

Lincolnshire Gardens Trust Newsletter

Spring/Summer 2021

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Chairman's Letter



As gardens gradually open their gates once again across the county – I write full of hope and expectation that we are beginning to see daylight at the end of the tunnel, with the horrendous

Covid pandemic retreating and lockdown easing. If we were in any doubt as to the significance of gardens, this last most difficult year has underlined how much we need our green space, designed landscapes, gardens and allotments for peace of mind and mental health, let alone exercise, well-being and visual pleasure.

Naturally, I am preaching to the converted here! I hope members will support LGT trustees in their renewed determination to 'sell' the benefits of gardening and, in addition, spread the word about the fascinating stories and attractions of Lincolnshire's special and historic gardens to a much wider audience, including schools and colleges.

Nature does not stand still – neither do developers! Since spring 2020, the LGT conservation team has been consulted on what seems an ever-increasing number of planning applications. They liaise with and advise the hard-working conservation officers of The Gardens Trust team: Alison Allighan Conservation Casework Manager, Margie Hoffnung and new recruit Daniel Bowles working to protect those gardens and parks of national significance. LGT Trustees are not against new works, but they are determined to encourage approaches to

development that are sensitive and appropriate to historic locations and context. To that end LGT are also keen to support Local Government moves to improve their local lists of landscapes of significance, as Ian George explains in more depth in his article.

As I write, Her Majesty the Queen, the Royal Family and the whole country mourn the loss of HRH Prince Philip. Few realise that this life-long royal champion of the natural world, who fought for 64 years to conserve sporting green spaces and 'Fields in Trust' parks, also took a keen interest in gardens. Alan Titchmarsh

recently related how, in his 2003 book on 'Royal Gardeners', he had concluded that the Queen was more interested in her gardens than the less green-fingered Prince Philip. He subsequently received a furious royal letter, three closely typed pages detailing every significant improvement Prince Philip had made to the royal gardens at Windsor, Sandringham and Balmoral!

In October 1996, when both HM the Queen and the Duke attended the opening of the University of Lincoln campus, did they plant trees? Among many commemorative trees Philip planted, there are of course several in Lincolnshire



Prince Philip visiting Sutton on Sea in 1953

To join go to www.lincolnshiregardenstrust.org.uk then click on Membership and then the link to the Membership Form

which, with his passing, will now resonate with even more meaning. I believe there is at least one lime tree beside the Queen's Walk at RAF College Cranwell. Another tree in Central Park, Scunthorpe marks his visit to the town (June 1957), a Newton's apple at Kings School, Grantham (May 1973- though stolen by the next day) – probably also a tree at Bourne Grammar School (April 2013). Certainly, both Prince Philip and HM the Queen each planted a tree on the west lawn at Burghley House, to mark her 2012 Diamond Jubilee.

Among the many stories and photographs of Prince Philip's long life serving the country, he is especially remembered for visiting Sutton on Sea soon after the devastating 1953 tidal surge and flooding, to offer comfort and support to families affected by the loss of over 300 lives as well as livelihoods. After 50 years, he returned to commemorate Britain's worst 20th century natural disaster by unveiling a plaque at the Dunes Family Entertainment Centre in Mablethorpe. See a short video online: <https://www.itv.com/news/calendar/2021-04-09/the-duke-of-edinburgh-his-visits-to-yorkshire-and-lincolnshire>



Returning in 2003 to unveil a commemorative plaque

Thanks to conservation professional Liz Mayle for sharing her research in this newsletter on the in-depth story of the nationally important designer Sylvia Crowe and the Promenade Gardens at Sutton On Sea. Only last month, work began on new £6 million Colonnade, as Lincolnshire Live online reported: "Further local consultation will also be undertaken on wider improvements to the Pleasure Gardens area... sheltered seating, additional planting, new walkways, an improved range of play and fitness facilities alongside additional spaces for future events, markets, performance, and other sports or recreation uses." So it would seem appropriate that a Mediterranean tree that also grows in Corfu where the royal prince was born – perhaps

Genista aetnensis (the Mount Etna broom, a good small tree for providing summer colour seen growing in Skegness); *Pinus pinaster* (maritime pine); (*Quercus ilex*) Holm Oak; or *Arbutus Unedo* (strawberry tree) might withstand east coast winds; – and be planted as a lasting tribute to HRH Prince Philip.

Please make sure you have paid your subscription to be able to book your place at the upcoming LGT events which will be carefully organised with social distancing still in mind, and fingers crossed this time will go ahead without problems. Remember also to check the LGT website and the LGT Facebook page for regular update of news, photos and information. So read on – and then pass it on to someone who might be interested to become a member to support our county garden heritage!

I cannot wait to see you all again soon in June as we visit Lincolnshire gardens at Sutton on Sea! Be sure to book a place.

Steffie Shields

More Protection for our Heritage

Lincolnshire has been chosen as one of 22 areas taking part in a national pilot scheme to help better understand and enhance existing records of our locally important buildings, monuments and places.

Funded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), the local heritage list campaign will involve all ten local authorities in the Greater Lincolnshire area

and will also involve Heritage Lincolnshire.

Ian George, Historic Places Manager at Lincolnshire County Council, says, 'This is such an important project – enabling us to have a record of all the locally important heritage assets across the historic county. It will capture information about buildings, structures, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes which the county's residents feel are important

but which don't qualify for national listing or registration.'

