members to Heveningham Hall, many of which are not regulars at our garden visits.

So we know the interest in what we are

doing is there. Do you have any views on on how we can make SGT better known? Do let me know.

The Winter Lectures again look very interesting and we already have a number of garden visits lined up for 2017. Both the Lectures and the Gardens chosen are always different and never bland, invariably providing comment and discussion both during and after. I am very grateful – on your behalf – to the Council for the wide selection provided.

So I hope you will attend, and help, and enjoy as much of what we provide as possible. Perhaps you can bring a non-member friend and introduce them to SGT. Membership is not difficult, not expensive, and should produce both pleasure and learning. ■ **SB**

Boring but important SGT CONSTITUTION

In view of concerns expressed by other County Gardens Trusts the Council has reviewed our Constitution. Two recommendations have been agreed to bring the original more up to date.

Firstly that the maximum number of Trustees on the Council should be reduced from 20 to 15. We believe it sensible to have an uneven number for voting purposes. At present we have 11.

The second recommendation concerns the operation of our Bank Account: we currently bank with the Charities Aid Foundation. We believe this should be operated so that all monies received – cash and cheques – must be paid into our current account with the Treasurer allowed to keep a small Petty Cash float.

No debit or credit cards are to be held and all payments to be made by cheque or BACs.

All this is what happens currently.

If you have any concerns about the above, or would like further explanation then please contact the Chairman. ■

SUFFOLK PRESERVATION SOCIETY

Some of you may already be members of this. The Council have agreed that we should be a corporate member.

Why? Because The Gardens Trust, to whom we belong now, is a Statutory Consultee on all planning applications which are likely to affect Parks, Historic Landscapes and Gardens. When an application is made in Suffolk they should contact SGT to alert us to view it and comment.

SPS do just that on all planning applications of concern and it will be useful if we are able to join with them where Parks, Historic Landscapes and Gardens are concerned. ■

Chilton Hall

Polly Burns

Members will remember that we have visited Chilton Hall twice. The first time was in 2006 when Lady Hart outlined the problems relating to a planning application for Prolog to build two large warehouses operating 24/7 on an area adjacent to the English Heritage listed Chilton Hall and its gardens and the EH listed Chilton church.

The warehouses were designed to be higher than the church tower. Despite the legislation designed to protect listed buildings and landscape, and that there were skylarks, toads and bats present which are protected species, planning permission was granted.

But Lord and Lady Hart, owners of Chilton, fought on; it has to be said that Lady Hart has an utterly outstanding knowledge of planning and she succeeded in getting a judicial review and quashed the application. This went on for years and SGT was proud to support their representations also on behalf of the Garden History Society and the Association of Gardens Trusts. They were also supported by the SPS, CPRE, the Sudbury Society and Chilton Parish Council.

When we next visited in June 2012 for our AGM in Chilton church and then visited Chilton Hall, courtesy of Lord and Lady Hart, matters were still not resolved, despite innumerable judicial reviews. This week it was announced that Prolog was going to abandon the site and relocate their activities in the East Midlands. This is a remarkable victory for all protected buildings and landscapes and the Harts are to be congratulated for winning this very protracted and intense battle.

I went to the hearing at Babergh and was so impressed how the Harts presented their case, but at the same time depressed at how easily the Councillors accepted Prolog's claim that 400 new jobs would be created, when it is well known that warehousing creates very few jobs and the reality was it was relocation of existing jobs in the Sudbury area, the majority of which were part time or zero hours contracts. For me the highlight (lowlight?) of the pro Prolog arguments was the skylark solution! A suitable field had been identified at Groton, four miles hence as the skylark flies. Presumably all inward migrating skylarks would be asked to adjust their skylark satnavs to the Groton site!

So many, many, congratulations Lord and Lady Hart on behalf of all listed buildings and landscapes everywhere. ■

This only goes to show the value of planning expertise – see previous article – and persistence. Ed.

