



# HISTORIC GARDENS Newsletter



*Number 47 — January 2018*

*Edited by Gillian Mawrey*

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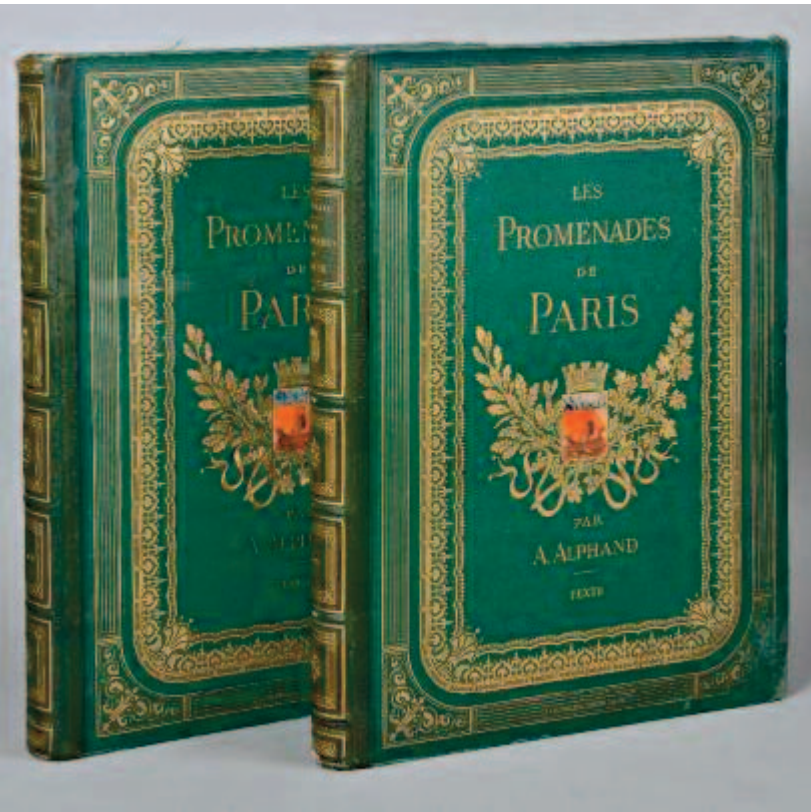
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# Conference Report



## John Dixon Hunt reports on the conference in Paris marking the bicentenary of the birth of Adolphe Alphand

A major colloquium on Jean-Charles Adolphe Alphand was held at the Hôtel de Ville in Paris on 27-29 November 2017. The occasion was the 150th anniversary of the publication of Alphand's *Les Promenades de Paris*, a huge, two-volume folio that chronicled Alphand's work for Baron Haussmann, who had been commissioned by Emperor Napoleon III to reorganize and reform the capital of France.

The colloquium was entitled “Le Grand Pari[s] d’Alphand” – a mild Parisian pleasantry which depends on knowing that “pari” is the French for a bet or wager. (The phrase “Il a gagné son pari” is often used to imply that someone has succeeded in

carrying out promised work that was seen as difficult.) This “Le Grand Pari[s] d’Alphand” title was also a somewhat awkward gesture towards, as the colloquium’s subtitle announced, the “Création et transmission d’un paysage urbain”, since its focus was less on that important work of Alphand’s than on envisaging how Paris, or Parises, could be re-envisioned in the light of his *chef-d’œuvre*.

Yet it was somewhat disappointing that so few papers actually addressed *Les Promenades de Paris* as a text. (My count was only a half dozen out of 28.) On the other hand, some of the best papers were given on the last day by distinguished practitioners, like Henri Bava and Michel Pena, who sought to understand how the Alphandian mission could be extended into the lands around Paris, even down the Seine valley towards Rouen. Interestingly, this final day was attended by a far greater number of landscape architectural students than the other two days.

Alphand’s schemes for Paris were as much political and economic as design aesthetics. Therefore, much of the discussion was indeed, and necessarily, on how much those original political manoeuvres – the wide avenues that allowed police and troops to move quickly to put down riots, or different social emphases of the “squares” that responded to different *quartiers* or *arrondissements* of the French capital – would continue to serve a new society and politics and its administrative bureaucracy.

That Alphand made sure to send copies of *Les Promenades de Paris* (the postal costs then would have been manageable!) to many cities in the United States was an indication of the importance that he, and others, saw in this new landscape urbanism.

Alphand’s massive work reported in detail on how he and his colleagues, notably the

# Conference Report cont...



Le Parc des Buttes Chaumont from Alphand's *Les Promenades de Paris*.

landscape architect Jean-Pierre Barillet-Deschamps, transformed the two parks that bracketed the capital – those of Vincennes and Boulogne – then pushed large and generous tree-lined boulevards through the city, engineered major infrastructural work like sewers, designed and installed a host of street furniture, established or reworked a cluster of major parks within or near the city (Les Buttes Chaumont, Montsouris, Monceau, Les Champs Élysées), and created “squares” throughout the city. (That last had been a demand of the Emperor, who during his exile in England saw and admired

London’s squares and wanted them replicated in Paris.)

All this, plus a detailed history of the precedents in landscape design from ancient times to the present, was detailed in the text and elaborately illustrated with handsome coloured engravings, as were the large architectural plants that Alphand saw as crucial for the large public spaces of the city. However, given Alphand’s own careful narration of the historical tradition of his métier, it is a touch disturbing how little care was taken with the contributions that touched upon that theme: the random use of *le style anglais*, *le style allemand* or *pittoresque* was alarming.