The project will have a dedicated officer for twelve months. The officer will be hosted by Heritage Lincolnshire in Heckington. The aim will be to get local people and community groups to nominate assets for addition to the local list. Then the conservation officer in each local authority will assess the nomination for its heritage value. Every asset which is nominated will be added to the county's Historic Environment Record via a new module which is being built specifically for the purpose.

The government has announced its intention to make changes to the way the planning system works. It is hoped that greater design input will be one outcome of its changes and it is setting up a Build Beautiful Commission to ensure this happens. The campaign to improve local listing across the country will feed into the development of new Design Codes which will help local planning authorities ensure design and architecture does indeed result in better outcomes.

In order to make their pilot project a success the County Council is keen for members of the LGT to take part and nominate parks, gardens and designed landscapes for local listing. Hopefully this will provide members with another reason to get out and about over the summer and visit some of our county's beautiful places.



Ian, with his wife Elizabeth, enjoying the gardens at Belton House in summer 2020



Lincolnshire Gardens Trust

Good news for garden researchers exploring local heritage who find it difficult to travel to visit the Lincolnshire Archives in Rumbold Street, Lincoln: the **Lincolnshire Historic Environment Record** has gone digital and is now available online. <https://heritage-explorer.lincolnshire.gov.uk/> You can use search terms of single words or phrases such as site types, place names, or time periods, eg Roman Roads. Each record in the database has its own unique record number, and can be found by searching on this number, prefixed by the record type code (MLI for monuments, finds, sites and buildings, ELI for events, surveys and archaeological investigations).

Also See Ian George's article opposite.

In 2020 National Heritage Lottery funding was secured for a major project to reconnect parts of the **Belton estate** which had become fragmented. The National Trust and the Woodland Trust are working together to link the park around Bellmount with Londonthorpe Woods on the edge of Grantham. There are also plans to restore the HE Grade II* listed tower and add interpretation.

Appreciating that traditional orchards have been in decline, and are under threat, East Lindsey

District Council has a new project '**Bearing Fruit**' to increase bio-diversity having secured funding from Natural England which will see 10 new orchards across the area including Louth. Residents will be encouraged to get involved with managing the orchards to help create new habitats for the future.

Over the last year, **LGT have objected to proposals** that might have impacted detrimentally on views and public appreciation at Grimsthorpe Park (HE Grade I), Stoke Rochford Park (HE Grade II) and most recently the iconic Victoria Jubilee Clock Tower (HE Grade II) on the central roundabout in Skegness beside the Promenade Gardens (HE Grade II).

LGT continues to be consulted by Historic England whose experts have been focusing on surveying several of Lincolnshire's historic parks and gardens with a view to possibly including them to the Register of Parks and Gardens if considered of special and national historic significance. We have welcomed and supported these moves, sending in reports to Historic England with LGT's local knowledge and archive information.

Although the park at **Gate Burton Hall** in West Lindsey has good historic interest as an example of a landscape park dating from the second half of the C18, Historic England concluded that its interest lies primarily in its collection of significant buildings: the hall and the church and the banqueting house 'Chateau'. The park itself falls short of the level of interest required for inclusion on the Register. However, the good news is that the walled garden at Gate

Burton Hall is considered an interesting example of its type from the late-C18 /early-C19, retaining features giving good evidence of its use, and with strong group value with other designated assets on the estate and has now been listed at Grade II. To date we await Historic England's decisions on the following sites: Greatford Hall, South Kesteven; Holton Hall, West Lindsey; Holbeck Manor, East Lindsey; and Norton Place, West Lindsey.

Uffington Park near Stamford in South Kesteven, laid out in the 1680s around the now demolished Uffington House with gardens dating to the mid-C19 by Samuel Gray, is now a registered Grade II park. We hope to share the reasons for designation and the story of the park in our next newsletter. (If you cannot wait till then, visit <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1470336>)



The Annual GT Weekend Conference and AGM due to be held in North Yorkshire in September has had to be cancelled due to the pandemic. However, do check all the marvellous garden tours and stimulating expert talks which you can access from the comfort of your own home! Visit <https://thegardenstrust.org/events-archive/> online lectures/garden talks



Old Orchard, Welby

Sutton on Sea Pleasure Gardens and Colonnade

Sutton on Sea Pleasure Gardens colonnade and colourful beach huts are a special place to be. When the colonnade was cordoned off for health and safety reasons and beach huts removed, it was realised that not only was this iconic local structure and the beach huts at risk, but that the gardens were too. Once research was underway, it became apparent that this was not only a much cherished place for locals and visitors, but also a garden that may well be of national interest as a designed landscape. This article is based on the research undertaken support an application to Historic England to give further consideration to listing the colonnade, but also to consider listing the pleasure gardens for listing too.

