



OXFORDSHIRE GARDENS TRUST

NEWSLETTER 22, AUTUMN 2015



AGM and Visit to Rycote Park, 13 June

Our AGM was held in an impressive 18th-century barn in the grounds of Rycote Park, by kind permission of the owners Bernard and Sarah Taylor. The meeting was attended by about 25 members.

Joanna Matthews, Secretary, summarised the achievements of the past year; in addition to our regular programme of lectures and garden visits, we have completed the HLF-funded project on walled kitchen gardens and begun a new research project to record the Oxfordshire sites worked on by Lancelot 'Capability' Brown. Work on a gazetteer of all parks and gardens in the county has begun under the direction of committee members David Bradley and Bev Lear. Over the summer months they will be assisted by two University of Oxford graduates, Anna Cuckow and James Harkin, whom we have recruited through the university's internship programme.

Will Holborow, Treasurer, reported that the Trust's finances were on a steadily upward trajectory, with over £8,000 in the bank and no need to raise subscription rates. However, with only 80 paid-up members, we remain a very small society. Joanna mentioned that the

OGT members at Rycote (photo Will Holborow)

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work of running the Trust is falling heavily on a small group of people. We are desperately in need of new committee members. Joanna also reported on progress with the merger of the national Association of Gardens Trusts and Garden History Society (see below). This led to some lively questioning at the end of the meeting, with concerns expressed about the proposed name for the merged organisation ('The Gardens Trust'). A decision on the merger was made in July when both organisations held their AGMs.

Margie Hoffnung explained her role as part-time Assistant Conservation Officer at the GHS, and stressed that the GHS has very limited resources for planning work. This means that county gardens trusts have a vital role in monitoring planning applications in their areas and commenting on development proposals that affect historic landscapes. To help them in this work, a 'Resource Hub' has been added to the Parks & Gardens UK website:

www.parksandgardens.org.

Following the AGM, we were introduced to Rycote's long and complex history by Sarah Taylor. Rycote is an ancient site, recorded in the Domesday Book. In the early 16th century a huge mansion was built here, regularly visited by the Tudor monarchs. It was acquired by Baron Williams of Thame in 1539 and remained in the hands of his descendants, who became Earls of Abingdon in the 17th century. The mansion was partly destroyed by fire in 1745. The park and lake were altered under the direction of Capability Brown in the 1760s, when the moat and formal gardens were swept away. A number of features from this period can still be seen, including an ice-house, a ha-ha and the lake. What was left of the Tudor mansion was almost completely demolished in 1807 apart from a detached wing which became a farmhouse. The successors of the Earls of Abingdon continued to live here until 1911, since when the site has passed through a number of different ownerships. There is a lot of fascinating historical information about the site and its owners on the Rediscovering Rycote site: <http://rycote.bodleian.ox.ac.uk>. Sarah then led us on a tour of the grounds, beginning with the 15th-century chapel. This has remarkably well-preserved interior fittings, including two very elaborate covered pews. Elsewhere in the grounds, Sarah explained the ambitious programme of landscape restoration that has been carried out since she and her husband acquired Rycote in 2000. The lake has been dredged and restored, and views towards it have been enhanced by the removal of some trees and a modern swimming pool. Our tour also took in the recently restored kitchen

garden and two newly planted enclosures close to the house – a flower garden and a herb garden. The new planting in these areas has been designed by Elizabeth Banks and was looking immaculate. The park contains a number of notable trees, including an ancient yew beside the chapel, a huge oriental plane close to the house and a number of trees at the head of the lake that may be a relic of Brown's planting. A light drizzle failed to dampen our enjoyment of this enchanting landscape, and our appreciation of the care that has been taken to restore it. The visit concluded with an excellent lunch of local produce. *Will Holborow*

AGM and GHS Merger

On 24 July, at their AGMs in Newcastle upon Tyne, the Garden History Society (GHS) and the Association of Gardens Trusts (AGT) agreed to merge to become The Gardens Trust. The two organisations had already agreed to merge in principle, the process being steered by a joint transitional committee.