It is – even for those who do not read French (a translation of Alphand’s work is sadly wanting) – an instructive view of how a major city may be envisioned in representations of the different layouts of “squares”, details of different railings (Alphand clearly thought that *genius loci* required different grills or open spaces for different parts of the city), careful illustrations of planting, and – this takes up a substantial part of the book – detailed explanations and illustrations of how the Bois de Vincennes and the Bois de Boulogne would be reformulated.

The papers were supposed to be supplied in advance of delivery, and they will, with revisions, be published in March 2018 by Éditions de la Villette. That is fortunate for those who did not attend. The fee was somewhat steep, my French friends said, and I also suspect the colloquium was not advertised widely or early enough.

One of the delights or frustrations of the event, depending on your perspective, was that many speakers, with their written texts in front of them, saw it as an opportunity to offer variations and impromptu, wonderfully rhetorical glosses on what they had originally written (it was France after all); but the timetable went for a burton, and the moderators did little to corral the speakers. As the proceedings were also recorded, one can hope that some of those spontaneous second thoughts, as well as the questions afterwards, would be incorporated into the final printed volume.

*Les Promenades de Paris* has recently been published in a full-scale facsimile in one volume, a treasure for libraries and even private persons to have on their shelves, by Collection Connaissance et Mémoires, 83, boulevard Saint-Michel, Paris 75005. Price 500€ + postage.





**Gillian Mawrey reports on Pépifolies, the  
Plant Market held every autumn in  
the French town of Doué-la-Fontaine**

We headed to the flower show at Doué-la-Fontaine in Anjou in the west of France on a bright but cold day in late autumn. In spite of recent gales there were still leaves on the trees, making me wish I could paint their subtle shades of brown. It was November 25th, the feast of Saint Catherine, significant for gardeners in France as the best time of year to plant trees and shrubs. “A la Sainte Catherine, tout bois prend racine,” goes the saying. “On Saint Catherine’s day, everything takes root.”

Doué-la-Fontaine is the rose capital of France. Half the roses bushes produced in the country are raised here, about 7 million a year, and the nearby countryside is covered with commercial rose growers, many of whom also breed their own named varieties. So we were not surprised to see that most of the 30 or so exhibitors at the *Marché aux Végétaux* were offering roses. Many of the others were selling fruit trees, another speciality of the area, indeed of the whole of the Anjou region, as witness the evocative names of many varieties: the apple ‘Reinette du Mans’, pears ‘La Belle Angevine’ and ‘Doyenné d’Alençon’, and the apricot ‘Précoce de Saumur’.

Almost all were sold bare root and it was a remarkable sight to see bushes and large trees all displayed lying on the ground (1), quite unprotected from the weather, not to mention the feet of visitors. It was all too easy to trip over them. We succumbed to three ‘Black Baccarat’, which we had been looking for for some time, one ‘Etoile de Hollande’ (ditto), one ‘Mustard and Ketchup’, which we had noticed when we visited in the summer (see below) and thought would make a lively antidote to all the good taste David Austin roses we planted three years ago, and one ‘Super Green’ (an impulse). They were duly tied up together with string (2) (very *Sound of Music*) and we paid and loaded them in the car, together with an Ilex. (In a pot this time, but annoyingly it turned out not to be labelled when we got it home.) We decided against a quince tree we also fancied as it was too large to fit in the car.

Coming back (entry is free, as is parking) we started to look at the other exhibits. One man was selling herbs (3), including some unusual ones and others labelled as dating back to monastic gardens; and another stand had dried pulses, which proved that the middle-class fashion for quinoa had reached rural France (4). There were also two exhibits of citrus fruit (5), which looked tempting but needed an orangery, which we don’t have, to survive the winter.

A spin-off from all the rose growing in Doué is a secondary industry making products derived from or scented with roses, and in one corner, betrayed by the fragrance wafting out from it, was a stand selling soap, rose-water, hand-cream and similar toiletries – and even caramels!

This was the 10th of these annual markets, rather tweeily called



## Pépifolies cont...

“Pépifolies” (mad about pips) and took place in the stable courtyard of the now lost Château des Basses Minières in Soulanges, a village next door to Doué. The château had been built in 1774 by Joseph François Foullon, Minister of Finance under Louis XVI, who was born in Saumur, not far from Doué. It is said to have been designed by the architect of the Hôtel des Monnaies in Paris, but there may be a confusion with two men surnamed Antoine. Certainly, it was surrounded by superb formal gardens – but sadly nothing remains of house or garden.

As Dickens recounts, fairly accurately, in *A Tale of Two Cities* (book 2, chapter 22), Foullon met a particularly gruesome end during the French Revolution, and his château was pillaged and pulled down. But in happier days, in the 1760s, he had been the founder of the local horticultural industry when he and Edmé-Crespin Chatenay, grandson of one of Louis XIV's gardeners, set up a nursery, *les pépinières royales*, in the town.

Foullon's estate, with the surviving outbuildings, became the property of Doué town council and in 1973 almost 2ha of his by then derelict garden was turned into, of course, a rose garden, the Roseraie Foullon, filled with over 300 varieties of all kinds of rose. It is intended as a living advertisement for the local growers, and so there is no charge to visit. The town's Espaces Verts, who organise the maintenance, had a stand at the show and Olivier Girard, the helpful man in charge, told me that for the past ten years the Roseraie has been gardened as biologically as possible, using for instance *savon noir* (black soap), a mixture of potassium and vegetable oil, to combat greenfly.