Sylvia Crowe (1901-1997) is one the most important and influential landscape architects of the twentieth century. Her commissions ranged from small courtyards to huge infrastructure projects. The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography states that ‘many of her works were indeed great in scale’, but also reveals that one of her first major commissions in 1945, after the Second World War was to work on the reclamation of sand dunes in Lincolnshire damaged by wartime gun emplacements’.¹ So the Lincolnshire coast was well-known to Crowe before she was commissioned to design pleasure gardens in 1954. In fact, Crowe designed three coastal gardens along a four mile stretch of our county coastline at the same time, including the Dune Gardens, Mablethorpe and also Bohemia Caravan Camp (now Sutton Springs, but this garden no longer exists).² The Museum of English Rural Life (MERL) which incorporates the Landscape Institutes Library holds a file with two reports compiled by Crowe herself, and these provide detailed information about her work in respect of the new pleasure gardens at Sutton on Sea.³

There had been a pleasure garden and colonnade at Sutton on Sea since 1938 ⁴, which had a paddling pool, bowling green, recreational sports areas, and ornamental gardens. The gardens were severely damaged on the night of the 31 January 1953, when a combination of high spring tides and a severe storm over the North Sea caused a huge storm tide which breached sea defences along the coastlines of England, Scotland, Belgium, and the Netherlands, with the loss of many lives. Documentary sources confirm that the 1930’s pleasure garden also suffered major devastation, with only a section of colonnade, a public toilet and a café surviving this disaster. The local economy relied heavily on tourists coming to enjoy the town’s famous golden sandy beaches. Without a pleasure garden, the economy of the small town would suffer.

Mablethorpe & Sutton Urban District Council acted quickly. Designs for the new Sutton on Sea Pleasure Grounds and Colonnade were prepared by Sylvia Crowe, and her assistant, Ivor Cunningham (1928-2007), who went on to become a notable architect in his own right. Crowe’s reports give detailed insight as to her brief. She describes the site conditions as ‘sodden ground with sea water, overlaid with sand and strewn with broken sea defences. All vegetation was killed’, and that ‘The problem was to re-establish plant life and bring back the sea-side attractions, on which the livelihood of the community depended, with the least possible delay’ and also that she ‘was briefed at the end of September 1953, contracts were let in February 1954’ and reveal she had less than eight months to complete the works as the gardens needed as the gardens had to be open by Whitsuntide 1954. So with a tight budget, and even tighter timescale, her plans for the new garden needed to address a number of design issues, including sea wall defences, incorporating a new colonnade whilst retaining the section of the 1938 colonnade, leisure, and sporting facilities for all ages, including a new paddling pool, bowling green, tennis courts and planting for a harsh coastal climate.

In addition to the bleak and devastated site conditions, Crowe faced other design issues. The site lay behind the new sea defences, whose

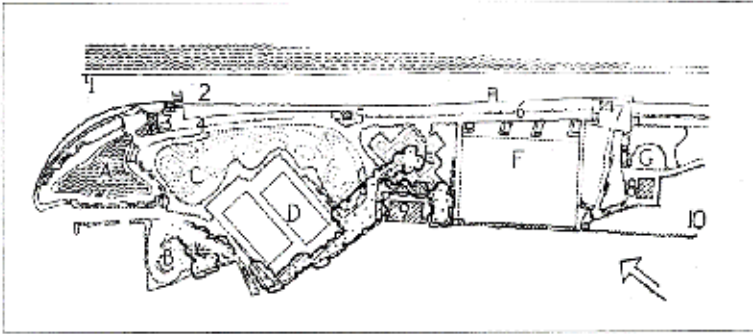


Fig.33 An interlocking design for a small public garden containing many uses. Sutton-on-Sea. A. Children's boating and paddling pool; B. Children's theatre; C. Putting green; D. Hard tennis court; E. Flower garden; F. Bowling green; G. Tea lawn; I. Sea wall; L. Promenade; J. Ice cream kiosk; K. New colonnade; S. Attendant's office; 6. Old colonnade; 7. Pavilion; 8. Dressing café; 9. Existing public conveniences; 10. Sand dune

Image 1 Sylvia Crowe's Plan, labelled, showing the proposed layout for the Pleasure Gardens at Sutton-on-Sea, from her book *Garden Design*, 1994, page 262.

12 ft high ramp ‘had to be incorporated into the garden’ and that ‘special precautions had to be taken to ensure that there was no weakening of lowering of the defences at anytime during construction’. Her first task was to design a new colonnade onto the existing landward bank of the sea defence, whilst incorporating what remained of the original colonnade at the southern end of the park in order that beach chalets could be erected on its roof. Works commenced in March 1954 during the spring period of storms and high tides. The new section of colonnade, constructed of reinforced concrete (this material being responsible for its structural failure just over 60 years later) and built by Sir Robert McAlpine, was attached to the old colonnade. Crowe decided to work the design of the new colonnade, using buildings to form a break ‘between the new and the old allowing a change to be made from the original design to one of lighter appearance’, and that because the site was small and in order ‘to make the most of the space the Attendant’s office, ice cream kiosk and bowls pavilion have all been built within the structure of the colonnade’ and ‘the ice cream kiosk was built to overhang a small children’s pool’. The whole of the reinforced concrete colonnade, retaining walls and roofing was completed in the space of less than three months and the first chalets were installed and occupied by Whitsuntide only four or so months after construction first began.

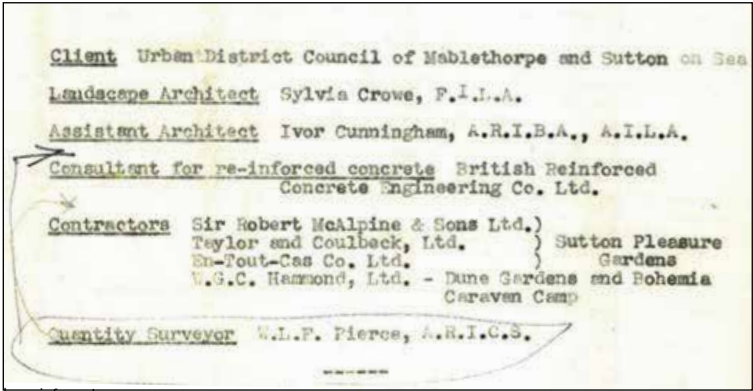


Image 2 Extract of Crowe's Report showing those involved included Sir Robert McAlpine.

