

HISTORIC GARDENS

F o u n d a t i o n

Newsletter 43 — November 2016

Changes are coming!

Full details will be in the next issue of
Historic Gardens Review.

So far as the HGF Newsletter is concerned, starting with No 44 next spring, it will offer many more pages of book reviews, allowing us to make that section even more wide-ranging. There will also be the usual reports on exhibitions, conferences and flower shows. And, because the sort of event that is currently listed in the 'Getting Out' and 'Learning' Pages is nowadays so easily found via the Internet, there will be fewer of these small items.

We hope you will appreciate this new, more literary, email supplement to the magazine. Your ideas and comments are very welcome, both while we are at the planning stage and once we have got it going.



Newsletter 43 has been compiled by Gillian Mawrey
with input from Helen Langley, Richard Mawrey and Nick Ward.

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Congratulations!



🌸 To Richard Bloom for winning the International Garden Photographer of the Year competition with 'Tekapo Lupins', taken near Canterbury, in South Island, New Zealand. More category winners on <http://www.igpoty.com>

🌸 To the Historic Sunbury Walled Garden in Surrey which has, for the fourth year in a row, beaten hundreds of other entries to be acclaimed Britain in Bloom's South and South East in Bloom Best Small Park 2016, along with a Gold Award. The achievement is particularly important this year as the Walled Garden's roses were destroyed following a deluge of rain in the spring, which required the contractors for Spelthorne Council, Lotus Landscapes, to go out at 5am each day to replace them.

🌸 To Hall Place and Gardens in Bexley, south-east London on becoming one of only six organisations in the UK to receive the prestigious Green Flag Award for the twentieth year in a row. The award, begun in 1996, is the mark of a quality park or green space. www.bexleyheritagetrust.org.uk/hallplace

🌸 To Julia Corden and her team of 42 volunteers in The Explorers' Garden at the Pitlochry Festival Theatre in Scotland who have been awarded two significant honours. The first is to be recognised as a Partner Garden of the Royal Horticultural Society and they've also been awarded National Collection Status, awarded by Plant Heritage, for their 32 varieties of Meconopsis Large Blue Cultivars, better known as 'Blue Poppies'.

🌸 To the South London Botanical Institute on being awarded a City Bridge Trust grant of £76,500 for an exciting new project, 'Botany on Your Plate'. The project will provide a range of activities introducing both children and adults to the science behind our food plants, helping people to understand where the food on their plate comes from. The project started this autumn and will continue over the next three years. The SLBI, based in Tulse Hill, was the subject of an article by Roy Vickery in *HGR 23*.



🌸 To Satoru Tabata, from Enzo in Japan, whose garden called 'Vedere con le orecchie, ascoltare con gli occhi' (See with your ears, listen with your eyes) won three separate prizes at the 8th Orticolario Flower Show, which is held annually each autumn at the Villa Erba on Lake Como. For a full list of awards see ufficiostampa@orticolario.it

🌸 To the Keeling family for producing beautiful terracotta pots over 40 years at Whichford Pottery in Warwickshire. To celebrate, they are offering big reductions and free UK delivery on certain of their pots. Telephone +44 (0)1608 684 416 or go to www.whichfordpottery.com for details.

🌸 To Open Gardens/Jardins Ouverts on exceeding their 2016 target of raising 20,000€ to donate to charity. Starting as a tiny copy in France of the National Gardens Scheme in England, it has expanded more quickly than the organisers ever dared hope, adding many new open gardens this year and being able to donate substantial sums to several charities. If you are anywhere in France next year, check out <http://www.opengardens.eu> and support their work while seeing a garden that is not normally open.

Getting Out

✿ The organisers of CB300, Brown's tercentenary year, are planning a service to be held in the church within Stowe Landscape Gardens on Tuesday 22 November at 2.30 in order to celebrate Brown's wedding to Bridget Wayet on 22 November 1744. If you would like to attend please contact Rosemary Jury on rosemary@jury11.fsnet.co.uk who will forward further details regarding order of service, parking etc.

✿ Learn more about Brown until 18 December with 'Brown at Croome', an exhibition of paintings and archive material about the work undertaken by Brown during his time at Croome Court in Worcestershire. Details on <http://www.capabilitybrown.org/event/brown-croome>

✿ Waddesdon Manor in Buckinghamshire offers its usual superb display at Christmas. Until 2 January 2017 Bruce Munro's 'River of Light' installation in the grounds returns by popular demand, and every 15 minutes the façade of the extraordinary house will be illuminated and bathed in a sound and light show entitled Dazzle@Waddesdon, created by Woodroffe Bassett Design. <http://www.waddesdon.org.uk/events/dazzlewaddesdon>

✿ Mix ballet with your Christmas shopping at Russborough House in Co. Wicklow, Ireland. From 12 to 4:30 on Sat 17 and Sun 18 December the Christmas Market offers candles, wood sculpture, breads and honeys, ceramics, and jewellery; after which the Ruth Shine School of Dance performs 'The Nutcracker'. Details on <http://www.russborough.ie>

✿ The Christmas Floral Extravaganza comes to Arley Hall and Gardens in Cheshire from 3-8 December. See the Hall decorated with flowers, join in with the candlelit carol evenings and let the little ones loose on the Children's Christmas Tree Challenge. Adults £8.50, children £2.50. Book early for discount rates at www.arleyhallandgardens.com

✿ West Green Gardens in Hampshire may close its potager in the winter but offers a Winter Festival and all sorts of Christmas goodies instead. See <http://westgreenhouse.co.uk/>

✿ Over the Christmas holidays visitors to the château and gardens of Breteuil, just south of Paris, can see magical illuminations and, on certain days, listen to a 'conteuse' tell fairy stories. Details on <http://www.breteuil.fr>

✿ Cold weather needn't mean waiting until spring to visit gardens. Think of all those lovely heated greenhouses in botanic gardens! The National Botanic Garden of Wales, for instance, has the world's largest single-spanned glasshouse, designed by Norman Foster, and claims to have the best display of Mediterranean climate zone plants in the northern hemisphere. And there's a Butterfly House as well, with "awesome tropical butterflies" (*right*). See <https://botanicgarden.wales>