Conservation is being devolved to county level, with the central Gardens Trust focusing on more complex or larger cases or national policy. Current GHS members become individual members of the The Gardens Trust. Each CGT is a CGT member of the Gardens Trust, just as they were a member of the AGT, with individual members of the CGTs continuing to belong to the respective county organisations. CGT members can also join the Gardens Trust, enabling them to receive the *Garden History* journal and the new Gardens Trust newsletter and to book events. The total combined membership is 7,000.

The agreed aims of the joint body are: to speak with a more powerful voice for the protection of parks, gardens and designed landscape; to play a key garden conservation role in the planning system as a statutory consultee; to provide support to strengthen the local activity of the County and Country Gardens Trusts; to be an internationally recognized centre of excellence in the study of garden history; to live within the means of the merged organisation and be financially sustainable over the long term.

A 12-member Board has been set up, chaired by Dr James Bartos. Michael Dawson becomes Vice Chairman and Dominic Cole OBE, former chairman of the GHS, is President. Committees have been set up to manage the various areas of activity: conservation, events, publications, membership, administration & finance.

To learn more, see the Gardens Trust website: www.thegardenstrust.org/index.html.

Gazetteer Progress Report

Since I last wrote, I am very pleased to report that we have made some excellent progress with the Oxfordshire Gardens Gazetteer. This ambitious project aims to provide a research resource for those interested in historic gardens in Oxfordshire, and to enable the trust to better respond to planning issues as and when they arise. Our progress has been much swifter than initially expected due to the very good fortune of having James Harkin, an intern from the University of Oxford, assisting us over the summer. Having looked at the formats suggested for CB300 research and by Parks and Gardens UK, James has put together our recording format using EXCEL. He has also been able to obtain details from the Historic England register and other source material loaded and is in the process of adding location maps. This is all very encouraging, but there is still lots more to do and members will be pleased to hear that we have Anna Cuckow (another University of Oxford intern) coming to work alongside James at the beginning of August.

None of this would have been so far forward without Professor David Bradley hosting James and Anna at the Department of Zoology, and for getting the whole thing off the ground. I know that we are all delighted with what has been achieved and considerable thanks must be extended for all the hard work so far. If all continues well, we should have our core list of sites in place by the end of the summer, together with summaries of their history and some of the available archive materials and resources associated with individual sites. It will then be back to OGT members to start filling in the gaps! We estimate that there are between 250 and 300 sites of interest in the county, including walled gardens which some

of you have already worked on in some detail. If any members think they might be interested in researching a specific park or garden and attending a Gazetteer research training workshop once this current phase has been completed, I'd be delighted to hear from you. Please contact me at: beverleylear@hotmail.co.uk.

Beverley Lear



Rhododendrons at Highclere (photo Beverley Lear)

Beverley Lear: Heritage Rhododendrons, 19 February

Beverley gave a beautifully illustrated talk on the introduction of various species of rhododendron during the 19th century. It was clear that the dating of the introductions was important in being able to identify the dates of creation of the gardens where the specimens were found. Bev has done a really useful job in identifying this as a historic tool, let alone introducing her audience to a delightful variety of flowering plants.

Joanna Matthews

Oxfordshire Gardens Trust Contacts

Company registered in England and Wales No. 04499797 Registered Charity No. 0194648

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www.ogt.org.uk

Chair: Vacant

Secretary: Joanna Matthews, 7 Church Way, Iffley, Oxford, OX4 4DY; 01865 777531; secretary@ogt.org.uk

Other Committee Members: Max Askew, Sarah Baines (Membership Secretary), David Bradley, Tobi Fett, Ian Gourlay, Will Holborow (Treasurer), Beverley Lear, Sally Stradling.

Newsletter Editor: Jaqueline Mitchell.