He reminded me of something we had noticed when we visited the Roseraie in the summer: that there was a test bed of *Hieracium pilosella*, mouse-ear hawkweed, a plant once used in medicine but now claimed to cut down weeding not just by providing a close mat of ground cover but by actively repelling other plants.

Although on a much smaller scale than Flower Shows like Chantilly and Orticolario (see previous Newsletters) this was most enjoyable afternoon, with lots going on, including pruning demonstrations. The only sad note was that the majority of the visitors on Saturday afternoon were, like us, not exactly in their first youth. Perhaps families and younger people go on Sunday. If we're in the area next year, we look forward to visiting again.

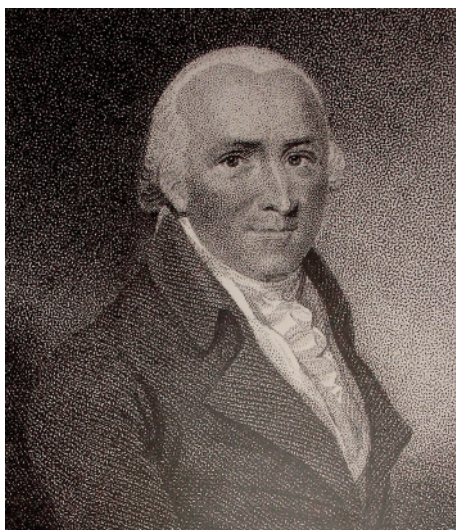
*For details of next year's Pépifolies keep an eye on [www.pepifolies.com](http://www.pepifolies.com)*

*Doué-la-Fontaine also holds a rose festival each summer. In 2018 it will run from 13th-16th July. See [www.journeesdelarose.com](http://www.journeesdelarose.com)*

*You can find more Plant Fairs throughout France at [www.jardipartage.fr](http://www.jardipartage.fr)*







# Humphry Repton

## Celebrating Humphry Repton: his year is here!

In the United Kingdom, and indeed somewhat beyond, 2018 is set to be a busy year, with the Gardens Trust leading and supporting an extraordinary network of parks and gardens, heritage organisations, and voluntary groups to celebrate the life and work of landscape designer Humphry Repton during the bicentenary of his death.

Our list of stakeholders shows some 200 people planning activities. There are research projects, such as that by Hampshire Gardens Trust which has unearthed a previously unknown Repton bill (to G. Purefoy Jervoise Esq of Herriard Park, south of Basingstoke, this one of only a few surviving bills showing all Repton's costs, including £21.00 for the Red Book). There are conferences, too, such as one planned by Norfolk Gardens Trust with the Gardens Trust to look at Repton's work in the county in which his career began. There are also lively events aimed at a more general public – for instance, Woburn Abbey's project for children to have a go at traditional surveying skills. And what is really very exciting indeed is the way in which they have rallied to the Gardens Trust's call to collaborate, looking set to achieve together a national festival with only extremely light-touch central coordination.

The Gardens Trust will shortly be launching a Repton events calendar to draw together the myriad of activities on offer. In the meantime, do take a look at [www.humphryrepton.org](http://www.humphryrepton.org) – or follow the celebrations at @humphryrepton, @repton200, or [fb.com/humphryrepton](https://www.facebook.com/humphryrepton)

**Linden Groves, The Gardens Trust Strategic Development Officer**



Finishing touches being made by sculptor Hannah Northam to her master model for Haddonstone's bust of Humphry Repton. Photo by Grahame Wickings.

**To mark the bicentenary** of Humphry Repton's death in 2018, Haddonstone has commissioned a bust of the great man from the sculptor Hannah Northam. No previous portrait bust exists so this is a significant work based on contemporary engravings. It follows Haddonstone's creation in 2016 of the first portrait bust of Lancelot 'Capability' Brown, which now graces such locations as Blenheim, Castle Ashby and Highclere. The new bust of Repton can be used as a pair with the Brown bust – perfect for landscapes where both had an influence.

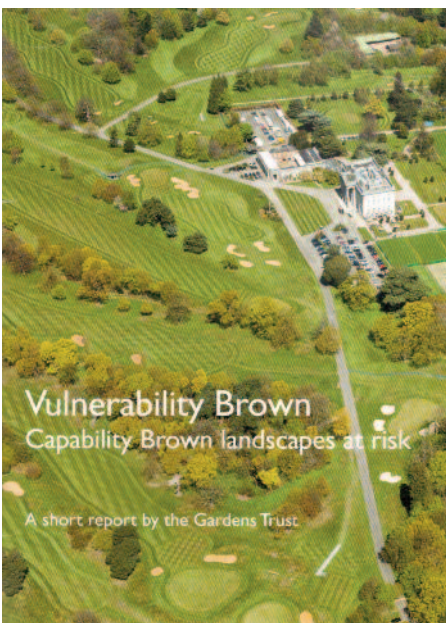
Haddonstone is supporting the Gardens Trust in celebrating Repton's life and has donated one of the new busts to the GT to use appropriately.

Established in 1971, Haddonstone is the UK's leading manufacturer of fine garden ornaments and architectural stonework in traditional, classical and contemporary styles.

Haddonstone is made from a unique form of cast limestone with a surface texture similar to Portland stone. The material matures and weathers like natural stone to create a timeless ornament that grows more distinguished with age. Repton busts are priced at £399.00 inc VAT. Visit [www.haddonstone.com](http://www.haddonstone.com) or telephone +44 (0)1604 770 711 for details.