✿ More butterflies feature in the October issue of the Friends of the Vallarta Botanical Garden's Magazine as that's the month when butterflies are at their most numerous and various – a delight to observe. A personal favourite of Bob Price, founder and curator of VBG, is the giant white morpho 'guardian angel'. Information about Vallarta, located in Cabo Corrientes, Jalisco, Mexico, and how to subscribe to the monthly newsletter can be found at www.vbgardens.org

✿ Over 90 gardens will be open next February for the National Garden Scheme's Snowdrop Festival. Details on the NGS website from 1 December – <http://www.ngs.org.uk/gardens/snowdrop-festival>

Looking Ahead



❧ Next year, the 18th Salon du Jardin will be held in the Quartier Ordener at Senlis, north of Paris over the weekend 31 March-2 April. There will be more than 200 stands, offering plants, machinery, designers, photographs – even rare poultry! Plus talks and demonstrations. See www.salon-du-jardin-a-senlis.fr

❧ The Arley Spring Plant Fair at Arley Hall and Gardens in Cheshire will be held on Sunday 23 April 2017.

❧ The Greenhouses of the Royal Palace of Laeken in Brussels are one of the wonders of European horticulture, famous both for their 19th-century ironwork by Alphonse Balat and their floral displays. They are open for only three weeks each

year in late April and early May. Tickets cannot be booked but nearer the time details will be on <http://www.brussels.be/artdet.cfm?id=4843&agendaId=369>

❧ 2017 will be Year of the Garden (Année du Jardin) in France's UNESCO-listed Loire Valley. From April to October, right along the river from east of Orleans to west of Angers, special openings, exhibitions, talks and other events are being organised to showcase this area's rich garden heritage. The programme is not yet finalised but will soon be on www.valde Loire.org/Actualites/Articles/Tous/Une-saison-culturelle-jardins-en-2017



Learning

❧ The topic for this year's joint conference between The Gardens Trust and the British Records Association is 'Keeping the Memory Green: Records of Small Gardens'. The conference, to be held on 29 November, at Burlington House, Piccadilly, London W1, will feature a variety of speakers from The Garden Museum, Lambeth Palace and the Royal Horticultural Society. For more information, visit www.thegardenstrust.org

❧ The second Art and Archaeology conference will take place in Jerusalem on 11-14 December. See <http://www.isas.co.il/art-archeology2016>

❧ Highlights of The Gardens Trust's 2017 series of Winter Lectures include Paula Henderson on 'The Gardens and Park of Bramshill, Hampshire' (This former Police Training College was the subject of an article in *HGR* 2) and Karen Fitzsimon on 'Drawing on Denmark – the mid-to-late twentieth-century landscape practice of Preben Jakobsen in Britain'. Lectures take place on Wednesdays at The Gallery, 77 Cowcross Street, London EC1M 6EL, and Brian Dix's talk on the archaeology of Boughton House will be repeated in Birmingham. Full details and a booking form are posted on The Gardens Trust website.

❧ The long-awaited conference on great French garden designers Achille and Henri Duchêne is scheduled to take place in Paris on 8-9 June 2017, with a further study day on Saturday 10 June in the Loire Valley (where the Duchênes worked on several sites, including the park at Chaumont-sur-Loire). Details from the Association Duchêne on www.haduchene.com

Parks Renaissance under Threat?

Ever since cuts to local authority revenue funding started in the UK in 2010 there has been concern amongst people working in the parks sector that public parks would suffer more than other local authority services because they are not a statutory responsibility, as things like education, housing and the police are. The turn of the century renaissance of the UK's public parks, ushered in by a focus on the benefits of quality public realm for all society, was under threat.

The UK's Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), and BIG lottery, which have together invested over £850 million in public park regeneration over the past 20 years, commissioned research to find out what impact cuts in government funding were having on parks. Readers may remember the 'Viewpoint' piece in *HGR 31* where I commented on the 2014 review of the 'State of UK Public Parks', which painted a dispiriting picture, reporting significant decline in public funding for parks and foreseeing that this trend would continue, with predictable harmful effects.

So it was with trepidation that I opened the follow-up review, the 'State of UK Public Parks 2016'. It was no surprise to find that the trend identified two years ago has only worsened and, in the absence of a significant policy change, that the future outlook is increasingly gloomy.

Park maintenance budgets continue to fall: 92% of park managers said their budgets had declined over the last three years, and 95% think they will continue to reduce. Staff and skills are rapidly being lost. In England, there is an emerging north-south divide, with the north faring worse. Across the Union, Wales appears to be doing worse than England and Northern Ireland, while Scotland appears to be faring slightly better.

A pattern is emerging of increasing diversity in both management agencies and sources of park income. The number of management organisations is increasing as more parks are being handed over by local authorities to small trusts and charities, who often have sole responsibility for just one or two parks. Managers are also becoming better at attracting money to supplement declining local authority funding.

This may be welcomed as a sign of commitment and innovation in a sector which is rising to the challenge of identifying ways to make up financial shortfalls; but the pessimist within me reads it as a sign of increasingly desperate financial straits, underlain by local authorities divesting themselves of assets.

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Right: Jephson Park, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, restored ten years ago with monies from the Heritage Lottery Fund.



Public Parks 2



Left: Russell Gardens, near Dover, in Kent, is in the process of developing restoration proposals with the Heritage Lottery Fund. The HLF has now funded improvements to around 850 UK parks.

In these times of austerity, local community groups across the nation have stepped up to the plate to do more for their local parks. There has been an increase in the number of ‘Friends of...’ parks groups, who today contribute more in raising funds,

maintenance work and volunteer time, than ever before recorded – estimated to have a value equivalent of £50 million a year. This is a remarkable contribution and one which undoubtedly should be celebrated. On the other hand, fewer than 10% of these Friends groups would welcome any formal long-term responsibilities, which means that looking to local communities to provide a sustainable future for their public parks is not a viable strategy.

Trusts are found to be faring better than local authorities, a trust being a way of ring-fencing funding for a park under which money is given to a charitable organisation that can only spend this money on a park or series of parks. Local authorities have a duty to spend their money on the priorities identified by its elected members, and parks have been shown to lose out consistently to other areas of spend such as education or refuse collection. This should be no surprise, particularly where trusts are funded by well-performing endowments which buffer them from impacts of funding cuts. However, they are dependent on their investments performing adequately in turbulent financial times.