Membership applications to: Sarah Baines, c/o 30 West Street, Chipping Norton, Oxon, OX7 5ER.

NEWSLETTER 23: Please send copy to jaq.mitchell@btinternet.com. Deadline: 7 December 2015.

Capability Brown Tercentenary

To celebrate the 300th anniversary of the birth of Lancelot Brown in 1716, next year will be full of events, the purpose of which will be to make his work more widely known, and, where possible, visited. Here in Oxfordshire we have a number of sites where he worked, some of which involved large-scale engineering, others he visited and drew a plan but the work was never carried out.

Brown did not leave a convenient archive of invoices, bills or a diary, but we have his bank accounts for the major part of his working life. This tells us for whom he was working and when he was paid (sometimes quite later than the visit or the work), and we can assess the amount of work from the scale of his charges. Oxfordshire sites where we have a firm attribution include: Blenheim Palace (for the Duke of Marlborough, and the largest payments for any site); Kiddington, an early commission, without archives and which has a disputed date; Kirtlington, where there is a plan by the previous 'improver', Greening, the then Royal Gardener, with additions by Brown; Nuneham, a late work; Radley; Rycote; and Thame Park. In addition Brown made plans for Adderbury (the Duke of Buccleugh) and Dornford, but the work was not carried out. Finally Ditchley, which is a puzzle as the payment was made to someone not then the owner, suggesting that this is an erroneous identification.

Our research is being carried out by a combination of OGT researchers and members of Oxford NADFAS. Last November we held a training day for NADFAS volunteers, and we visited Nuneham Park and Radley in the spring. After that the volunteers chose the sites where they would work. Unfortunately several have had to withdraw since then for a variety of reasons, mostly lack of time.

The Nuneham team has made good progress, as has that at Adderbury main site (work at the latter was not done by Brown, but will be useful for our Gazetteer). Thame Park, Kiddington and Rycote have lakes of differing character which are being researched.

Blenheim is doing its own research and we hope to be able to use its findings. Nuneham will be hosting an Open Day next June in conjunction with the Global Retreat Centre (tenants of the house and part of the gardens), Oxford Preservation Trust, the University of Oxford's land agent Savills, Kellogg College and the Churches Conservation Council which takes care of the old 'Grecian' church.

We have contacted almost all the sites, and received quite a good reception. Still a lot to do, but 12 months to go to our deadline of July 2016.

Joanna Matthews

CB300 Activities

A number of events and activities are already planned for 2016, so here is an early bird alert to a few (we are also arranging some OGT lectures and visits).

AGT, Avon GT and the GHS Research and Recording Study Day, King's Weston, Bristol, 22 September 2015: Peter Hill, 01275 858809 events@avongardenstrust.org.uk.

Mercer Art Gallery (Swan Road, Harrogate, North Yorkshire HG1 2SA) exhibition, 'Noble Prospects: Capability Brown and the Yorkshire Landscape', 25 June–11 September 2016.

Blenheim Palace Exhibition 'Capability Brown & the Landscape Created for Blenheim Palace', 13 February–2 May 2016.

AGT Study Day, 'Lancelot Brown and his Associates', Heathmount School, Watton-at-Stone, Herts, Saturday 16 April 2016.

Historic Royal Palaces, in association with the Universities of East Anglia, Sheffield and York, Conference 'Capability Brown Royal Gardener - the man and his business: Past Present and Future', Hampton Court Palace, 6–8 June 2016.

Historic England, Natural England & the Ancient Tree Forum Conference 'What Capability Brown did for Ecology: The Legacy for Biodiversity, Landscapes & Nature Conservation', Sheffield Hallam University, 15–17 June 2016.

ICOMOS-UK International Conference, University of Bath, the Garden History Society & the National Trust Conference 'Capability Brown: perception and response in a global context', University of Bath, 9–11 September 2016.

Details of these and all other CB events can be found at www.capabilitybrown.org/events.