Suffolk Gardens Trust Holiday

Gardens and Highlights of Friuli Venezia Giulia

18 - 24 May 2016

Roses, Wild Fields, Nightingales, Local Culture and Gorgeous Food.

John and Julie Scott

What a visit! Eleven of us were privileged to have a lively garden tour in the NE of Italy, very well organised by Erica, our guide and Laura her assistant, who lived locally. Therefore we were able to have local sights, food and culture alongside marvellous gardens.

Our initial contact was through a local Italian teacher who used to live there and who knew an expert rose grower who organises an annual rose festival, and she knew Erica.

Our group gelled well together as we had local speciality meals starting with the first evening at “Sesto al Reghena” in an historic hotel, followed the next morning by an entertaining and fascinating guided tour of the local abbey and church.

After this we set off for the first garden visit at the castle of Cordovado where Benedetta, our local contact with the UK, led us first around her brother’s garden, then her own ancient and extensive one. Her speciality is roses and they have even just planted a new rose maze (Rosa Damascena Project). These gardens are part of a local rose festival and so there were also artistic garden sculptures to look at.

We were so lucky to have lunch in the castle with Anna (Benedetta's sister) and brother Sergio, so atmospheric and ‘gentile’, roses adorning the place settings alongside an elegantly set table. There were, after drinks and nibbles, a light pasta dish, a decorated potato and fish dish and cold meat. This was followed by strawberries, vanilla custard and coffee. An enchanting meal. There were more places and history of the castle to follow before we headed off to a local craft museum and garden. Here we learned about the local ancient trade of the silk worm industry.

Our second night was spent in the hills, the hotel overlooking the mountains and we dined locally again near an open fire and grill which warmed us after the rainy day.

Friday we visited the magical garden of the Garlands in Artegna, where there was a forest of roses, many of a rare and ancient cultivar. The owner, Eleonora, a fascinating lady who talked us through scores of roses and their stories. Here we heard the nightingales.

A “borgo medievale di Villafredda” was the next stop, this had been previously



hit by an earth tremor and was now rather wild and intriguing; alongside the walls were gigantic bamboos, one 15 metres high! We lunched nearby 'al fresco' at a lovely osteria.

The afternoon was spent at a more English-style garden in Moruzzo, in the hills above Udine, designed on a slope with an upper terrace; as in all the gardens, the tour was followed by refreshments.

We drove onto our final stay at the atmospheric "Abbazia di Rosazzo" up in the hills, surrounded by vineyards and with snow-capped mountains behind. The route to the Abbey introduced us to the decorated route of the 'Giro d'Italia' cycle race.



Everywhere the roads were decked out in pink banners, bikes and ribbons announcing the route of the Italian bike ride.

"Abbazia di Rosazzo" was to be our home for the next 5 nights – a lovely, historic building with many frescoes and a beautiful church attached.

Saturday, after breakfast we had a lively history of the abbey and tour of its pretty rose garden before driving to Gorizia to a

garden run by trustees (Giardino Viatori) on a hillside. Here the previous owner had grown ericaceous plants, quite unusual for this part of Italy. Our garden route gradually climbed up to first one layer with a pond, newly planted and establishing itself beautifully, then onto the top level which opened up offering wide countryside views.

Here we were treated to a marvellous meal in the garden, with locally made elderflower cordial and prosecco. Noisy frogs could be heard while we were also treated to home-cooked cakes.



Later in Gorizia we visited a small house museum where the rooms were furnished and had lovely table arrangements. We wandered in Cividale next which was again all decked out in pink (Giro d'Italia) including the statue of Julius Caesar in a pink toga.

Sunday after an early start we arrived at a beautifully planted, colourful and textural garden set off by rolling lawns, not forgetting the marvellous vegetables.

This was followed by a small garden with hay statues, made by a well known artist. This garden was owned by the vice-president of the local gardens trust; they are just starting to open their gardens to the public.

Next a visit to the UNESCO site of Aquileia, a very ancient Roman port with an important cathedral and archaeological sites. Then fortified with refreshments, we walked to the canal which led onto the “Laguna di Grado”. We had a gorgeous boat trip to Grado where we had time to explore, before returning home via a pizzeria.