Local authorities with park strategies in place are still doing better in 2016 than those authorities without strategic plans; but the effect is less marked than in 2014 and the percentage of authorities with a current parks and green spaces strategy in place has dropped by nearly a quarter, to 48%. It seems most unlikely that any of these will be renewed in the foreseeable future.

Yet, set against this is clear evidence that more people are using our parks more frequently, research now confirming that over half the population uses their parks regularly.

We know the role that green places play in both our physical health and our mental well-being, and it is a vital one for our predominantly urban population. So what is to be done?

The 2016 review provides a range of recommendations for the future. We need: continuing local authority leadership; active partnerships; ongoing support for community groups; new management and funding models; and, finally, improvements to the national information base about parks.

Co-ordinated effort between all park organisations is called for. The vacuum left by GreenSpace, the now defunct parks-focused charity, has been filled by new or existing organisations which have taken up parts of its role: the Parks Alliance is providing a new voice in the sector; Keep Britain Tidy has taken up ‘Love Parks Week’ and provides support for the National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces; the

Continued on following page

Public Parks 3

network of community groups persists through its own efforts, and the Land Trust has a helpful 'good practice' area on its website.

The reality is, however, that since Cabe Space, the government body with a remit to improve public space, was scrapped in 2011, its legacy is missed now more than ever. Its ability to fund research, stimulate and promote good practice and reach the political centre that other sector NGOs could not, is a huge loss to the parks world. This gap urgently needs to be filled, with a funding model to support an organisation to champion parks, that is independent of political whim and that can ensure its longevity. Some form of foundation with funds in perpetuity would be appropriate, taking it out of the vagaries of political fashion.

Most depressingly, the 2016 report from HLF and BIG Lottery highlights what has been anticipated since 2010, and only confirms that warning signs previously given have not been heeded: and there is still no adequate response from government.

As I write the UK government has set up a Parliamentary Select Committee under the Communities and Local Government department to inquire into public parks and 'examine the impact of reduced local authority budgets on these open spaces and consider concerns that their existence is under threat'. The committee has just heard oral evidence, and over 350 organisations or individuals have sent in written evidence for its consideration.

It is clear that local communities and parks managers are innovative and engaged about the parks where they live, and equally clear that immediate and wide ranging action is needed to safeguard urban parks in the UK. What we must hope for now are strong recommendations from the Select Committee, and rapid sign-up to deliver the recommendations from government.

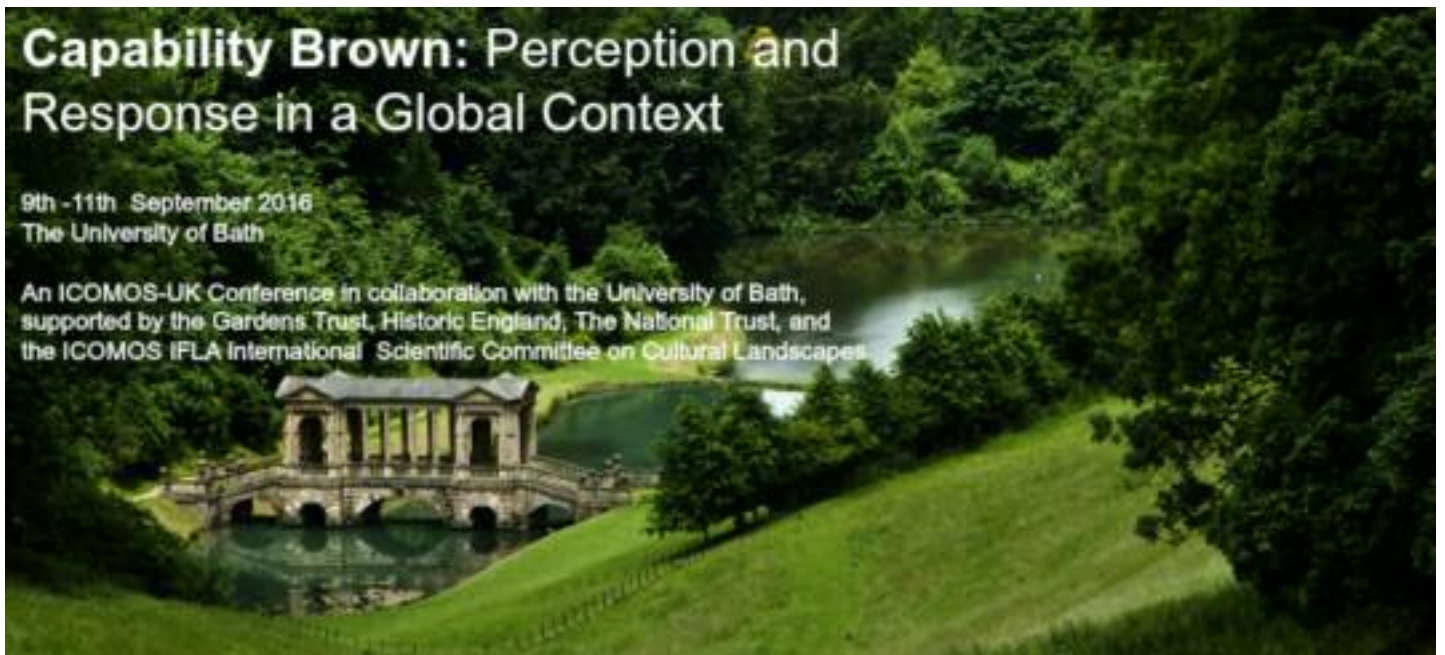
From my experience of liaising with managers around the world this issue is not restricted to the UK. Many European, American and Australasian parks organisations are being challenged by diminishing



funding. In the USA there are more examples of public parks being funded by private and public partnerships, trusts and charities, and also of successful individual parks trusts and some larger ones. In Pittsburgh, for instance, the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy looks after four major parks, including Schenley Park (*left*), and is increasing its land acquisitions over time. Here in the UK the city of Milton Keynes is the best example of a whole parks system being managed by a dedicated trust.

Parks need a secure long-term mechanism for management. Where parks are managed by adequately funded trusts they flourish. I remain convinced that local parks trusts working in partnership with local government and engaged communities should be the long term goal.