A drawing is held in the RIBA Collections for the post-modern colonnade with its Ice Cream Kiosk at Sutton-on-Sea. The drawing consists of two coloured drawings dated 1953 and are attributed to architect Ivor Cunningham.



Image 3 Part of Ivor Cunningham's sketch for the colonnade. <https://www.architecture.com/image-library/RIBApix/gallery-product/poster/design-for-a-new-colonnade-and-park-for-suttononsea-seafront-promenade-mablethorpe-lincolnshire-pers/posterid/RIBA36595.html?tab=framed>



Image 4 Photograph of the ice cream kiosk forming the northern end of the new colonnade. <https://www.architecture.com/image-library/RIBApix/image-information/poster/children-paddling-at-the-seafront-gardens-at-mablethorpe-lincolnshire/posterid/RIBA38618.html>.

Source of images: RIBA Collection

A photograph, which attributes Crowe as the architect, is also held at the RIBA Collection and shows the northern end of the completed colonnade. Comparing this with the drawing by Cunningham shows that the first floor, level with the promenade, did not form a part of the final design. Neither did the post-modern beach huts. The speed with which the structure needed to be built perhaps explains why post-modern concrete beach huts, as shown in Ivor Cunningham’s sketch drawings, were never built, and instead, beach huts of timber were constructed.

The children’s paddling pool of the 1938 garden was located to the southern end of the site with a putting green at the northern end. The new paddling pool was located at the northern end of the site, next to the pullover. This was because the bowling green of the former gardens was located here, but suffered with sea-spray breaking over the pullover. The paddling pool was a gift from the Kin Club of Canada, to commemorate the fortitude of the people of Sutton on Sea after the flood. It was specified that it should be in the shape of a maple leaf. Crowe states that she took liberties with the design resulting in a ‘variety unknown’ but was based on.

A slightly wind-blown version of a Maple Leaf (reminiscent of Acer Griseum) was evolved which has fitted very pleasantly into the general design. A small extension of the pool for smaller children was based on the form of the Maple Fruit. One end runs under the colonnade so that children can play here where it is widened out to from a dry place for the children to play in wet weather.

Also, she notes, ‘At this point the original concrete ramp of the sea wall has been left exposed, and a commando net fastened to it for the children. This refers to the landward sloping sea bank forming the croft beside the Ice Cream Kiosk seen in both the Cunningham drawings and the RIBA photograph showing the Ice Cream Kiosk. The paddling pool was opened officially on the 6th of August by an official representing the High Commission of Canada.

Crowe describes the Sutton-on-Sea pleasure gardens in her book, *Garden Design* (2 ed. 1994)⁵ as ‘An interlocking design for a small public garden containing many uses’. Features included a children’s boating and paddling pool, children’s theatre, putting green, hard tennis courts, flower garden, bowling green, and a tea lawn, ice cream kiosk, new colonnade, attendant’s office, pavilion. Into this design, she incorporated the existing public toilets and a café, which, along with the southerly end of the original colonnade are all that survived from the original 1930’s park following the flood.

The gardens were given a nautical flavour by using buoys, anchors, a ship’s wheel, and a mast rigged with code flags and storm signals, These were obtained from a co-operative ship-breaking firm in Grimsby and were painted in the traditional nautical colours of black, white, grey, clear yellow and red, a colour scheme which has been carried through all of the buildings.

Both report files containing Crowe’s notes give full details of the material and plants used in the garden. Rough retaining walls of ‘Rock-faced’ walling, and paths of khaki colourcrete in various finishes, exposed aggregate, cobble, and asphalt. Turf was ‘sea-washed’ for putting and bowling greens. Main planting species consisted of Acer Pseudo- Platanus, Hyppophae, Tamarix, Euonymus, Japonica, Clearia Haastii, Senecio grayi, Eryngium, Centranthus, Stative latifolia, Armeria and Santolina. Sheltered area had roses and herbaceous plants. The list of suitable planting seems way ahead of its time, and the Dune Gardens still have this same planting, showing just how successful and appropriate to its exposed location Crowe’s ideas were some seventy years ago. The gardens opened officially on the 6th of August 1954. The cost of the garden and colonnade was £32,362.

The War Memorial, built in memory of the men who died in World War 1 from the parishes of Sutton on Sea and Trusthorpe, was designed by William Richard Gleave of Nottingham.⁶ This cost £320 raised through public conscription and events, and was unveiled on Armistice Day 1920 by Maj. James Henry Hadfield of Alford. There are conflicting reports from documentary sources as to whether the memorial suffered damage in the 1953 floods. The memorial was nevertheless relocated as part of the new gardens. Crowe’s plan does not include the memorial garden to the north of the promenade. No notes have been found showing her involvement in works north of the pullover. There are some clues that suggest she was responsible, in part, for some works in this area. The main clue is the materials she used for walls in new park, which was a distinctive rock faced walling, and that this same material is used for walls to the north side of the promenade. Another clue comes in the form of an excerpt from Michael Credland’s book *First World War Memorials of Lincolnshire*, and the entry for Sutton on Sea states that ‘Following the 1953 East Coast Floods the promenade, pullover and gardens were reconstructed and the memorial relocated and rededicated on Sunday 26th June 1955.’⁷ A further source found at the Lincolnshire County Council Historic Environment Record (HER)⁸ has been located (since the war memorial was listed) referencing a newspaper article in the Lincolnshire Standard, dated Saturday 2nd July 1955, a year after the pleasure gardens were formally opened. This states,