Monday, the 24th May, we set off for the region of Trieste to see

wild flower meadows with Paul, an English botanist. These were breathtaking and stretched for miles, again we heard nightingales, it was a marvellous treat to be in such a wild place high up on the border looking down on Trieste. This area is also good to visit when all the wild cotinus bushes colour beautifully for the first weekend in November.



Lunch was at a local restaurant; here, different restaurateurs can open for a few weeks a year and avoid paying taxes on their sales due to a law passed by Marie-Therese in the eighteenth century !

With rain starting we were off along the coast to a romantic castle at Duino, where we viewed the gardens with striking views along the rocky coast, before a tour of the castle. German submarines had

been hidden there during the war in the castle’s rocky inlets and caves.

A dramatic storm blew up while we were inside listening to the story of the family who had first run the Europe-wide postal service. The day ended with a good meal in the best local fish restaurant, overlooking the sea.

On our last day we visited the art gallery at the abbey, enjoying the paintings, before driving to another castle north of Duino, Miramare, both larger and less ancient where some looked round before walking along the cliffs to drive to Trieste for an Austrian-style lunch. Just a short time afterwards for a wander before leaving for the airport or other transport. ■



A CAREER IN HORTICULTURE Part II

Paul Miles (Group 19)

Having written this far the editor asked me what happened next? Well, in the last year at Wisley I decided that, having studied and collected plants, I wanted to learn how to use them and to make gardens. After several interviews the late Charles Notcutt offered me a three-year training arrangement in the Notcutts landscape department. In 1968 I applied for and won a Bowles Memorial Travel Scholarship which was for one year, but I was allowed to use the letter of introduction for three years. The first part was spent touring the gardens of Europe, the second a shorter tour of Ireland and the third a six-month lecture tour of North America planned with the help of Frank Knight, who had been Managing Director of Notcutts and was the Director of Wisley Gardens when I was a Student Gardener.

Charles Notcutt allowed me to take the time off on condition that I would work for him long enough to make up for it, which was very fair.

In the event, I stayed for seven years but had reached a stage where I felt that I was not learning. A friend asked if I had applied for the job in the National Trust. I did not know about it but was invited to an interview and engaged as horticulturist. In effect it was as a Garden Advisor with shared responsibilities.

It was hard to believe that I was being paid to do the sort of work that I liked best. However, it involved a lot of travelling in England, Wales and Northern Ireland which eventually led me to give a year's notice.

As a result I went freelance, which ironically caused me to travel widely from Mexico to Russia, China, Brazil and Japan designing and restoring over seven hundred gardens including making a roof garden for a giant department store in Osaka.

There were over fifteen lecture tours of the USA, two in Russia, one in Japan and many in Europe.

Also the privilege of contributing articles to *The Garden*, *Pacific Horticulture*, *Country Life* and others. *Garden Britain: The First Garden Map* was published in 1979 and I planned and led overseas tours for the Garden History Society and the Garden Museum.

I received the Freedom of the City of London and became a Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Gardeners.

A life in horticulture has had its rewards. Placing trees on a winter's day is not what some people regard as a lovely job but there is a form of bush telegraph which opens garden gates and an invitation to join the International Dendrology Society came through it.

Meeting many interesting and wonderful people has made it all worthwhile as do the students whom I now try to encourage.

The next fifty years are to be looked forward to with what life continues to bring. ■



Paul Miles

WALLED KITCHEN GARDEN GROUP

The Walled Kitchen Garden Group has a full winter planned with visits to the following private gardens to record the detail of each garden.