Paul Bramhill is an independent landscape consultant with over 30 years' experience in landscape management. He was CEO of GreenSpace.



Capability Brown: Perception and Response in a Global Context

A report from a UK conference considering Capability Brown in his tercentenary year.

One of the highlights of the Capability Brown Tercentenary Festival was a wide-ranging conference, 'Capability Brown: Perception and Response in a Global Context', organised by ICOMOS-UK in September 2016 at the University of Bath. It was funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and supported by the University of Bath, Historic England, the National Trust, the Gardens Trust, and the International Federation of Landscape Architects.

The theme of the conference was to explore Brown's significance, past and present, not only in Britain but also in the world beyond, and this strong international element, with speakers (and audience contributions) drawn from many countries, was a key contributor to the conference's success. The papers were all-embracing and well-illustrated, with the images benefiting from the lecture theatre's wide-screen, digital technology.

IT was a major component in successfully delivering the programme. It enabled small or intricate details in the images projected to become clearly visible, a boon especially for garden plans, which encouraged some in the audience to capture them on their smartphones. Between sessions the technology showcased a documentary film on Brown and selected landscapes. Made by the National

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Conference Report 2



Trust's Head of Gardens, Mike Calnan, this immersive experience included drone-directed aerial photography and demonstrated the arrival of a new tool for detecting and evaluating phases in landscapes and gardens, and, as here, outreach.

The conference programme consisted of three themes: 'Brown in Great Britain'; 'Brown as Perceived Abroad', and 'Echoes of Brown'. Perhaps because the theme of Brown's work in Britain has been much explored already in 2016, the conference was weighted towards the less hackneyed topics of Brown's influence abroad and his legacy in the 21st century.

Having been formally opened with a welcome by Richard Hughes, President of ICOMOS-UK, and an introductory address by the Duke of Gloucester, Patron of ICOMOS-UK, the conference moved straight into Session 1, 'Brown in Great Britain', chaired by Dr Marion Harney, Senior Lecturer and Director of Studies, Bath University. As an indication of the stellar cast for the conference, the keynote talk, 'Brown and Neo-Classicism', was given by the major expert on Georgian landscape, Professor John Dixon Hunt, whose own thoughts on the conference will be published in *HGR 35*.

The three following papers were 'Lancelot Brown's design of the water at Blenheim' (*above*), presented by Hal Moggridge, then Professor Mark Laird on 'Flower Garden Wood: Brown, Bute and Botany at Luton Hoo, Bedfordshire', and Dr Megan Aldrich on 'Brown at Burghley: Aestheticising the Medieval Past'.

Session 2 on the first afternoon and Session 3 on the second morning were both devoted to 'Brown as perceived abroad', with Dr David Jacques chairing the first and Michael Symes the second. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the conference started with the wider British community in the 18th century with papers by Dr Finola O'Kane Crimmins on 'The limits of Brown's Landscape: Translations of the Landscape Garden into Ireland', and then Dr Therese O'Malley, entitled "'Models in this Art': Tracing the Brownian Landscape Tradition in America'.

Day 2 transferred its attentions to continental Europe, with, as one might expect, the French being somewhat resistant to admitting Brown's influence. Dr Laurent Châtel and Dr Monique Mosser delivered a paper entitled 'Brown invisible in France? The French Perception and Reception of Gardens

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Conference Report 3

in Eighteenth century Britain'. Moving eastwards, the Low Countries were covered by Dr Nathalie de Harlez de Deulin on 'The English Garden in the Low Countries and the Principauté of Liège' and Wim Oers on 'Capability Brown's design for Schönberg at Laeken, near Brussels, 1782'. Hungary rated two lectures, Dr Kristor Fatsar on 'Hungarian garden tourists in search of Brown's legacy' and Gábor Alfödy on 'Brown's impact on Garden Design in Hungary'. Brown's influence even reached Russia, as explained by Professor Boris Sokolov, in 'Thomas Whately, Catherine the Great and the Brownian Tradition in Russia'.

'Echoes of Brown' completed Saturday's formal programme and the conference papers. Chaired by Peter Goodchild, it continued the historical theme but also pointed to the relevance of Brown's work for the 21st century, from the practical, such as water technology and carbon capture, entrepreneurship and team building, through to visitor engagement and how heritage organizations collaborate with researchers. Papers by Dr Eeva Ruoff on 'George Parkyn's *Entwürfe*...', published in Leipzig in 1796 and 1805', and Professor Dr Marcus Köhler on 'The Early Landscape Garden in Germany' concluded the historical dimension. Matthew Tickner and Will Cookson, of Cookson and Tickner Ltd, Landscape Architects, presented 'Beauty in Simplicity: an exploration of the design principles of Capability Brown'. The final two papers were 'Misconceptions' by John Phibbs (whose book on Brown is eagerly awaited by the cognoscenti) and 'Why celebrate Capability Brown' by Dr Oliver Cox.

Each session concluded with 'Questions and Answers' and both the full days ended with an evening event, but, unfortunately, my long commute prevented attendance at either Friday's Prior Park event or Saturday's at the Bath Assembly Rooms. It was especially disappointing to miss the latter as the National Trust, steward of numerous Brown landscapes, has been a leading partner in 2016's commemorations of his tercentenary and Dame Helen Ghosh, Director of the National Trust, and Mike Calnan, Head of Gardens, were billed to speak.

Sunday's early morning Session 5, 'Conclusions', included 'Reflections and Future Directions', chaired by Michael Symes, and a final round of Q&A. Acknowledging that the richness and variety of the conference papers made a synthesis impossible, Symes affirmed how rewarding a subject of study Brown had proved to be and, importantly, continues to be. The conference, he said, had deepened our knowledge and understanding of Brown while raising questions and opening new lines of thought for exploration and possibilities for collaboration at home and overseas. It had also addressed popular misconceptions of Brown, including that he was a destroyer not an improver, that all the formal gardens he replaced were perfection, and that his designs always excluded flower gardens.

The conference's contribution to Capability Brown's tercentenary reminded us of the sheer range of Brown's achievements and of his present-day potential to contribute to problem-solving across a variety of professions. One can't but admire the skills, professional and personal, of the man, and his stamina, and his legacy.