# Historic Landscape Assembly

## David Marsh reports from the Gardens Trust's Historic Landscape Assembly 2017



Born in 2015 following the merger of the Garden History Society and the Association of Gardens Trusts, the UK's Gardens Trust is already coming of age with an increasingly dynamic role in the centre of the historic landscape whirlpool, something that was particularly clear at its second Historic Landscapes Assembly, held in Birmingham in November 2017. With over 80 attendees, including volunteers from County Gardens Trusts across the country and representatives from major heritage organisations, there was a real buzz as they shared the year's biggest ideas and key priorities across the sector.

The morning was taken up by representatives from Historic England and Natural England briefing delegates on their 2017-18 priorities, and then volunteers and staff from the Gardens Trust updating everyone on its three current campaigns. The first, "Celebrating Humphry Repton", marking the bicentenary of Repton's death, is well under way (see page 6)

and, although it can't match the funding of the 2016 Capability Brown Festival, looks certain to match its enthusiasm and spread of interest nationally.

Given that, after the Capability Brown Festival's success, most people would imagine all Brown's 200+ sites to be properly protected, it is frightening that the Gardens Trust's "Vulnerability Brown" report identifies threats to many of them – and that 6 are on the Heritage at Risk register.

"Compiling the Record", a crowd-sourced project to add 20th-century landscapes to the national Heritage List, has already identified many threatened, undervalued and under-researched sites, and raised awareness of the UK's more recent heritage.

More details on these three campaigns can be found at <http://thegardenstrust.org>

After a lunch where networking seemed to be taking place in every corner, the afternoon began with the Gardens Trust's President, Dominic Cole, talking about how the Great Storm of 1987 launched his career as a landscape architect. We then moved on to Sally Miller from Hampshire Gardens Trust telling us about Bramshill, a Grade I listed Jacobean site. and the planning issues which arise when a reasonably intact extensive historic landscape passes into the hands of developers, albeit generally sympathetic ones. Next it was Chris Addison from Northamptonshire Gardens Trust and Beryl Lott from Lincolnshire Gardens Trust, who described to us their plans to run an innovative East Midlands Gardens Trusts Research and Recording Project.

It would have been nice to have fitted in a visit to one of Birmingham's historic parks or gardens but there was simply no time. The good news is that there will be other opportunities, because garden history is making a come-back in the city, with courses soon starting at two venues, and some of the Trust's winter lectures happening there too.

As a Board member of the Gardens Trust I may be biased in thinking this a worthwhile day, but delegates' feedback showed that for volunteers and paid officials to be able to come together to find ways to work in unison is a big step forward.



Right: The Gardens Trust's Conservation Casework Manager Alison Allighan showing Cheshire Gardens Trust volunteer Barbara Moth around the Trust's online log of planning casework.





©National Trust Images/David Sellman

**Whipsnade in Bedfordshire** is famous for its zoo – but it can now also be proud of its Tree Cathedral (*left*), which has just been awarded a Grade II listing by Historic England, which means that it should be protected from development or neglect. Situated on the edge of Whipsnade Village green, the Tree Cathedral is composed of different varieties of trees and shrubs laid out to the plan of a medieval cathedral, with a

nave, transepts, chancel, cloisters and chapels. It was created by lawyer Edmund K. Blyth, who had served in the infantry in World War I and wanted to create a lasting memorial for his comrades-in-arms in, he said, a spirit of “faith, hope and reconciliation”. Mr Blyth donated the Tree Cathedral to the National Trust in 1960 and it is open to the public.

**Park management** often involves removing inappropriate non-indigenous species of trees to replace them with local varieties, but it is rare to find someone who has done this with a hundred acre (40 ha) forest. Brackenhurst Botanic Garden in Tigoni, 25 km north-west of Nairobi, Kenya, lies in lush tea-growing country. Seventeen years ago local vet Mark Nicholson (*right*) was complaining how non-indigenous trees, such as eucalypts, were damaging the water table and discouraging wild life. People said “Why don’t you do something about it?” So he did. Under his leadership, the forest has been gradually re-planted, often using endangered species such as *Prunus africana*, *Podocarpus* and *Warburgia ugandensis*. The wild life has duly returned and sunbirds, goshawks and black-and-white colobus monkeys are now frequent visitors.