Boxted Hall, Boxted – Saturday 22nd October 2pm
Author Peter Cunard

Grange Farm, Woolpit – Saturday 12th November 1pm
Author Sheila Deare

Babergh Place, Great Waldingfield – Saturday 21st January 2pm
Authors Sue Smith and Peter Cunard

Heveningham Hall – Saturday 25th February 1pm
Author Tina Ranft

The visits always take place during the winter months to make it easier to fight the battle with nettles and brambles in order to inspect the detail of the gardens and their foundations. The group is always interested in encouraging new members to join and anyone wishing to enquire, should, in the first instance, contact the ‘head honcho’ of the group, Peter Cunard via email at pcunard@globalnet.co.uk.

GARDEN VISITS 2016

The following eight gardens were visited by SGT members in 2016. Numbers shown separately.

Rosemarys – East Bergholt	(31)
Rougham Hall	(35)
Felixstowe Seafront	(31)
Stoke Priory	(29)
Hillside Freston	(32)
Heveningham Hall	(110)
Larks Hill – Tuddenham	(32)
By the Crossways – Kelsale	(36)
TOTAL:	336



Larks Hill

This compares to 265 visitors to 9 gardens in 2015.

Capability Brown in Suffolk – 15th July

Some reflections

Stephen Beaumont

The germ of this day began 3 years ago at an SGT garden visit to Bramfield Hall when Edward Martin and myself approached Lois Hunt and asked if she and husband Jon would consider allowing SGT to use Heveningham Hall and grounds for a one day event to celebrate the tercentenary.

There is no flattery in saying how helpful Lois was once the green light was given. She gave us every encouragement.

The Stables were offered and prepared, the format of the day agreed, she introduced Ben Townsend from her golf club at Halesworth to do the catering, she persuaded Kim Wilkie to be present, she allowed open access to the walled garden and she almost insisted we should end the day at the Orangery. Nothing was too much trouble for her, everything promised was done.

She also worked enthusiastically with Edward to borrow and transport the original Brown drawings of Heveningham from English Heritage after Edward's persistence and knowledge had tracked them down to Audley End.

With Ben I calculated that we could accommodate 90 in the Stables: there was a long impressive refectory table inside which was difficult to move.

In the meantime our small group – Edward Martin, John Dyter and I – had arranged four good speakers, representation at the Suffolk Show with an “advertisement” board, a good buffet lunch (including Capability Brownies) and the preparation of 500 Booking Forms. Peter Cunard had prepared a press release and 240 of the Forms went out to members with the Spring Newsletter.

We had no inkling the event would prove so popular. We quickly realised that it should be limited to SGT members only, and within 3 weeks had reached our capacity and started a waiting list. Lois then had arranged the removal of the table and we nervously increased our number to 110. There were still about 30 waiting for returns.

Would English Heritage release the plans? Would all the speakers turn up? Did we have a good PA system in place? Could we block up the south facing windows in the Stable? Would the sun shine?

A visit on the Monday saw the plans go up under the watchful eyes of Edward, Lois and English Heritage; Lois looked me in the eye “Don't worry Stephen, all is arranged and, please, no more questions about seating numbers!”

John and I decided to gatecrash the Suffolk Preservation Society CB afternoon on the Thursday to see how, and if, everything worked. We heard a very good talk from Kim Wilkie, to be told by him that tomorrow's would be different; we did subsequently change a few things.

The day arrived, the sun shone and the Council members congregated early to arrange the name tags. The Lord Lieutenant, Clare Countess of Euston, arrived

(with the third speaker) then Mrs. Gilly Drummond, the Chair of the CB 300 Festival arrived from Hampshire. Karen Lynch arrived from Yorkshire GT but sadly Kate Harwood of Hertfordshire GT, such an enthusiast, found her car had broken down.

Anxious as ever, we waited for the first speaker to arrive from Northants and the second from Norwich. We needn't have worried and by 10 a.m. all were in position and Gilly Drummond introduced the concept and detail of the CB 300 Festival.



I found it interesting to note that there were 4 people in the room whose antecedents had commissioned CB.

Before lunch we had two excellent speakers talking about Brown, his ideas, his methods and his heritage. Steffi Shields followed the title of her new book *Moving Heaven and Earth: Capability Brown's Gift of Landscape* in singing his praises, while

Tom Williamson was perhaps a little irreverent, with a wider view also following his new book *Lancelot Brown and the Capability Men: Landscape revolution in eighteenth-century England*.