Helen Langley

This conference report can, necessarily, only outline the full programme (and there was a site visit to Croome Court, Worcestershire, on the 3rd day), but copies of the special supplement on the conference of *Garden History, the Journal of the Gardens Trust* can be purchased from the Lavenham Press for £18 each by either emailing ghsmembership@lavenhamgroup.co.uk or telephoning +44 (0)1787 249 286.

Chelsea Flower Show

My notes on the Royal Horticultural Society's Chelsea Flower show were whimsical this year: 'Hyacinths and Heucheras', I wrote, 'Peonies and Potatoes', 'Salsify and South Africa'. It was that sort of show, more quirky, less bland, than in recent years. Of course, as always there were spectacular plants on the stands in the Great Pavilion and in the show gardens outside – but, from a historic point of view, visitors had to be prepared to fossick around to find mentions of a back story. The Flower Arrangers' theme was Victorian revival, which is nostalgia rather than history, but, more seriously, Burncoose Nurseries marked 100 years since the founding of the Rhododendron Society, Morrice and Ann Innes's exhibit of potatoes had historical notes, Floyds Clematis produced an interesting display on the origins, via China and Japan, of modern varieties of clematis, and Bowdens Nursery offered a time-travel journey, complete with 1920s train carriage, celebrating plant collectors from around the world – the most popular stand in the show.



The anti-slavery garden (*left*) was not, as you might think, referencing the past but rather drawing attention to the hidden scandal that is slavery in the 21st century; but the designer, Juliet Sergeant, was herself making history as the first black woman to design a garden at Chelsea.

Apart from history, we go to Chelsea looking for the international element. There were wonderful displays from Grenada and from Barbados; South Africa's exhibit of plants from its World Heritage sites was outstanding and a Mekong garden won Best Artisan Garden, with a beautifully-made boat festooned with oriental flowers. But none of the designers of the big show gardens came from outside the UK and no one channelled distant (eg Islamic or Japanese) influence in the way we have seen before. Kazuyuki Ishihara's garage garden in the Artisan

Garden section was a nice example of Japanese humour as well as of Japanese planting but Occitane's Provençal landscape came nearest to evoking another country.

One exhibit that had both an international and a historical element was the extraordinary '5000 Poppies' project (*right*), appropriately laid out in front of the Royal Hospital, Chelsea, with Chelsea Pensioners in their matching coats strolling in the background. Lynn Berry and Margaret Knight had set out to crochet just 120 poppies to 'plant' in Melbourne in remembrance of their fathers' war service. They expanded to 5000 and ended up with 26,000, making a moving memorial to many others who served their countries.



I have visited the Chelsea Flower Show almost every year since 1966 – a bit of history in itself, which started me wondering about how the show has changed over the past half century. The extraordinary constructions in natural stone that used to draw the crowds along the Rock Bank have disappeared, although they were always one of the high points, to be replaced by stands selling banal sculpture. There are fewer displays from UK public bodies – though Birmingham was on stunning form. I miss the gardens made by Leyhill Prison and can still envisage an exhibit by Regents Park from, probably, 1967 which has proved memorable for me though probably rather twee for modern tastes. Today, the big charities and financial institutions provide the backbone of the gardens. Indeed, the whole show is sponsored by M&G Investments.

One important change is the increasing gap between the gardens the judges award the highest medals to and what the public likes, comparable, if not as huge as, the gap between the Turner Prize and the art ordinary people like. But surely the RHS should lead, not follow, popular taste?

Text: Gillian Mawrey. Photographs: Richard Mawrey.

Chantilly Flower Show



The wonderful flower show held in the park of the Château de Courson, south of Paris, began in 1983 as ‘the French Chelsea’ and was a prime mover in the satisfying revival of interest in gardening in France over recent years. The French middle classes came in droves and bought plants they never knew existed, including mature trees, which they stuffed into the backs of their tiny cars. Courson became a go-to event for garden-lovers from all over Europe. At the spring show, the sense of excitement was palpable; in autumn the changing colours of the trees in the

park added a spectacular backdrop. At both seasons, Courson’s founders, H  l  ne and Patrice Fustier, could be seen driving round in their buggy, stopping to hug friends and encourage stall-holders.

After 30-odd years, the twice-yearly effort became too much and last year the show moved across Paris to the Ch  teau de Chantilly, where there was space to expand. In contrast to Courson’s mid-19th century *parc    l’anglaise* by the B  hler brothers, Chantilly’s gardens are by Le N  tre, so, when we went for the first time this year, we wondered whether the laid-back atmosphere would have survived the move to more formal surroundings. Hurrah! The Fustiers were still whizzing around in their buggy, people we hadn’t seen for ages were there to chat to (and even offering glasses of champagne), and the plants were superb and oh so tempting. We ordered a whole gardenful to be delivered and took away one extra. (A banana tree, of course.)

Of particular interest were the stands devoted to small charities, giving them the chance to explain their work to a larger public than they could usually reach. Some we already knew – La Ferme Europ  enne, for instance, which we featured in the magazine back in 1996, and the excellent Open Gardens/Jardins Ouverts – while others were new to us.

The Association Kokopelli (www.kokopelli-semences.fr) is a terrible name for a very worthwhile organisation, which has branches in Belgium, Switzerland, Costa Rica and Brazil, as well as France. It exists both to save from extinction seeds which are not commercially viable and to send these seeds to third world countries, so that poor farmers and individuals do not have to buy expensive F1 hybrids every year. (The name refers to the Hopi god of fertility but don’t let it put you off.)

Another that caught our eye was Le Jardin du Cheminot, which was started, surprisingly, in 1942 by people who worked on the railways (those same ‘cheminots’ who are always being cursed for going on strike) with the aim of encouraging gardening and respect for nature. Now open to all and renamed

Jardinot (www.jardinot.org) it has 900 local committees, publishes a magazine and useful leaflets (I picked up one on planting hedges), offers advice on gardening and bee-keeping and runs allotments.

I’m already looking forward to the spring show next year. It runs from 19-21 May and details will be on

<http://www.domainedechantilly.com/fr/journees-plantes>

Text: Gillian Mawrey. Photographs: Richard Mawrey.