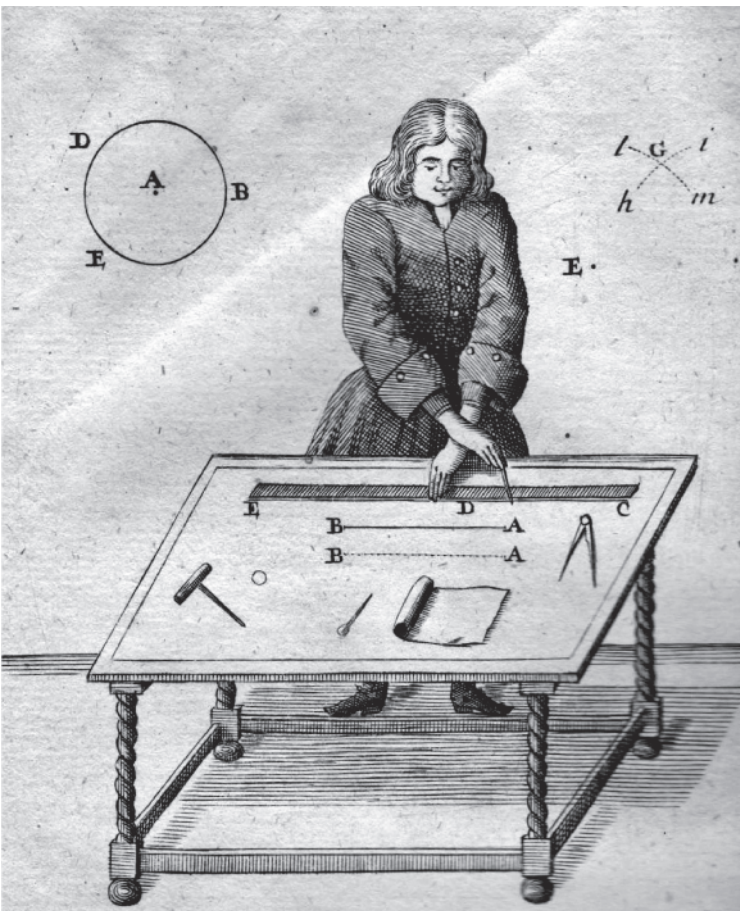


**John Overington, a local Republican politician** in West Virginia, has found a novel way of drawing attention to historic trees in his bailiwick. Every year he offers \$500 of his own money as a prize to the largest tree of a particular species. In 2017 he chose magnolias and the prize was awarded to a Southern magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*) on the campus of Shepherd University, on the banks of the Potomac River 65 miles south of Washington DC. The winning tree is 57 feet tall (17.4m), with a girth of 69 inches (1.8m), and was probably planted when the gardens were laid out in 1907-8 by Oglesby Paul, a landscape designer who is said to have worked with Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. The prize money will be put towards the restoration of the gardens.



**Following his article on Rideau Hall** in *HGR 35* Mark Burleton has sent this photograph of a Red Oak (*Quercus rubra*) planted by HRH Prince Arthur, Duke of Connaught and Strathearn on May 1st 1906. This is the first known ceremonial tree (out of over 145) planted at Rideau Hall. In 2017 it was recognised as a Heritage Tree by Forests Ontario – one of the initiatives celebrating the 150th anniversary of Canada’s confederation. Members of the public were invited to nominate heritage trees in their area. For other examples see <https://www.forestsontario.ca/community/in-the-spotlight/heritage-trees/>





## **Ichnographia Rustica. Stephen Switzer and the designed landscape**

**By William Alvis Brogden**

**Routledge. 298 pages. £110.00.**

**(Also available as an eBook.)**

**ISBN 978-1-472 43440 1.**

**Reviewed by John Dixon Hunt**

**This is an important book**, on a writer and landscape practitioner whose significance has been lost in the rush to celebrate the English garden, which, ever since Horace Walpole, has been seen as the culmination, the apt Whiggish apotheosis, of English landscape design. Brogden's Introduction establishes from the start how Stephen Switzer's work has been "clouded somewhat" by developments in the 18th century, "notably the picturesque". Switzer's designs are crucial in and for themselves, neither harbingers of a better taste to come nor "regrettable examples of *retarditare*" taste.

Brogden takes much further, and with a myriad of examples, what John D. Sedding in *Garden Craft Old and New* (1891) hailed as a landscape of "betweenity – the garden of transition". Except that Brogden sees it far less as a transition than as a unique and (he seems to argue) a perfect balance between the terms, so often invoked in landscape discussion – the terms, which he refuses to accept, of the formal and informal.

I first encountered Switzer (1682-1745) in an essay Brogden published in *Furor Hortensis* (1974). The next year Peter Willis (the editor of *Furor Hortensis*) and I took Switzer as a vital voice in early 18th-century discussions of landscape, and for our 1975 anthology *The Genius of Place* we selected passages from his two editions of *Ichnographia Rustica* in 1718 and 1742. Those volumes had first appeared as a single book in 1715, *The Nobleman, Gentleman, and Gardener's Recreation*, which Switzer later realized he could expand into a three-volume and major work on "Rural and Extensive Gardening". When I collected examples of landscape history for Garland reprints in 1982, I chose the three-volume *Ichnographia* of 1718 and his two-volume *An Introduction to a general System of Hydrostaticks and Hydraulicks, Philosophical and Practical* of 1729.

In the years since Brogden first published, drawing on his two-volume 1973 Ph.D. dissertation for the University of Edinburgh, he has been at work exploring both archives and sites where Switzer was thought or known to have been engaged. It is a massive endeavour, not least in his own attention to what Switzer himself termed his practical and philosophical approach –



namely, seeing that both concepts or theory and the actual making of place were, as they still are, central to the field.

Brogden's approach is chronological. Each chapter identifies stages in Switzer's progress,

with discussions of sites relevant to that period of his career. Thus the first sees him outlining Switzer's debts to the classics and then, rather cursorily, a cluster of contemporary writers, before moving on to his apprenticeship with London and Wise at Brompton Park Nurseries.

At this stage it is hard to see what exactly, if anything, Switzer designed. His writings that talk about key sites – Cassiobury, Castle Howard's Ray Wood – tell us more about his early ideas on rural gardening than what he did himself to implement them. He worked at Blenheim (digging the foundations for Vanbrugh's bridge), and formed the gravel pit at Kensington Palace into an amphitheatre.

A few more materials have emerged since Brogden began his work: Sugnall in Staffordshire, whose owner subscribed to Switzer's *The Practical Husbandman and Planter* of 1733-4, was written about by the current owner, David Jacques, in "Garden History" in 1981, at Brogden's suggestion. Jacques doubted Switzer's involvement, though Brogden still thinks he was behind the design. Whetham House, in Wiltshire (*below*), another site where we now know more, had an elaborate cascade which Switzer reproduced in his hydraulic book of 1729 – evidence of how much he loved water-work of all kinds.