(Please see Polly Burns' excellent reviews of both books on page 17 & 18)

Tom spoke without notes and I imagined this was his style at UEA "Are you still with me?" "Are you awake at the back?" and so forth. Certainly we were.

We broke for a good buffet lunch in the Stable yard where umbrellaed tables, sunshine and a pint of Adnams allowed us to mingle casually. Some then walked up to see the Walled Garden, which was looking wonderful, while others went back in to admire the original plans.



After lunch Edward gave a fine introduction to the plans and their history and guided us through the alterations to the plans which, until the Hunts came, had never been brought to fruition.

After the theory of the morning the afternoon talks told us of the practical aspects of following CB's plans 200 years later.

First Andrew Blenkiron, the Estate Director, showed us the difficulties, and

expense, of recreating the Brown waterways at Euston Hall. Silted up and diverted by time, they were now back to his original design. (Look out for the first “garden visit” in 2017 which is planned for Euston Hall)

Finally we came to Kim Wilkie who has done so much with the Hunts to transform the gardens and park at Heveningham by reverting the parkland to CB’s original design; he told us of many difficulties – including the sinking digger.

Kim also showed some other designs of his as illustration of his three tenets for landscape design – “clarity of thought, beauty of purpose and poetry of living”.

Kim then accompanied a viewing of the park and rear garden. He explained how CB had positioned every tree and clump of trees for a purpose – to hide this or draw attention to that. Already those planted by Kim about 20 years ago had swelled out to illustrate these purposes.

We also saw and understood Kim’s transformation of the rear garden to the Hall where his sweeping grass terraces had replaced the cluttered Victorian garden. Much photographed, the geometry creates a visual masterpiece.

This walk led us up to the Orangery where tea was served. The lunch tables had magically been transferred and there we pondered on the day while looking out across the lawns to the Temple and sheep-filled parkland without noticing the ha-ha so beloved by Capability Brown.



What would he have thought, I wondered, of this fine summer day in the middle of Suffolk when 110 people came to admire and enjoy his lasting legacy to our countryside? ■

SGT GARDEN TOUR 2017

Following on from Michael Warren's 2015 Tour to Gardens of the South of France we have approached him for ideas for 2017 and his suggestion is a Tour in the Loire Valley based in the Tours – Angers area. Many beautiful chateau gardens along the River Loire look at their best in September, a time when one's own garden can be left to look after itself. Visits to Rivau, Chenonceau, Valmer and Villandry Chateaux and others would make for a most enjoyable and interesting tour.

The tour would be four or five nights depending on the cost which Brightwater Holidays are currently working on.

Please let us know if you are interested so that details can be sent to you as soon as they are available.

Please contact :

Eleanor Soar: eleanor.soar@gmail.com

White Cottage, Ipswich Road, Holbrook IP9 2QR

Or Helen Barker: helen.barker@btinternet.com

Pound Close, Harkstead Road, Holbrook IP9 2RA



WINTER LECTURES 2016 - 2017

1. **Saturday 29th October at 2.30pm** **KEW GARDENS** **by Andrew Sankey**

Kew Gardens are the combination of two very different Royal Gardens – Kew and Richmond – which in the 18th Century under Joseph Banks became the greatest botanical garden in the world. Charles Bridgeman, William Kent, Capability Brown and the Hookers of Kew were all involved.

Andrew Sankey is a garden designer/landscaper, nurseryman and lecturer. He also gives talks on Gertrude Jekyll, Sissinghurst, English Elysiums (Painshill and Stourhead), Companion Planting, Cottage Gardening and the like. Andrew has written three books on gardening and lives in Cambridge.

Blackbourne Centre , Elmswell IP30 9UH

Junction 47 (A1088) Take the by-road signposted Elmswell. Uphill, past the church turn left (Blackbourne Centre sign). Follow signs, over railway crossing then turn right (signposted) and carry on through housing estate to large car park.