Sutton Garden of Peace RE-DEDICATED

Last Sunday, Sutton on Sea war memorial, re-erected in a new setting having been demolished by the 1953 floods, was re-dedicated. Today, it dominates the scene (lower picture), on the pullover setting of flowers in a rock garden. The design of the gardens is the work of U.D.C Surveyor, MR. Eric Jordan (Pictures by W. Tramm And Son).

The same article goes on to state that ‘The architect who drew up the plans for the new gardens after the 1953 Floods did so by making the retaining wall to the raised rock garden around the memorial in the shape of a cross’. So it seems that Crowe did indeed contribute to the memorial garden, setting out its shape, and must have been laid out when works to recreate the pullover and sea defences between February and May 1954 was undertaken. A year later, the borough surveyor must have completed the gardens once the memorial was moved.

For one person to design and construct three coastal gardens in a year despite poor site conditions and serious time constraints is indeed an amazing achievement. Sylvia Crowe’s notes show how important the work she undertook was in revitalising Sutton on Sea after the flood. Despite some alterations, the layout of the gardens has not changed since 1954. There have been some additions, including infilling the paddling pool under the ice cream kiosk, which itself, has been extended. A petule shaped memorial and the nautical masts have been removed from around the paddling pool. A boat feature was installed in the last twenty five years and a rose pergola (based it seems on the earlier 1938 pleasure garden). But the

gardens are still entirely recognisable as Crowe’s design. The gardens are a unique survival and an excellent example of the work of one of the most notable landscape architects of the twentieth century.

At the time of writing, the demolition of the colonnade has commenced. East Lindsey District Council has committed to saving the paddling pool. It is clear from documentation that some inspiration for the new colonnade has been taken from Ivor Cunningham’s sketches. However the current planning application does not make clear what is proposed for the gardens. Last year, plans for the gardens showed that Crowe’s gardens were to be replaced, ironically, with a garden in the style of Crowe, based on the Dune Gardens at Mablethorpe. It is hoped that the opportunity to reflect upon Crowe’s achievement will be fully considered. Instead of a plan for garden in Crowe’s style, perhaps a more appropriate response would be to reinstate her gardens as homage to the work of one of the 20th centuries most notable landscape architects, and one who revived the fortunes of this small coastal town in record time, despite the difficult circumstances, after the devastation of the 1953 flood.



A recent image (above) shows the colonnade with beach huts above. This shows the Ice Cream Kiosk, seen in the RIBA photo, but now with infill to its left and right, and some of the arcades of the colonnade prior to being temporarily infilled with plywood following structural report recommendations in 2018. Since this time, the remaining arcades have also been blocked with plywood for the same reason.



Image taken June 2020, above, showing the arcades of the colonnade now completely infilled with temporary plywood boards, as is the undercroft on the sea defence wall. The bridge and paddling pool are still extant, but part of the pool beneath the ‘floating’ kiosk have also been infilled.

Currently obtaining photographs over the garden is not possible, due the colonnade being inaccessible. The colonnade is fenced off from the promenade. The following photographs show the site as currently exists, with temporary boards infilling the colonnade. Reference to old photos assists much more in terms of design, which remains unaltered except for some accretive additions to the ice cream kiosk.



Photo taken from south end of promenade, on top of the colonnade (original 1930’s section) looking north over the gardens. The structural plan of the garden has not changed since constructed in 1953. The bowling green is seen in the middle of the photo, beyond is the flower garden, and beyond that, the tennis court. Note the ribbons on the railings, a symbol of the feelings of the local community about the loss of the beach huts and colonnade.



The maple leaf children’s paddling pool, surrounded by modern fencing, seen from the northern end of the promenade looking west over the pool.



Ice Cream Kiosk, and between the kiosk and the bridge, the continuation of maple leaf pond. To the right, the putting green, now used as a picnic area. The Ice Cream Kiosk has been infilled and has a slightly lower set down extension to its left (black door). There is temporary boarding to the sea bank hiding the covered children’s play area.

Liz Mayle is a Historic Building Consultant and part-time conservation officer in Lincolnshire. She has a strong interest in seaside history, and grew up in Mablethorpe, visiting the gardens at Sutton on Sea regularly since 1964 and owns a beach hut in Sutton on Sea.

Resources and Reference

Historic Environment Record (HER)

Lincolnshire Archives

Old Maps online

Landscape Institute Archive and Library
(Museum of English Rural Life)

Sylvia Crowe Folder - Reference No: AR CRO PF/A/8
(two reports - various extracts - appended in full)

RIBA Collection – Ivan Cunningham Drawings

The Book of the Lincolnshire Seaside, David N. Robinson

The Buildings of England, Lincolnshire, N. Pevsner,
R. Harris & N. Antram, Penguin, 1989

Historic England – Listing Decision Reference 1460038
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¹ <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-67305>

² The landscape architect Maria Teresa Parpagliolo Shephard in Britain: her international career 1946–1974
Sonja Dümpelmann, Pages 94-113.