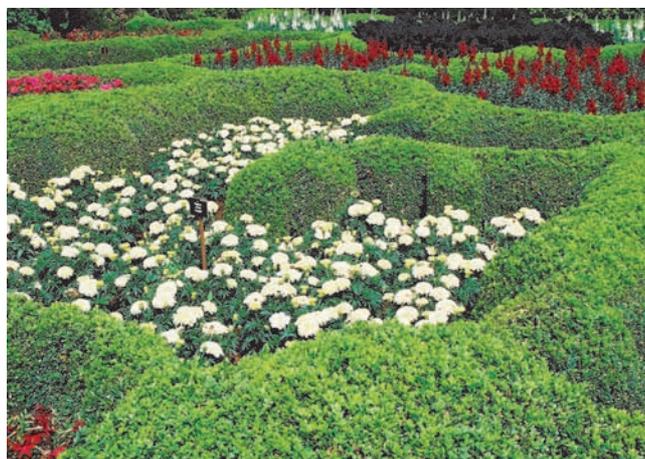
Nuneham Old Church, designed by 'Athenian' Stewart for the 1st Earl Harcourt. There will be an Open Day for the church on Sunday 13 September, and a planned visit for CB300 next June (photo Joanna Matthews)

Katie Campbell: Italian Gardens and Landscape Design Today, 12 March

Dr Katie Campbell gave us a most unusual yet fascinating talk in which she drew parallels between 16th–18th century gardens of Tuscany and some of the best known (and possibly most controversial) gardens and urban landscapes of the 20th–21st centuries. Campbell's thesis revolved around three distinct garden styles that she has identified as originating in northern Italy – she calls these 'Humanist', 'High Renaissance' and 'Baroque'. These, she argued, draw on very different underlying philosophies and are represented in the form and layout of the gardens.

The Tuscan garden of Villa Gamberaia epitomises the Humanist garden and the move away from the enclosure of the medieval *hortus conclusus* with the insertion of a long axis passing directly across the front of the villa and penetrating into the wider landscape beyond. The underpinning idea of the Humanist garden is centred on a concept of spiritual harmony with nature and the environment and, in this sense, argued Campbell, the small formal patches of garden embracing the local flora at the front of Jarman's cottage were like 'parterres' foregrounding a distant horizon which set the compass of the garden in all its aspects. Other modern gardens said to belong to the genre included Thomas Church's iconic Californian garden, El Novillero (Donnell Garden) created 1947–9. Here a kidney-shaped swimming-pool and sun loungers famously set the foreground of views outward from the garden into the Californian landscape beyond. The ephemeral 'dew gardens' created by Christopher Parkin were also placed here – shaping patterns in the dew being a way of connecting with an elemental nature.

If the underlying theme of the Humanist garden is the unity of garden, landscape and nature, then the gardens of the 'High Renaissance' are best defined by concepts of order and allegory. Gardens such as the Villa di Castello in Florence, created in the early 16th century, introduced an intellectual component, with Etruscan and classical styles of sculpture and the overt control of water the most obvious design features. The gardens at Villa Castello, and also at Villa d'Este near Rome, are set out on a grid pattern which Campbell paralleled with the work of UK contemporary designers such as Christopher Bradley Hole who utilise a 'natural' (or informal) planting palette set within a grid of paving which imposes 'order'. The strongly allegorical garden created by Ian Hamilton



Tom Stuart Smith's cell design at Broughton House (photo Jaqueline Mitchell)

Finlay at Little Sparta in Lanarkshire is also unarguably in the character of the 'High Renaissance'; as is Kim Wilkie's 'Orpheus garden' created for the Duke of Buccleuch at Boughton House, Northamptonshire in 2009.