Otherwise it is for Brogden a question of triangulating images and descriptions in his books of remains on the ground, a keen eye for appreciating what he was doing, and a full knowledge of the connections and estate owners that Switzer knew.

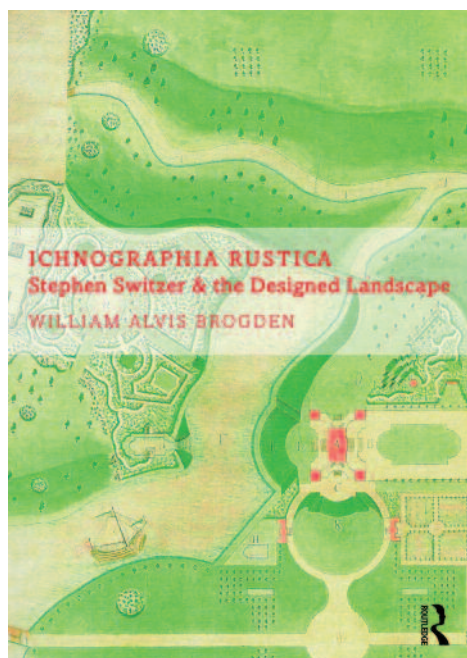
The work he did for the Bertie family at Grimsthorpe in Lincolnshire (*above*), for instance, at Cirencester Park in Gloucestershire (c1714), and at Nostell Priory in Yorkshire (c1734) reveal more about his steadily developing vision. It is what I personally most admire about Switzer – landscapes that acknowledge the *genius loci* of a site, its latent possibilities, above all its natural effects and what could be done with them. His skill was clearly that he could meld the immediate gardens (its geometries) with the larger, less organized estate, into his own understanding of a rural and extensive gardening.

With the establishment of his seed shop in Westminster, Switzer became a public figure, and proceeded to essays (i.e. work on the ground, also chapters in books) in the landscape style, where Brogden properly notes that a "designed landscape is not necessarily the work of studied informality". This is made clearer in his final chapter when he explores the legacy of Switzer from Thomas Whately to the "modern movement".

It must be said that such an important figure as Switzer could have been graced with a more reader-friendly layout, with better illustrations and some in colour. The cover brings Nostell Priory to life with its colours and aptly declares the careful adjudication of geometric and natural forms there, and makes the proposal exciting. (Brogden is right to insist that conventional terms like "formal" and "informal" for gardening are largely meaningless –







even Brown would enjoy and feature the “forms” of the nature he worked with.)

The font size of the text is small compared with the width of lines across the page; paragraphs are sometimes too long for the easy following of arguments; a few accents are missed (Andre le Notre!), and there are no notes, only quick parenthetical references to books listed in the bibliography – which is a pity, as some arguments could well have been detailed in notes and advanced more generally in the main text.

Some paragraphs, even sentences, lose hold of the subjects of their narrative, and (for me) there are no references from text to

the image. This leaves readers to make their own assessment of that relationship, which, given that we are trying to determine the precision of what Switzer designed, could be better demonstrated.

While Brogden is no stylist, his workmanlike narrative carries us through the long chronicle of Switzer’s career. But a more lively book design would have helped to bring back into focus what an important gardenist he was, whose philosophy and practice we can profitably return to, as historians mainly, but also as designers of sites.

If Evelyn, quoted by Brogden on page 14 quoting Switzer, had allowed gardening to “speak proper English”, arguably Switzer himself saw how English gardening practice could absorb into its native culture the “linguistics” of European work.

## ‘Pasley’

**Written and compiled by Emma Isles-Buck**

**Obtainable from Emma Isles-Buck by emailing [emmaib@btinternet.com](mailto:emmaib@btinternet.com)**

**155 pages. £16.00 (with profits to charities Perennial and the Gardens Trust).**

**ISBN 978-1-5272-1105-6.**

When we set up the Historic Gardens Foundation, one of our earliest supporters was the distinguished landscape architect and garden designer Anthony du Gard Pasley (1929-2009) who took out a life subscription. This was typical of his generosity and his belief in educating people about gardens, their history and their meaning.

Pasley himself was a charismatic teacher and, in addition to being a brilliant designer, was also a genuine ‘character’. Always impeccably dressed, albeit in the style of an old-fashioned 1930s landed gentleman, with a bristling moustache and twinkling eye, he was also a noted collector, poet, music lover and much else. The secret of his talent lay in his guiding principle that the garden should relate to the client, the house and the landscape. Pasley was not a man to impose his own ‘style’ on a garden, nor was he a slave to current fashion. His use of island beds at Rocky Lane Farm (Oxfordshire) when they were deeply unfashionable proved exactly right for the garden and its situation. His historical knowledge enabled him to conceive Wadhurst Park in terms of Hubert Robert, and he was particularly sensitive to gardens of the High Victorian era such as Dornden (Kent) and Pashley Manor (Sussex).

‘Pasley’ is part biography by his god-daughter, Emma Isles-Buck, and part *Festschrift* of recollections by his clients, friends and family, with some of Pasley’s own poems. A worthy tribute to a great landscaper.