³ SR CRO/PF/A/8 Two reports from Landscape
Institute Archives.

⁴ Date of opening of the first pleasure garden at Sutton on
Sea was in 1938. A film of the event exists at <http://www.lincsfilm.co.uk/listings/listing061080.html>.

⁵ Plan of Sutton on Sea Pleasure Gardens, by Sylvia
Crowe, taken from her book, Garden Design, 1994, page
262. Although this plan appears in other books by Crowe,
this plan is annotated, and each area or building is named
on this plan.

⁶ First World War Memorials of Lincolnshire, Michael
Credland, Society for Lincolnshire History & Archaeology,
2014. Entry 238.

⁷ Ditto

⁸ Kindly supplied by Richard Watts, Senior Historic
Environment Officer (Records), Lincolnshire County
Council, from the Lincolnshire War Memorial Project.



Planting woodlands for future generations

WILDLIFE

CAROLINE BINGHAM visited Monks Wood, part of the Ashing Lane Nature Reserve, near Dunholme, created by the Nettleham Woodland Trust.

- 1: Rod Newborough seated under The Monks Oak
- 2: Information boards guide visitors on flora and fauna
- 3: The Beatles Pond

MY GUIDE was Rod Newborough, one of the charity's trustees, who after a career of more than 40 years with the Forestry Commission decided to also volunteer a good deal of his retirement time helping to create these native woodlands close to his home in Scothorn.

We met at the nature reserve car park at the end of Ashing Lane and although Rod had pre-warned me that the ground would be very wet, a week had passed since we had spoken and several areas which had been under water had now drained and were comparatively dry. We joined other walkers who were enjoying the bright but chilly spring weather. The reason for my approach to the Trust was to try to find a woodland orientated project which *Lincolnshire Life* could support as part of our 60th Anniversary celebrations this year.

Walking along with someone who knows every corner of the reserve – in fact, probably every tree which has been planted – gave me insights well beyond admiring the scale and variety of features which have been included.



We entered the reserve through the Threshold Gateway, a timber archway which was designed by local school children to echo aspects of the architecture of Lincoln Cathedral. There is bench seating inside and information boards which give a timeline of the creation of the reserve. Ashing Farm has been owned by the Pickering family since the 1930s when their 50 acres included the land where Pickering's Meadow is today. This land is heavy clay where several areas seasonally flood and was gifted to the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust (LWT) by Elsie Pickering in 1984.

LWT began tree planning on land adjoining the meadow in 1991 to create Watts Wood, which was also gifted to the Trust in 2005 by Sylvia Watts. Nettleham Woodland Trust was formed in 2006 as a community group dedicated to the development and management of woodland around Nettleham, with a 125-year management lease from LWT being granted on the Ashing Lane reserve in 2010.

A straight pathway leads from the gateway towards the The Monks Oak which was planted in memory of the local farming family who donated the land for this area of the reserve. More than 30,000 native trees and shrubs were planted by local volunteers between 2009 and 2012. Notably there are





ash, oak, birch, small-leaved lime and alder. Smaller trees include field maple, wild cherry, crab apple and hazel. The Lincolnshire Co-operative Wood features many species of willow which can tolerate the wet habitat.

While tree planting has been very successful, nature still dictates some of the success or failure, with a large grey squirrel population causing major damage to the tops of some trees. Rod explained that they gnaw bark around the top of the oak's trunk which dies back and then is toppled in strong winds. Rod pointed to several examples as we entered Watts Wood via Sylvia's Gate, named in memory of woodland volunteer Sylvia Wood. On the other hand birches and willows have self-planted in the woods and are thriving. Last year there was a beautiful show of Southern Marsh-orchids which have naturalised themselves on the reserve.

I was already getting a feel for the very close community links which are celebrated throughout the reserve, with people and organisations. Cathedral Copse was planted in 2017 to commemorate the 800th anniversary year of The Charter of the Forest, while the stone Book of Oaks monument marks those who pledged gifts of woodland oak timber for the restoration of the Cathedral roof. It is hoped that the 100 oaks which were planted in the area by the Nettleham Woodland Trust will one day be used in restoration work on the Cathedral. That will not be in Rod's, mine or even our grandchildren's time but they are monuments planted for future generations and centuries of Lincoln Cathedral.

The Beatles Pond is so named because a volunteer sold her treasured autographs of

- 4: Sylvia's Gate
- 5: Damage at top of tree caused by grey squirrels
- 6: Lincoln Cathedral Book of Oaks monument
- 7: Nigel Sardeson deer sculpture
- 8: The Threshold Footbridge with design inspired by The Humber Bridge
- 9: Rod under the living willow arch in the All Abilities Area
- 10: Lincolnshire Co-operative woodland lake

the Fab Four to fund the excavators to dig out what is now home to great-crested newts. Dragonflies are also prolific across the reserve from these ponds and wetlands.

It was too early in March for trees to be in bud but there were catkins and signs of plants and wildlife sensing the coming of spring. We saw a woodpecker, buzzard, plenty of smaller birds and pairs of geese beginning to nest at The Lake in the Lincolnshire Co-operative Wood. Rod explained that in spring and summer the verges and glades are ablaze with a huge variety of meadow flowers and alive with butterflies, bees and other insects. One of the ideas for a project which *Lincolnshire Life* could become involved with is to build a raptor house which would provide a high,

secure place for owls to nest. Hopefully, more on this to follow in a later edition.