2. **Saturday 25th February at 2.30pm** **TREASURES OF THE LINDLEY LIBRARY** **by Fiona Davison**

The Library in Vincent Square, London, is the largest horticultural library in the world. Specialising in botanical art and garden history, the collection gives a unique insight into gardening, garden design, botany, horticultural science and botanical art.

There are over 80,000 books in the collection together with more than 30,000 of the best original botanical illustrations. A wonderful insight into the social history of gardens.

Fiona Davison is Head of Libraries and Exhibitions of the RHS and a glance at her Blog gives an impression of her wit and wisdom.

Brandeston Village Hall, The Street IP13 7AB

Brandeston is 13 miles NE of Ipswich between Kettleburgh and Cretingham. Follow the A1120 towards Framlingham. At Earl Soham turn right after the Victoria pub, signposted Brandeston and continue for 1.5 miles and the Hall is on the right.

3. **Saturday 25th March at 2.30pm** **THE GARDEN IN ART** **by David Marsh**

After completing a PhD on The Gardens and Gardeners of Later Stuart London, David has become a well-known lecturer on Garden History. He has lectured at Birkbeck University and the Institute of Historical Research at the University of London. He is also associated closely with both The Gardens Trust and Parks & Gardens UK.

Recent subjects of his talks have included 'The Opposite of Chelsea', 'Tudor and Stuart Gardens', 'Paris Gardens' and 'John Claudius Loudon and the rise of the Amateur Gardener'.

Woodbridge Community Centre IP12 4AJ

Adjacent to the station in the centre, there is a large carpark alongside

Cost of each lecture : Members £4 Guests £5.00

Contact details: Tel. 01379 650009 juliejohn_scott@yahoo.co.uk

News in **BRIEF**

GREEN FLAG AWARDS

Congratulations to all those gardeners and park rangers whose hard work has resulted in so many of Suffolk's Public Parks achieving Green Flag Awards from the charity Keep Britain Tidy, notably the Abbey Gardens, Bury St Edmunds, Nowton Park, East Town Park Haverhill, and West Stow Country Park, Felixstowe Seafrost Gardens, Nicholas Everitt Park Oulton Broad, and Elmhurst Park, Woodbridge.

FRONT GARDENS - The Latest News

As a result of growing concern over the decline of front gardens in our towns and cities (See Newsletter No.42 Autumn 2015) the Royal Horticultural Society has just launched its new 'Front Gardens Guide', hoping to reverse the growing trends of paving over gardens or neglecting them, spearheading a 'Greening Great Britain' campaign to encourage general wellbeing, helping wildlife, and reducing the risk of flooding, with suggestions on planting that are particularly helpful. The Guide is aimed not only at homeowners, but estate agents, garden centres, Housing Associations and Councils. Copies are available online at www.rhs.org/communities/pdf/Green-Streets/rhs-front-gardens.guide, or simply type in 'Royal Horticultural Society' and take it from there...

MAPPING THE UK'S ANCIENT AND SPECIAL TREES

covers the whole country, supporting biodiversity, giving trees protection, and collecting their seeds to enable propagation. The East Anglian group of the Ancient Tree Forum was established in 2015. If you want to get involved please contact Reg Harris at reg@urbanforestry.info

THE CONTINUING THREAT TO OUR BEES

Controversial pesticides are being blamed by scientists at the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology for the alarming decline of wild bees, caused chiefly by the use of neonicotinoids on oilseed rape crops, leading to a 20-30% fall in their numbers between 2002 and 2011. The use of this pesticide has been shown to affect the bees' ability to navigate and forage, thus hindering colony growth. Fortunately the use of neonicotinoids has been banned throughout the EU for a two-year period – but what happens thereafter must be a matter of serious concern.