In the 'Baroque' garden the requirements of intellectual order are replaced with a heightened sense of sensuality in which nature overpowers man. Grottoes which are misshapen, dazzling and surprising replace classical statuary and can be considered as the dominant architectural device. Perhaps the most famous Baroque garden in northern Italy is at Bomarzo. Here, the leaning house (level floors and sloping windows) disturb our perception of natural order – enormous animals and the head of Orcas, into whose open mouth one might be tempted to walk, further confound the visitor. Sadly, much of the allegorical understanding of this garden has been lost, but working in the same mould, suggested Campbell, was the Brazilian architect Burle Marx who created amorphous gardens which expressed a strong desire to provoke. The many projects carried out by the Dutch urban design company West 8, and the simple planting of birch trees outside Tate Modern by Kienast Vogt in 2007 could also be considered examples of this style suggested Campbell.

Other 'modern Renaissance' trends noted were Tom Stuart Smith's design at Boughton House, in which cell structures are reproduced in the shape of beds; Beth Chatto's gravel garden, in which plants are chosen to suit a particular environment; and ecological trends such as the creation of green walls and the greening up of industrial sites. In the end though, isn't everything connected to, and inspired by some sort of relationship with everything else? This was a fascinating and most enjoyable talk giving us plenty to think about. *Beverley Lear*



Looking down the watercress beds. Note the dividing boards made of elm, the partitions lifted to increase the rate of flow (photo Will Holborow)

Visit to Ewelme Watercress Beds, 25 April

Seventeen members of the OGT spent a sunny afternoon visiting these historic watercress beds, which once sent their produce to Covent Garden. Following a short film (produced by Frank Bullock in 1964) of their history and the way in which the watercress was sown and harvested, we toured the beds and the adjacent wild flower meadow, which is now community land and used for educational purposes. The way in which the plant was produced endured for generations and was fascinating. ‘Pinches’ of the tops of watercress were sown in rows, and pushed under water to avoid damaging frost. The plants were reaped in the autumn, the bunches (or ‘hands’) sprayed with water in the packing shed to keep them fresh, then placed in 5kg baskets for transport



to market via the railway at Watlington. In 1964 they fetched 8d per ¼lb; today they are not allowed to sell the watercress that grows here because of run-off pollution from the road nearby. Commercial production stopped at Ewelme in the late 1980s, but the watercress beds were restored by volunteers in the early 1990s and the site bought under the ownership of the Chiltern Society in 2000. Nowadays a dedicated team of volunteers, including the very knowledgeable trio who took us round – Anne, Keith and Kate – maintain the site.

Jaqueline Mitchell

Visit to Thenford Arboretum, 9 May

On a glorious summer afternoon, members of the OGT enjoyed a visit to this newly created arboretum and gardens. Self-guided with a map, we were able to see the highlights of the grounds: medieval fish ponds, two large ponds with, on our visit, a family of swans; a long rill in between rows of conifers running down to a stone bridge; sculpture ‘rooms’; an 18th-century walled garden with box hedging tulip beds (on our visit in May) and including a beautiful bronze and steel water sculpture by William Pye encircled by beech hedging (unfortunately the wind was too strong for this to be in operation, as visitors would have risked a soaking!). Lord and Lady Helseltine have built up the arboretum, with its extensive collection of trees and shrubs, over 3,500 in all, over a number of years, and continue to do so – the rock garden is their latest project. They have also amassed some excellent modern sculpture (aside from the Pye), including works by Elizabeth Frink, *Wounded Elephant* by Ronald Rae, Philip Jackson’s *Reading Chaucer*, Michael Ayrton (1921–75)’s *The Minotaur*, a row of wooden shells, and beside the lake a huge pair of steel swans.

Jaqueline Mitchell



Botanic Gardens by Sarah Rutherford (Shire, 2014)

Sarah, Vice-Chair of Buckinghamshire GT, began her career in the Oxford Botanic Garden as a trainee horticulturalist and botanist, before going on to Kew Gardens for more training, then turning to historic landscapes and becoming an Inspector of Historic Parks and Gardens for English Heritage (as it was then), before finally turning freelance. This, her 6th Shire book, concisely tells the history of botanic gardens. The story starts with the need for trainee doctors to be able to recognize the plants from which medicines could be made. The earliest recorded such place was in Italy, where the garden was attached to the University of Padua, then France, and finally the University of Oxford’s 1621 garden. Sarah goes on to examine other botanic gardens around much of the world. She also describes how their purpose changed, botanists being charged with finding plants that might be grown commercially, rather than just medicinal ones, up until the present day, when botanic gardens’ value are as living museums, with specialist or historic collections of plants.