There is always plenty of work for volunteers to undertake including coppicing, pruning, helping to maintain pathways and mowing. Signs ask visitors to be respectful of the countryside and its inhabitants but with numbers peaking in the summer months there is litter and dog waste which some people leave behind which needs to be collected. If you would like more information about becoming a volunteer there is more information on the Trust's website www.nettlehamwoodlandtrust.co.uk

Ashing Lane Nature Reserve is a great testament to the community effort which has embraced local partnerships and created this

haven of managed woodland and countryside on the doorstep for village communities north of Lincoln. Rod more than anyone knows that planting trees is an investment for future generations and as Lincolnshire has one of the lowest densities of woodland and trees among counties in the UK, the reserve is playing its part to help address this imbalance.

In his spare time Rod is a woodturner and craftsman and he has an anecdote in his *A Forester's Jottings* booklet which is sold in aid of the Trust, that two ladies spoke to him at a school autumn fayre after buying a wooden snowman: "We don't know your name, but we know where you live and we call you 'the tree man'." It's a title Rod is more than happy with. ■



Not Just a Walk in the Park *Tales from Beyond the Bothy*

An Introduction to Frazer Chapman, Treasurer LGT

After a rather uninspired grammar school education, Frazer left school at 16 to begin a horticultural apprenticeship with the Greater London Council (GLC) Parks Department. Why a horticultural apprenticeship? He wanted to work outside in London, and this pathway presented the opportunity to do so. He had an older friend who was undertaking a Royal Parks apprenticeship in Regents Park, and his description of work in the park seemed uninteresting to Frazer. It offered extraordinarily little variety and a rather ponderous training regime. Frazer preferred the opportunity to move around London's non-royal parks and pick up a wide range of experiences that the GLC offered. There was rivalry between the Royal and GLC parks, which sparked competition for excellence.

Frazer started work in Victoria Embankment Gardens in London. On the evening of his first day of work, the Lady Henry Somerset's statue of the Orphan Girl tucked away in the gardens was stolen, leaving only the plinth and a rather sad pair of bronze ankles. This statue would not be reinstated until the restoration of the gardens in the 1990s. Frazer mentions the theft because it is indicative of the decline of the public park from the end of the Second World War until, when? (It is still ongoing?)

During his early London years, Frazer worked in Kenwood House's grounds, Kenwood nursery, Golder's Hill Park and Hampstead Heath plus, Southwark Park. The work in London's parks provided an environment for him to understand what green space means to a city and its people. However, after a time, Frazer wanted more.

With an itch to travel growing and interest in London's parks waning, Frazer went to work on a kibbutz in Israel. Frazer's time on the kibbutz was spent working in the rose growing units, specifically looking after the large poly-tunnels and pruning the rose bushes for maximum production. Stems were cut each day and stored in large cooling units before being taken to Lod airport for shipping to Amsterdam flower markets. This enterprise was a profitable enterprise for the kibbutz. Frazer was able to visit the Golan Heights in the spring and marvel at the volume and varieties of wildflowers to be found. This time gave Frazer a lifelong interest in Middle Eastern culture.

London in the mid-1970s could be uninspiring and, with no reduction urge to travel Frazer, went to Australia. He arrived in Melbourne with £9.50 in his pocket and spent his first night in the Salvation Army's People Palace. The People



Fuchsia House, Royal Botanical Gardens, Sydney 1975

Palaces were a chain of hostels across Australia created to support people travelling around the continent. Quickly moving onto Tasmania, Frazer spent some time working in Hobart's parks and gardens before moving back to the mainland and Sydney, taking up a post in the city's Royal Botanical Gardens. Frazer looked after the Australian natives' section of the gardens, which allowed exploration of the continent's extraordinary flora and fauna. He had families of possums in his bothy. The venomous Sydney Red Back and Funnel Web spiders often took up residence in the garden's tap boxes; this offered a frisson of excitement when irrigation sprinklers were set up for watering. Frazer also remembers working high in the air on storm-damaged trees with chain saws whilst wearing shorts! Health and Safety was not an important issue for parks people. Frazer worked on significant landscaping projects for the City of Adelaide, plus working on search and rescue patrols to support pelicans. The birds were becoming hungry, weak and at-risk and trying to find water after several dry years. Adelaide remains one of his favourite cities.

Frazer travelled extensively throughout Australia and south-east Asia before returning to London at the end of the 1970s.

Taking up a post in Peckham Rye Park presented Frazer with the undeniable decline of the public park. The demise of the Parks Department and the integration of park management into Leisure Departments or Works Departments within local authorities robbed the nation's local authority parks of value and stature. Parks were an easy target for funding cuts, and

this, plus the loss of core horticultural skills, left public parks and urban greenspace in a precarious position. As the city park declined, the country park rose to prominence. New, well-designed country park visitor centres, and their safe visitor-friendly grounds, provided a welcome change from the litter-strewn, potentially unsafe, non-maintained inner-city park.

With his interest in amenity horticulture diminishing, Frazer worked for Community Service Volunteers, training long-term unemployed adults with hard landscaping skills to increase employment potential. He spent several years working on inner-city improvement projects, for example, many pop-up play areas. He was also involved in creating Culpeper Community Gardens and Sunnyside Community Gardens in Islington. These two projects remain active and have thrived for the past 35+ years. Frazer was responsible for one of the very early projects to try and preserve and manage Highgate Cemetery, specifically the New Cemetery. The site had been ravaged by Japanese Knotweed and many tombs had become dangerous. The project focused on protecting the asset and enabling access.