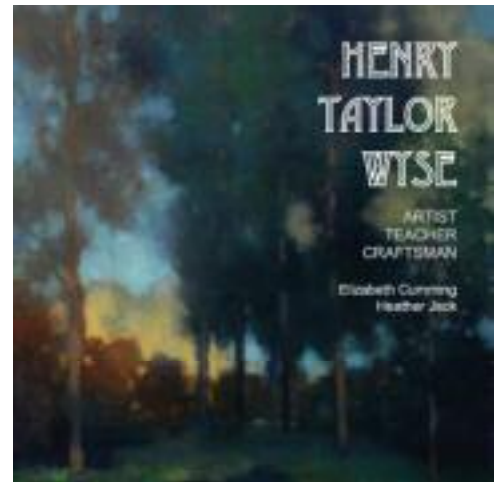


🌿 **Henry Taylor Wyse: Artist Teacher Craftsman** by Elizabeth Cumming and Heather Jack. Aberbrothock Imprints. 92 pages. £9.95. ISBN 978-0-900-35333-8.

Although Charles Rennie Mackintosh is probably Scotland's best known early 20th-century architect and designer, there are several other Scottish Arts and Crafts and Art Nouveau personalities who also deserve recognition. (See *Hand, Heart and Soul* by Elizabeth Cumming, Birlinn, 2006.) This summer, two small exhibitions on the extensive creative output of a pioneering art teacher, Henry Taylor Wyse (1870-1951), were on show at Hill House, Helensburgh, and the Museum of Edinburgh (Huntly House).

The wide-range of work exhibited included pastel drawings and oil paintings, marbled papers, book covers, furniture designs and pottery (decorative and practical) as well as an attractive selection of glazed ceramic buttons. However, one aspect (also included in the excellent paperback book that accompanied the exhibitions) that could be of interest to HGF Newsletter readers, is Wyse's 'Design for a Garden of One Acre' with an 'Estimate for Laying Out and Furnishing ...' This domestic garden plan, further expanded with planting details, a Summer House and a Fountain, were both published in *Amateur Gardening*, February 19, 1896, pages 484-5. Archive designs for such modest middle-class gardens can provide insight to the scaled-down aspirations of pre-World War One householders.

The book can be bought from the main Wyse website address (<http://htwyse.info>) or the publisher direct (<http://aberbrothockimprints.co.uk>).



🌿 **Indian Forester, Scottish Laird: the Botanical Lives of Hugh Cleghorn of Stravithie** by Dr Henry J. Noltie. Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh. £15.00. ISBN 978-1-910877-10-4.

🌿 **The Cleghorn Collection: South Indian Botanical Drawings, 1845 to 1860** by Dr Henry J. Noltie. Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh. £20.00. ISBN: 978-1-910877-11-1.

The first is a remarkably detailed biography of Henry Cleghorn (1820-1895) and account of his botanical and arboreal legacy, while the second illustrates the importance of his commissioned botanical illustrations as an integral aspect of plant identification and specimen study.

Indian Forester, Scottish Laird is copiously illustrated in black & white, with a Foreword by the Geographer Royal, Professor Charles Withers. It explores Cleghorn's family, childhood and education and his experience as a young Scottish East India Company surgeon based in Madras and Mysore. However, it is his early expeditions as a field botanist where coffee, cotton and teak were of commercial relevance, the Madras years from 1851-1860, a major section on the forests of South India, North India and the teak forests of Burma that reveal his role as a conservationist.

Cleghorn's fascination with the newly-revealed accuracy of photography, together with many academic papers, including a significant report on Tropical Deforestation, indicate the extent of his scientific interests. In addition to an Indian travelogue and the gardens of South India, the book concludes with four detailed chapters on his last period in India, his retirement (with a 'grand tour' of Europe), and most significant, his legacy.

The Cleghorn Collection: South Indian Botanical Drawings, 1845 to 1860 is an impressively coloured production with 200 botanical drawings reproduced for the first time. It is a compilation of a relatively recent discovery from within the vast library archive of Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh and includes studies by South Indian artists and students from the Madras School of Art, which was

Continued on following page.

founded in 1850 ostensibly to cater for the artistic needs of the colonial power. As the 'pictorial' sequel to *Indian Forester*, *Scottish Laird* this is a visually enchanting publication but with serious content about Cleghorn's specific botanic, medicinal and arboreal curiosity and scrutiny.

The author's engaging style not only presents descriptive and keenly researched information on the complex personal and scientific life of Hugh Cleghorn, but also provides an insight into mid-19th century Edinburgh social and academic life. These two excellent and comprehensive publications ideally should be read together.

Margaret Campbell

🌿 **A Day at Château de Vaux le Vicomte by Alexandre, Ascanio and Jean-Charles de Vogüé.**
Flammarion. 192 pages. £22.50. ISBN 978-2-08-020199-7.

Vaux le Vicomte boasts the first garden designed by André Le Nôtre, which inspired Versailles and all of Europe with its vast allées, massed water features and playful visual tricks. This charming book, one of a series published by Flammarion on great French estates, is written by the three brothers who now run Vaux, and gives an introduction to the history of the site, the people who have lived and worked there, and the lasting appeal of its iconic house and gardens.

It is the photographs by Bruno Ehrh which make the book. There are 170 colour images, capturing the magic of the château and the grounds today, as well as some important archival prints and plans. The accompanying text is short and easy to digest. Unusually for Vaux, which is marketed largely as a 17th-century estate, the book contains information on the history of the site over time, including the families who lived there in the 18th and 19th centuries, and its little-known role as a hospital in WWI.

While it contains no new scholarship, this is an enjoyable introduction to one of France's finest châteaux, available in French and (perhaps suggesting its main target audience) American English.

Jill Sinclair

🌿 **Gardens and Gardeners of the Ancient World by Linda Farrar.**
Windgather Press. 304 pages. £25.00. ISBN 978-1-909686-85-4.