Joanna Matthews

Visit to Compton Verney, 18 July

Members of OGT and Oxford Tree Group enjoyed an informative visit to Compton Verney, where we were guided round the Grade II* Capability Brown landscape by Head Gardener Gary Webb. Owned for generations by the Verney family, the estate fell into disrepair until in 1993 it was bought by The Peter Moores Foundation, which gifted it to the Compton Verney House Trust which manages it today. Compton was a medieval village, but the Verney family rebuilt the estate, the house being remodelled by Robert Adam and the grounds by Capability Brown in the 1760s.

Brown was greeted by a formal garden, a canal (both of which he removed) and woodland on the far side of the lake. He set about naturalising the landscape, adding footpaths with staged viewing points around the extended lake, creating coppices and cover for game, and building a new bridge and, in 1772, a chapel (Grade I). The designer's aim, Gary Webb told us, had been to create 'nature perfected' and to plant species native to the local landscape. The Wellingtonia Avenue, planted in the 1850s was the principal carriage drive to the house until after the Second World War. The other side of the bridge, the Trust has (with a local farmer) replanted two fields, one of which is sown with wild flowers and trees – mainly oak, with ash and a few lime – positioned according to an early 18th-century plan. A feature of Compton Verney today is its use of the historic landscape setting for modern sculpture and land art. This summer this includes *Drift* by Laura Ellen Bacon, and Fay Claridge's harvest effigy *Kern Baby* beside the lake. We also visited the Brown chapel, which has the tomb of Richard and Margaret Verney (c.1631, by Nicholas Stone). It is being restored as part of a £3m HLF project which will also include a new visitor and interpretation centre, reinstating footpaths and a new footbridge in front of the road bridge so as to afford a circular route around the lake, as was possible before the road became too busy. It is hoped that much of this will be ready for 2016, when Compton Verney will be a Brown hub.

The grounds, which include c. 1,000 trees, surveyed annually, are managed by Gary, one other employee, and four volunteers. The team's most recent project has been the installation of a Wild Flower Meadow on the west lawn, designed by Chelsea Best in Show winner Dan Pearson in a parterre design inspired by William Morris's 'Trellis'. There is a blog on the Compton Verney landscape at: <https://comptonverneylandscapegarden.wordpress.com/>.

Secret Gardens of the Cotswolds by Victoria Summerley & Hugh Rittson-Thomas (Frances Lincoln, 2014)

There have of course been a fair few books written on the many captivating gardens in the Cotswolds. This book is illustrated with fine photographs by Hugh Rittson-Thomas. I particularly enjoyed the many vistas, which I feel to be the essence of such gardens, set as they are in wonderful archetypal English countryside. The text is written largely from the point of view of the importance of the owners' input and passions in creating the gardens. The author appears to have had considerable good luck and skill at encouraging them to share fascinating details/facts/history about the gardens' development. The naming of key plants is to be commended, although of course this is in no way a practical gardening book. While 6 of the 20 gardens detailed are not open to the public, it is a privilege to 'wander round' them in a virtual sense.