**Richard Mawrey**

**Ici repose – à la découverte des cimetières de Caen by Sandrine Berthelot and Emmanuel Luis**  
**Lieux Dits. 80 pages. 7€.**  
**ISBN 978-2-36219-156-5.**

Apart from Père Lachaise in Paris, with its famous inhabitants (Peter Abelard, Georges Bizet, Oscar Wilde, Adolphe Alphand) I tend to avoid French cemeteries as being full of tasteless monuments laid out in rigid lines without a scrap of green to relieve their stony atmosphere. How wrong I was – at least so far as the city of Caen in Normandy is concerned. I now know that French cemeteries and burial grounds were once, like those in England, situated next to parish churches, and were often planted with fruit trees, the produce being sold to support the church. In the 18th century the increase in population led in 1776 to a law which ordered that new burial grounds should be created outside built-up areas and the old ones closed. At the Revolution, being church property, old and new were confiscated and in 1804 handed to local municipalities to run. In 1939 most of the surviving pre-1776 cemeteries were derelict and so declared nature reserves – and it is here you will find the romantic atmosphere the English find so attractive.

After explaining this general history, the authors describe nine cemeteries, including the one intended for Protestants and foreigners, now largely subsumed in the university campus, but where Beau Brummell's grave can still be seen.



As well as the sites themselves, they investigate the people buried there and, most interestingly, the tombs themselves, how their style evolved and the artists who made them. Examples include one wonderful Art Deco chapel (*left*), commissioned by the Letellier family from the architect Charles Auvray.

Caen has excellent stone (it was shipped to England to build Canterbury cathedral) and we learn about whole dynasties of stone and marble masons, sculptors, architects, metal workers, the occasional stained glass maker. The christian and secular symbolism of the designs is also examined.

Rarely will you find so much well-researched and fascinating information in such a small space. This booklet on Caen is just one of hundreds of books, in large and small formats, from this Lyons-based publisher which specialises in local cultural history. We reviewed *Maisons Laffitte: parc, paysage et villégiature 1630-1930* in HGR 6, *Jardins en Alsace* in HGR 25 and *Étonnants Jardins en Nord-Pas de Calais* in HGR 33. Other

of their non-garden titles that have given me a great deal of pleasure are *Vichy, invitation à la promenade* and *Bagnoles de l'Orne*, both about spas.

**Gillian Mawrey**



## **Arboretum by Owen Johnson**

**Whittet Books. 474 pages. £40.00.**

**ISBN 978-1-873580-97-4.**

I loved this book – its combination of serious history and jolly anecdote kept me reading well into the night. The author, as Registrar of the Tree Register, maintains a database of exceptional trees in Britain – over 80,000 of them – and his object in this book is “to show how the whole country can be appreciated as an arboretum”.

If this aim sounds dull, the book is anything but. It is quirky, personal, poetic and inspiring. There are unexpected references to the towers of San Gimignano and idiosyncratic stories about people who have worked with or introduced trees to Britain.

One sentence from the section on ‘Trees from Chile’ gives a flavour of Johnson’s scope and style. “Strictly, the Quinoa (*Polylepis australis*) is a gatecrasher to this party as it is confined to high-altitude forests just into the Argentine side of the Andes, but it is so delightful and so little-known a tree that it would be a pity not to recommend it at this juncture to gardeners with a sense of fun.”



So we don’t have to go to a famous place like Kew or Westonbirt to see champion trees: they are all around us. I’m ashamed to say I had never noticed the avenue of thorns (*Crataegus*) in the University Parks in Oxford (left), but, thanks to Dr Johnson, I will be more observant in future.

## **A Wood of One’s Own by Ruth Pavey**

**Duckworth Overlook. 256 pages. £14.99.**

**ISBN 978-0-7156-5223-7.**

As an antidote to her frenetic life as a journalist in London, Ruth Pavey took the not entirely sensible decision to buy four acres (1.6ha) of neglected woodland in the west of England. She had known Somerset as a child but the acquisition still provided a learning curve as steep as the slope on her land. Discovering what already grew there, and what might grow well in future, finding out about the area’s history, and meeting the current inhabitants, both human and animal, all took time and patience. Her joys and her adventures are recounted with realism and humour. “It may be dull of me, but there is some comfort in having reached a stage in life when hopes centre more on meeting an otter than a lover.”

## **Trees in England: Management and disease since 1600 by Tom Williamson, Gerry Barnes and Toby Pillatt**

**University of Hertfordshire Press. 229 pages. £16.99.**

**ISBN 978-1-909291-96-6.**

“English trees, and especially those growing in rural areas, have become a topic of growing concern...” The book’s opening sentence, with its sloppy repetition of “growing”, gives an indication of both subject and style. The authors’ object is to place the spate of modern tree diseases and perceived loss of woodland in a historic context – and hence in perspective. An important subject but more sparkle would have been welcome in the text.

**Gillian Mawrey**



**Théâtres de Verdure** edited by Nathalie Duguen and Marie-Caroline Thuillier  
Gourcuff Gradenigo. 208 pages. 49€. ISBN 978-2-35340-227-4.

The series of interesting essays in this book reflects the geographical and stylistic range represented in the network of green theatres

created by the authors in 2010 ([www.reseautheatreverdure.com](http://www.reseautheatreverdure.com)). There are examples in England, Portugal, France, Germany and of course in Italy, where the idea of presenting plays and operas outdoors in specially created theatres had its inception in the Renaissance. The Villa Rizzardi, north of Verona, is one that has hardly changed since the 18th century and is still used. The book includes others as far away as the United States, Australia and Sri Lanka. Not all are historic or in the grand gardens of châteaux or villas. The outdoor theatre at the Trinity Laban Conservatoire (*above*) was built in 2005 and is in Peckham, south London, statistically one of the poorest areas in Europe.