Is a garden a foretaste of Paradise as envisaged by early Islam or a re-creation of the Judeo-Christian Eden with the four rivers flowing outwards from the centre? Is it a space dedicated to some deity or holy man, such as the Egyptian god Min, the Roman Venus or the Christian St Fiacre (also the patron saint of cabbies)? Is your garden to relax in or to discuss the niceties of Platonism with like-minded Greek savants or to impress the world that you are Ramses or Tiglathpileser and thus Master of the Universe? Or is it simply for growing a few potherbs and some flowers for the house? All these functions of the garden, and many more, can be found in the pre-modern world, and in her new book Linda Farrar, whose *Ancient Roman Gardens* is pretty much a standard text on that subject, has expanded her horizons to encompass the whole of gardening from the earliest Pharaohs to the end of the 15th century. Each period is tackled thematically by source – pictorial, literary and archaeological – though Farrar ruefully admits that for some periods, such as pre-classical Greece or the Etruscans, the sources are very thin on (or under) the ground. This is another major work of scholarship and a 'must read' for students of antiquity – but there are two niggles. One is minor (the inclusion of medieval European gardens is unhappy and the chapter too hurried); but the other is a major black mark: there is no index!

Richard Mawrey

🌿 Many readers enjoyed Marian Shaw's account in *HGR 19* of how her buccaneering great-great grandfather donated a park to the people of Hull. Now Marian has written a full biography of this extraordinary man: *Zachariah Pearson: Man of Hull: A Tale of Philanthropy, Boom and Bust* is published by the Grimsay Press at £15.99.

Exhibitions 1



Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2016.

❖ The superb ‘Painting Paradise: The Art of the Garden’ exhibition of garden-related art from the Royal Collection (reviewed in N40) has moved from London to Edinburgh and can be seen at The Queen’s Gallery in the Palace of Holyroodhouse until 26 February 2017. Then, from 17 March to 23 July, it will be the turn of ‘Maria Merian’s Butterflies’ to appear there, another exhibition intelligently selected from the Royal Collection and previously exhibited at Buckingham Palace.

It is difficult to believe that these extraordinary pictures, with their vivid colours, fine detail and almost surreal style, were painted three centuries ago. Maria Sibylla Merian was a German-born artist and entomologist who, in 1699, sailed with her younger daughter Dorothea to the Dutch colony of Suriname in South America, where she spent two years researching the life-cycle of butterflies and other insects. Today, with time-lapse photography, we can watch the process of metamorphosis as it unfolds, but in the early 18th century there was little understanding of the subject and the book Merian published on her return to Amsterdam, *Metamorphosis Insectorum Surinamensium* (The Metamorphosis of the Insects of Suriname), was instrumental in explaining it.

Some of her work was acquired by King George III, including luxury versions of the plates from the *Metamorphosis*, partially printed and then hand-painted on vellum by Merian herself. To enhance her brilliant palette further, she sometimes used silver paint, as on the wings of the Menelaus Blue Morpho Butterfly (pictured above).

This enchanting small exhibition is well worth seeing. If you don’t like insects as much as Merian did, you can enjoy the flowers and fruit she also painted, and the quotes from her lively texts.

For information on the exhibitions in London and Edinburgh, visit <https://www.royalcollection.org.uk>

❖ Treasures from the British Royal Collection are also being shared with art-lovers across the Channel. ‘At Home in Holland: Vermeer and his Contemporaries’, seen in London earlier this year, has transferred to The Mauritshuis in The Hague. Bringing together works, including landscapes, by some of the finest artists of the Dutch Golden Age, including Vermeer, Gerrit Dou, Pieter de Hooch and Jan Steen, it runs until 27 January 2017. See <https://www.mauritshuis.nl/en/>

❖ Also moving from London to the continent is ‘Lenses on a Landscape Genius’, the work of Capability Brown seen through the eyes of contemporary photographers. This was first exhibited at the Building Centre, just off Tottenham Court Road, which may seem a strange venue for a cultural exhibition but is one that offers space for interesting exhibitions. This was the second I have been to there this year – and they do a good cup of coffee.

The photographs of Brown landscapes by 16 of today’s best-known British photographers could almost



Ashburnham Place, East Sussex, by Gareth Davies.

Exhibitions 2

in themselves define Brown's work, something that the myriad of words spoken and published about him in his tercentenary year has not yet quite achieved. They make the landscapes (and his less well-known architecture – bridges, arches, churches, even a model village) look both quintessentially English and extraordinarily beautiful, and occasionally they offer a glimpse of how revolutionary they must have seemed in Brown's own time.

Sadly, the captions accompanying each image are not up to the same meticulous standard: Charlecote is in the wrong county, while Burghley is put in both Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire. (This is not actually incorrect, but should have been explained.) And we are even subjected to the howler of 'Humphrey' Repton!

The exhibition is moving to the Bibliothèque René Pechère in Brussels. The dates have not yet been announced (they will be on www.bvrp.net) so there seems to be time for a bit of tidying-up.

✿ Another exhibition that is moving countries (or, in this case, continents) is 'Comparative views – Taiwanese landscapes' (*Regards croisés – paysages taiwanais*), which was seen at Varengeville in Normandy this summer and moves to the Taipei Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) in Taiwan in December. It takes as its starting point a survey conducted by its curators, Alice Schyler Mallet and Hungyi Chen, in the Alishan mountain range in Taiwan. Alice found hydrangeas and other plants growing wild in Taiwan that she remembered having seen in gardens in Normandy and research showed that these flowers had been imported into France in the 19th century. Presentation of the exhibition in two different places is designed to compare the different notions of nature and landscape in France and Taiwan. More specifically it traces the history of Taiwanese landscape painting and the influence of France on it.

✿ The Australian Garden History Society has sponsored two free exhibitions at the State Library of New South Wales in Sydney which cast an eye over Australia's gardens, old and modern. 'Planting Dreams: Shaping Australian Gardens', curated by Richard Aitken, celebrates 200 years of Sydney's Botanic Gardens by exploring Australia's garden history, while 'Planting Dreams: Grand Garden Designs', looks at innovative larger gardens – both public and private – created in NSW since the 1980s. "Surely it's time to move on from dated English ideals?" says exhibition consultant, Howard Tanner. Until 15 January 2017. See <http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/whats-on>

✿ Another unexpected yet excellent place for exhibitions is the Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris, just round the corner from the Jardin des Plantes. This summer's offering was 'Jardins d'Orient', which was far more comprehensive and applicable to today's gardening than its subtitle, 'from the Alhambra to the Taj Mahal', suggested. It began with a highly relevant account of how water was (and is) conserved in the extremely dry climates of the Arab world, using sophisticated hydraulic systems of their own and sometime re-using Roman aqueducts. There were archive photographs, and even film, showing ancient technology in operation, and modern photographs showing it still in use.