Ian Gourlay

The Writer's Garden by Jackie Bennett (Frances Lincoln, 2014)

Although more 'coffee-table' than academic, this is a lovely book whose interest should not be underestimated. The range of authors and gardens is wide, 19 in all: poets John Clare, Ted Hughes and Rupert Brooke; children's authors Beatrix Potter and Roald Dahl; literary heavyweights Jane Austen, Dickens and Hardy among them. The geographical spread is also extensive, from the Scottish borders (Walter Scott and Robert Burns) to Devon (Agatha Christie). There is plenty of detail about each garden, but the real richness of this book is in bringing out the sense of emotional 'grounding' and well-being that the gardens brought the authors. Often these are places that assumed their significance early, the emotional longing coupled in adulthood with a sense of escapism: Churchill, for example, found solace at Chartwell, fed by his childhood experience of Blenheim and the potential to create a lake. Roald Dahl, who had seriously good connections in Hollywood and London, yearned for a simple life and moved to Gypsy Cottage, Great Missenden. A writing hut gave him the separation from family that he needed to write, and his observations of creepy crawlies eating his vegetables, flowers and fruit inspiration for his stories. Ruskin went to Brantwood in the Lake District when his life in Oxford had become overbearing. He used the garden for intensive nature studies, created distinct gardens within the garden, and laboured to make walls and paths.

Beverley Lear

Oxfordshire Gardens Trust

VISIT

Tickets for visits must be obtained in advance from the Secretary, OGT, 7 Church Way, Iffley, Oxford, OX4 4DY. Cheques payable to Oxfordshire Gardens Trust. Directions and parking arrangements sent with tickets.

10.00 am, Thursday 17 September David Harber's Sculpture Workshop and Display Garden, Aston Upton, OX11 9EE

Visit to David Harber's sculpture workshop at Blewburton Barns, followed by his display garden at The Dial House, Church Road, Blewbury, OX11 9PY, which is crammed with his favourite pieces. £3 members; £5 non-members. Pub lunch available at the Sweet Olive, Aston Tirrold. Maximum 30.

LECTURES

All lectures are at Kellogg College, 62 Banbury Road, Oxford. Doors open 6.30 pm, for lecture at 7 pm. Pay at the door: members £5/guests £7, including a glass of wine or juice.

Thursday 15 October The Society of Dilettantes

Dr Laura Mayer, Garden Historian, speaks about this group of influential young British aristocrats and their transformative impact on British taste and culture, including their sponsorship of *The Antiquities of Athens*, and its subsequent influence on Greek Revival landscapes.

Thursday 12 November Indian Influence on British Gardens and Garden Architecture

Diane James, garden historian, speaks about the development of Indian design in British gardens and garden architecture in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, including onion domes, chhajja cornices, minarets, temple pools and nandi statues, built by returning nabobs, officials and engineers.

Thursday 3 December The Green Man Trail in Oxfordshire

Tim Healey, freelance writer and broadcaster and band member of the Oxford Waits, tells us about the symbolism of the Green Man and its representation in Oxfordshire.

Other Events

Until 31 October Gnome and Away: Secrets of the Collection, Garden Museum

Exhibition of the Museum's unique collection of objects and art works before they are packed away until the new Museum opens in early 2017. Visitors can rifle through drawers, peer into packing boxes and explore over a hundred highlights from the collection, many of which have never before been publicly displayed.

From Tuesday 29 September The Gardens of the Kit Cat Club: Society Gardening in the Early 18th Century OUDCE 10 Week Course. Ref. V200-156. Cost £190. Details: <https://conted.ox.ac.uk/courses/details.php?id=V200-156>.

2–5pm Wednesday 21 October Bucks Garden Trust Visit to Stowe Landscape Gardens

Visit to the house led by Anna McEvoy, Stowe House Custodian & Research Manager. Dr Sarah Rutherford, Historic Gardens Consultant, and Gary Marshall, NT Archaeologist continue the tour into the gardens concentrating on developments in the Elysian Fields. £10 BucksGT members, £12 guests; must be booked in advance. Info and bookings: <http://bit.ly/1FLk0wo>.

Saturday 31 October GHS Autumn Study Day: Masonic Symbolism in Gardens, Freemasons' Hall, London

Researchers from the UK and Europe will examine this complex subject. Further details: Robert Peel: rma.peel@btopenworld.com.