For the **DIARY**

- **29 October 2016. West Suffolk Record Office.** Caroline Holmes, 'Horticultural exchanges across the high seas and into the Cullum Library' Two sessions 10am-12pm and 1.30pm-3.30pm. For further information see Suffolk Record Office's 'Autumn and Winter 2016' programme or email bury.ro@suffolk.gov.uk or telephone: 01284 741 212.
- **12 November 2016 at 4.00pm. Helen Yemm – Illustrated Garden Talk and Questions and Answers. Harkstead Village Hall.** Gardener, writer, author, teacher and hardy perennial 'Thorny Problems' columnist for the Daily Telegraph, Helen Yemm suddenly found she had to 'up sticks' and leave her much photographed and admired two-acre Sussex cottage garden. The lavishly illustrated talk – the story of how she 'downsized' her garden and started again with a tiny neglected patch – is both personal, practical and entertaining. It is intended to provide inspiration and information for everyone, not just those finding themselves in a similar situation. The talk will be followed by an informal gardeners' question and answer session, and refreshments.
Tickets £10 on the door, £9 in advance, available from Patty Shone shonepatience@gmail.com 01473 787586. In aid of Harkstead Church.
- **23 November 2016. Norfolk Gardens Trust, John Innes Centre, Norwich.** Kate Harwood, 'Oriental Scenery and the Nabobs.' 2.00pm. For further information please telephone Sue Gues: 01362 868 317.

Courses and **CLASSES**

- **This autumn. Otley College, Leisure Learning, Short Courses. Garden Design and the Principles of Horticulture** (8 weeks): **Introduction to Garden Design** (8 weeks); also one day workshops on **Grow your own Kitchen Garden in Small Spaces; Productive Gardening** and **Floral Meadows**. For further details and costs, please contact Admissions telephone: 0800 022 4556 or email admissions@eastonotley.ac.uk
- **25 October 2016 W.E.A. Nature, Ecology and Permaculture: The Wildlife and Habitats of East Anglia.** (7 weeks) Alex Bass, 25/10 Hadleigh and 16/1/17 Orford. For further details please telephone: 0800 328 1060 or www.wea.org.uk
- **6 November 2016. University of Cambridge, Institute of Continuing Education, Madingley Hall. Gardening with Gainsborough Perspective.** Caroline Holmes. For further information and the Institute's full programme, please telephone: 01223 746 262.

Book Reviews and **CB 300 REVISITED**

CB 300 REVISITED

I'm sure all of you who came to our Capability Brown 300 celebration at Heveningham will be happy to be reminded of an excellent day; the weather, the venue, meeting friends and learning more about Brown from our inspired speakers made for a day that combined knowledge with fun. I thought I would review two books recently published by two of the speakers, Steffie Shields and Tom Williamson.

At this point I've a few confessions to make, but nothing too dramatic! Firstly Steffie is a personal friend, with whom I've shared many a glass and garden. Secondly it was Tom who got me into landscape history. Finally I am a Brown sceptic. So reading the books I was quite challenged to balance these conflicts.

***Lancelot Brown and the Capability Men.* David Brown and Tom Williamson.** Reaktion Books Ltd. London 2016. Hardback, 277pp. ISBN 978 1 78023 644 5. £30.00.

***Moving Heaven and Earth.* Steffie Shields.** Unicorn Publishing Group Publisher, London 2016. Hardback, 288 pp. ISBN 978 1 910787 15 1. £30.00.

Both books approach Brown from different standpoints. Steffie describes the starting point of her more than 25 years study by being bowled over by the landscape at Broadlands and marvelling at the fact it was man-made. Steffi being an award-winning landscape photographer we have the benefit of viewing the landscapes through her artistic eyes. Hers is a very personal book, though at the same time she has amassed a huge amount of material which she analyses and evaluates very critically, but in a very readable style.