After this fascinating section the curators moved on to explain (with captions in French and English, though not Arabic) the different sorts of garden found in the middle east, and the crucial importance of shade. They did not hammer home how much western gardens owe to eastern ones, but illustrated their

different themes with paintings, sculpture, books, textiles, musical instruments, a pen case, bowls, and many other objects, some of them displayed around a long, water-filled canal (*left*). They had even built an Islamic-inspired garden in the courtyard – quite a brave thing to do considering the present anti-Islamist mood in Paris.

Sadly, this intelligent and thought-provoking exhibition is not moving on anywhere else – but the book (in French only) which accompanied it is still available for 25€ from <https://www.imarabe.org>



Gillian Mawrey

It is often forgotten that Capability Brown designed buildings as well as parks. English Heritage draws attention to five of them in its blog – <https://heritagecalling.com/2016/09/02/not-just-green-spaces-5-buildings-designed-by-capability-brown/> (You will have to ignore the lapses in grammar. English Heritage is not interested in the heritage of the English language.)

Other useful online sources on Brown include a new interactive map of aerial photographs (see www.historicengland.org.uk/research/current-research/conservation-research/designed-landscapes/capability-brown-300) and the results of research by volunteers from the County Gardens Trusts on 179 parks and gardens designed by Brown which are now available to the public at www.parksandgardens.org

Powerpoint slides from the ‘Conclusions’ session of the Brown conference (see pages 8-10 above) have been added to the ICOMOS-UK website (www.icomos-uk.org/about-us/events) together with a summary of the conference.

See Blenheim Palace, Painshill, Leeds Castle and dozens more historic places from the air in a beautiful new video of architecture and gardens. These are rarely filmed from the sky, but are free to view now on the website of the Historic Houses Association: www.hha.org.uk

If you love bulbs (or tend to plant them the wrong way up and need to know the basics) you will find lots of information on a new website – www.bulb.com

If you need facts and figures to back up claims that the heritage is an extremely valuable part of a country’s economy, quote Historic England’s recent report ‘Heritage and the Economy’. The research was done in England but the content is relevant to almost all countries. Download the report from <https://content.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/heritage-and-the-economy/heritage-and-the-economy-2016.pdf/>

Historic England has also produced a report on ‘Heritage and Society’, which contains lots of figures that confirm that the heritage in general is not only important for the economy but also something people care about deeply. But, sadly, only 45% of those who responded to the questionnaire thought that parks and gardens were ‘worth saving’. See <https://content.historicengland.org.uk/content/heritage-counts/pub/2016/heritage-and-society-2016.pdf>

Many trees are under threat from the introduction and spread of imported pests and diseases, a scourge that applies all round the world. To help raise awareness and combat the variety of these problems, the Arboricultural Association has produced a concise document, the ‘Biosecurity in Arboriculture and Urban Forestry Position Statement’, which can be downloaded from <http://www.trees.org.uk/Trees.org.uk/media/Trees-org.uk/Documents/AA-Biosecurity-Policy.pdf>

More on trees and insects – and on climate change too – from the doctoral dissertation of Rajendra Prasad Ghimire of the University of East Finland which can be downloaded from http://epublications.uef.fi/pub/urn_isbn_978-952-61-2252-6/urn_isbn_978-952-61-2252-6.pdf

The Gardens Trust has published a new guidance leaflet on ‘The Planning System in England and the Protection of Historic Parks and Gardens’. It can be downloaded from the Gardens Trust website, which is currently being constructed.

Please Help



❁ The next issue of *HGR* will carry an article by Mark Burleton about the historic garden at Rideau Hall, the official residence of the Governor-General of Canada. Mark would like to replant in the garden a peony that was created in the early 1900s by famous Quebec peony breeder Harry Norton and named 'Lady Byng' in honour of the wife of the then Governor-General. Described as "bright crimson carmine with a distinctive cushion of deep red and buff", it has disappeared from Rideau Hall and from catalogues, but probably survives in private gardens.

If you think Lady Byng might be hiding in your garden, please contact Mary Pratte on 00 (0)1 613-746-6070 or gmpratte@sympatico.ca

❁ The UK's National Heritage Ironwork Group has launched a new membership scheme for anyone who is interested in historic ironwork and wants to help preserve it for the future. Individual membership starts at £50 a year, with senior citizen and student discounts. Visit the Group's website to find out more: www.nhig.org.uk/support-us/membership/

❁ The University of Dundee in Scotland is to lead the GROW Observatory, a Europe wide project involving tens of thousands of 'citizen scientists': Gardeners, Growers and Family Farmers, big and small. The aim of the project is to improve the sustainability of soil and land. And they need your help. Please complete the registration form at www.growobservatory.org to get involved.

❁ The Hardy Plant Society is looking for volunteers to join their members and collect seed for the annual Seed Distribution Scheme. Last year the society, which celebrates its 60th anniversary next year, distributed over 40,000 packets of seed to 18 countries. Request the seed list in November by visiting www.hardy-plant.org.uk. The seed is free, but a £5 administration fee is requested.

❁ Capability Brown will not be forgotten in 2017. More celebrations are to come and this Newsletter will be reviewing all the many publications. Historic England has taken the unusual course of seeking crowd funding for John Phibbs's book, 'Place-making: The art of Capability Brown'. People pledging £50 will get a good deal as their name will be in the book and the author will sign it. Here is a link to the relevant page – <https://unbound.com/books/capability-brown>

Did You Know?

❁ A report 'Gardens and Health' from independent health think tank The King's Fund found that the latest available statistics (April 2013 to March 2014) on how adults use their free time show that half of adults (49.5%) report gardening as a free-time activity, far fewer than watching television (90.4%) but far more than playing a musical instrument (10.4%). People also visit gardens as part of visiting historic sites (40.2%) or taking 'days out' (68.7%). But, even when we are watching television, people are often learning about gardens and gardening.

The report also cites evidence that gardens and gardening are important for health, particularly mental health. For example, a study in the Netherlands showed that every 10% increase in exposure to green space translated into an improvement in health equivalent to being five years younger, with similar benefits found by studies in Canada and Japan.

The report is available at <https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/gardens-and-health>