**11 Jardins créés ou restaurés en Haute-Normandie** by various authors.

**Association Régionale des Parcs et Jardins de Haute-Normandie.**

**52 pages. 5€. ISBN 9-772264-63805-3.**

This booklet demonstrates the richness of the gardens in Normandy, from those housing official collections, such as the Jardin des Plantes in Rouen and the Arboretum at Lyons-la-Forêt, to the more varied creations, many of them quite recent, of keen and knowledgeable individuals. It is actually Bulletin No 38 published by the Regional Association of Parks and Gardens in Upper Normandy and the preceding three bulletins describe 44 other gardens in the area. All four are available from [www.arpjhn.com](http://www.arpjhn.com) – though be warned that, sadly, some gardens are open to the public only rarely and others not at all.

**Une Maison de Plaisance au XVIIIe siècle (L'Hôtel de Noailles à Saint-Germain-en-Laye)** edited by Françoise Brissard and Gabriel Wick.

**Éditions Artlys. 160 pages. 20€ . ISBN 978-2-85495-662-7.**

The first thing to say about this book is that it is *beautiful* – a pleasure for the eye and to hold in the hands. Its well-illustrated text expands and updates Françoise Brissard's article on the Hôtel de Noailles in *HGR* 32, which described how the Ducs de Noailles built their town house close to the royal palace at Saint-Germain-en-Laye in 1689 and laid out fine gardens around it, which were later altered in part to a fashionable *parc à l'anglaise*, filled with new and rare trees and shrubs. Only the two side wings of the house survive, a road having been driven through the middle in 1836, and even less of the remarkable gardens; so Brissard, Wick and their colleagues have had to piece together fragments of evidence, both in archives and on the ground, to arrive at what they admit is no more than a series of informed guesses about what house and garden actually looked like at different periods. How they built up that information and put it into words and pictures is as fascinating a story as that of the property itself.

**Gillian Mawrey**



# If You Remember...

**In his review of John Phibbs's second book** on 'Capability' Brown (N 46 pp9ff) Professor John Dixon Hunt queried whether the French woman who said she didn't "get" Brown was a real person or simply a device for explaining Brown to those who knew little of him. John Phibbs has replied that she is indeed real, her name is Cecile Bonneau and she came over to England to make a TV programme about Brown.  
[Now we know her name, I too can vouch for her existence! **GM.**]



**Dr Gabriel Wick**, who wrote the article on the château of La Roche Guyon in *HGR 24*, reports that designer and plantsman Gilles Clément has been brought in to restore the huge 3ha (7.4 acre) potager. During a previous restoration the fertile top soil was stripped off and the ground 'improved' with agricultural soil. This proved unsuitable for growing vegetables, although fruit trees (*left*) have done well. In a preliminary move this time, individual beds are being used to test different methods of improving soil. We will report on the results. **GM.**

**Kedleston Hall in Derbyshire** featured in *HGR 35*. The Palladian mansion and its park, both listed Grade I, were largely designed by Robert Adam and represent Georgian splendour at its most magnificent. As is becoming a recurrent motif with UK-based stories, Kedleston found itself menaced by the Government's drive to cover the countryside with new houses.

A developer had applied for planning permission for two estates, the first of 400 dwellings and a shop, and the second of a further 195 dwellings. The consequences to the park would have been very damaging. The National Trust, which runs Kedleston, objected on the ground that the development would "have a harmful impact on the setting and significance of the heritage assets which would not be outweighed by the benefits of the housing". The heritage regulator, Historic England, objected on the same grounds. A local group, Kedleston Voice, took up the cudgels. The local authority, Amber Valley Borough Council, was persuaded and refused planning permission. Round 1 to Kedleston.

The developers appealed and the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government appointed an inspector. He held an enquiry and reported that the damage to Kedleston was insufficient to justify refusal of permission. Round 2 to the developers.

Mr Peter Steer of Kedleston Voice took the inspector to court and in May 2017 the inspector's decision was quashed. Where he had gone wrong was in concentrating too narrowly on whether the development encroached on the heritage site (which it didn't) and how much it would impact on the view. The judge held that he had incorrectly "treated visual connections as essential and determinative" instead of looking at the wider heritage picture. She said, in effect, that the Council had got it right in the first place. So Round 3 to Kedleston – but there may be an appeal. The result will be important for many other historic properties. Watch this space. **RM**

# *Errata et Meae Culpa*

Parts of Margaret Campbell's article on Comely Bank Nursery (Newsletter 46 page 8) were cut for reasons of space and the following information was unfortunately omitted.

"This contribution was principally based on research by the Comely Bank East Lane Association History Group and the photograph, GWW E01683, is from University of Aberdeen: Special Collections Centre."

The caption was muddled in the report of Susan Kemenyffy's award (N 46 page 16). In the photograph Susan is second from right not second from left. Former First Lady of Pennsylvania, Michelle Ridge, stands far left, then current First Lady, Frances Wolf, Susan Kemenyffy is next, with Governor Tom Wolf to the far right.

Bella D'Arcy (N 46 page 15) prefers to be called by her married name of Bella D'Arcy Reed and would like it to be made plain that she is no longer a trustee of the garden to which she refers, and also that it was a person dressed as a Roman centurion and not an Italian soldier who helped her up the steps in Rome.



## *Looking Ahead*

Look out for the next issue of

### ***Historic Gardens Review***

It will include articles on the lost gardens at Muromtsevo near Moscow, restoration work at Hillsborough Castle in Northern Ireland, garden aviaries in China and England, and a light-hearted history of children's horticulture. We mark the 70th anniversary of the death of Mahatma Gandhi with a review of the memorials still being created around the world in his honour – and Lynne Walker takes us on a whistle-stop tour of some fine gardens in New Zealand.

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