David and Tom also handle a great deal of material, equally readably, but their proposal is that Brown was part of a movement away from formal linear parks to informal pleasure grounds designed to be appreciated on foot, horseback or from a carriage. They point out, as does Steffie, that this movement had started before Brown's birth, with the works of Bridgeman and Kent, so he was no innovator. There were also many wannabe Browns, notably Richard Woods and William Emes. Davis and Tom then explore Brown's rise to pre-eminence, by recruiting and retaining a very able and professional workforce who were capable (the Capability Men) of delivering his designs swiftly and effectively. This, allied to the fact that he commanded the patronage of the main wealthy movers and shakers of the day is the reason why he achieved such enduring fame.

Steffie tackles Brown's career differently in that she combines chronology with chapters analysing his various key features, lakes, rivers and clumps etc, with

the occasional chapter on specific and notable sites, such as Hampton Court and Blenheim. Then a chapter on Walled Kitchen Gardens, obviously near to my heart, but making me eat humble pie, as one of my Brown sceptic ideas was that he was responsible for sweeping away sheltered areas to produce the sweeping landscapes that are his hallmark.

One feature of her book that I appreciated is that at the start of each chapter there is a map of England and Wales with the properties featured in the chapter identified. This was particularly good in that it was a constant reminder of how widely Brown worked and of the geographical position of the landscapes.

So I have finished up with a greater appreciation of Brown, his position in the history of landscape and how he executed and constructed the landscapes. I remembered driving past Heveningham when Kim Wilkie was working there to realise Brown's plans and wondering how he'd managed without a JCB, now I've some idea! David, Tom and Steffie all reflect on the vicissitudes that these great landscapes have had to cope with, including Planning, and just in the last few days planning law has been strengthened to help protect them. Those at Heveningham will remember Gilly Drummond's passionate plea for more vigilance to protect against planning predations, so great, if all the CB300 celebrations have brought this about. But it's not just man threatening to drive motorways across parks, nature, too, is good at destruction. The great storm of 1987 and others, Dutch Elm disease, with more recent predators horse chestnut canker, ash dieback and sudden oak decline have all taken their toll.

I unreservedly recommend both books, they are so different, so well written and so beautiful just to look at. ■ **PB**

***The Secret Life of the Georgian Garden.* Kate Felus. I.B.Tauris, London. 2016 Hardback 258pp ISBN 978-1-78453-572-8. £17.99.**

Reviewed by Nigel Surry

How were Georgian gardens enjoyed by their owners, friends and guests, not just at an aesthetic level, but otherwise? At last, here is a book that attempts to answer these questions, taking the reader chapter by chapter through the Georgian day, beginning with the morning walk or drive continuing in the afternoon (after a modest 'nuncheon') given over to fishing, quoits or archery or rest and contemplation, in a modest 'root house' or refuge, and ending with a supper, perhaps accompanied by a handful of musicians in a banqueting house in the style of a Grecian temple or Chinese pavilion, often with fireworks to celebrate some major public occasion. An extensive use of contemporary letters, journals and early guidebooks together with an impressive range of illustrations from works by Sandby, Devis, Zoffany and others enhance a well-written, enjoyable book, – an indispensable supplement to biographies of the great garden designers of the period.

Books **WORTH NOTING**

***Lancelot Brown and his Essex Clients.* Dr Michel Leach and Jill Playter.**
£8.00 plus £2.00 to cover postage and package. (Essex Gardens Trust 2016).
Available from Jill Plater, 5, Wakelin Close, Ingatestone, Essex CM4 8HH, tel:
01277 352 867 email: jillplayter@hotmail.com Please make cheques payable to
Essex Gardens Trust.

***Tulip's Flora: A Countryman's jottings on the Plant Life of the North Essex Parish of Bulmer.* Philip 'Tulip' Rowe (1871-1955),** edited by Robin Rowe (Philip Rowe Archive, Bulmer Essex 2013). £7.50.

***Rethinking Ancient Woodland: The Archaeology And History Of Woods In Norfolk.* Gerry Barnes and Tom Williamson** (University of Hertfordshire Press 2016) £18.00.

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By the Crossways – Brian Skilton

Thanks are due for all photographs provided. These are from John and Julie Scott, John Dyter, Judith Gowland, Michael Warren, Edward Martin.

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