The latter part of the 1980's marked Frazer's return to local authority work and coincided with Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT). Frazer managed a fair portion of London's greenspace from Bloomsbury to Hampstead. However, the loss of most of the workforce following CCT and the accompanying lack of funding to support park work seemed to mark the collapse of the park and the culture of the public park. Lincoln's Inn Fields fell within Frazer's responsibility when

described as tent city in the press. Lincoln's Inn Fields was a no-go zone with hundreds of rough sleepers living in tents, slowly undermining the fabric of this historic site. It illustrated how far greenspace neglect and desolation had fallen.

In the early 1990s, Frazer abandoned amenity horticulture and spent a year working as a successful freelance photographer for several London charities.

The introduction of the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) in the 1990s seemed to offer a lifeline to the nation's parks. The restoration of several important historic parks, for example, Liverpool's Sefton Park, via HLF money, proved it was possible to bring the public park back from the abyss. This funding source raised the profile of the public park and illustrated how close we had come to losing these important designed landscapes.

Looking for new challenges, Frazer worked on city improvement projects for the Medway towns, including Rochester in Kent. He could work without the constraints of CCT and put together a small team of skilled horticultural practitioners. The urban improvement projects provided context for successfully entering Rochester into the city category for Britain in Bloom. Competing against the perennial winners of this award, Bournemouth and Eastbourne and other high profile tourist destinations, the town achieved third place. A not insubstantial feat. Frazer had a broad remit, including managing the grounds of Rochester and Upnor Castles plus the gardens of Eastgate House. The position provided the opportunity to explore the post-industrial wilderness of the Isle of Grain and the Thames estuary. For several years, Frazer put together a floral installation to promote Rochester's visitor attractions at the Kent County Show. He was always expected to take the Gold Award for this display and always did!



Rochester City of Sport Promotion 1995

In the late 1990s, Frazer was seconded to Medway Council's Social Services to survey the gardens and grounds of the department's many houses for supported living and respite. This move led to him being asked to troubleshoot and consequently restart an ailing horticultural therapy project.

In the 1990s, Frazer revaluated his relationship with horticulture. He began to think about the role the landscape plays in forming who we

are and how we interact with it and why. The existential development of our environment drew him. How we garden and why, how garden fashions rise and fall, or cease to be important. Frazer enrolled in the Architect Association School of Architecture's post-graduate, Conservation and Restoration of Historic Landscapes course.

The HLF had offered the public park a lifeline. At the end of the 1990s, Frazer contributed to the Regeneration of Public Parks book (Spon (2,000)) produced by the Landscape Design Trust and the Garden History Society.

Although Frazer's main interest was the public realm, he took up the Head Gardener/ Garden Manager role for the Swiss Garden in Bedfordshire. Frazer wanted to understand first-hand how the many components for preserving and conserving a designed heritage landscape fitted together. Sufficient funding, maintenance skills, the garden's history, the value of the asset and the understanding of the asset, plus the risk of damage by exploitation and the potential for a conflict of interests with stakeholders, all contributed towards undermining or strengthening the spirit of the property. There are many paths towards conservation, preservation and restoration and securing a legacy for a designed landscape. Frazer supervised the restoration of the grotto and fernery during his period in the garden, plus providing chats on the radio, including announcing an edition of Gardeners' Question Time! He managed the garden's wedding business which supported the garden's upkeep.

During this time, The Garden History Society (now the Garden Trust) asked Frazer to initiate, advise and support the Bedfordshire Gardens Trust (BGT). The BGT has grown from strength to strength and is now a respected and established trust.

In 2005, Frazer began working for Islington Council, looking after the city council's green space assets, from listed ironwork railings to restoring war memorials, from park benches to vernacular park buildings, from watercourses to important rockwork. Many local authorities did not know what their greenspace assets were, nor their value. An Islington project developed to catalogue, value and strategically plan the management and maintenance of their greenspace assets. Although many local authorities were hard-pressed financially in the early part of the new millennium, some inner London councils reaped the benefits of the building boom. The central London developments provided significant funding via Section 106 (S106) planning obligation money to support major greenspace improvement works.

S106 money offered the opportunity to work with English Heritage to restore the listed railings around St Luke's Churchyard in Old Street and, working with a paint archaeologist, to change their colour. War memorials in disrepair could be refurbished via S106. Following the refurbishment



Swiss Garden 2005

of a large war memorial in Spa Green Garden, Rosebery Avenue (adjacent to Sadler's Wells), Frazer used falconers working with Harris Hawks to protect the investment from spoiling by London's pigeons.

The work led to Frazer contributing to a CABE project to develop a mechanism for attaching a value to greenspace. (Making the Invisible Visible: the real value of park assets) (*The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment* (CABE) was an executive non-departmental public body of the UK government, established in 1999 and disbanded in 2010)

The financial meltdown in 2008 and the property crash put the brakes on the money available for many greenspace improvement projects throughout the country.

Between 2010 and 2019 Frazer worked in Peterborough. Initially refurbishing the city's play facilities via Play England's, Children's Play Initiative, he moved towards creating greenspace improvements through S106 and Landfill Communities Funding. Identifying green spaces and parks that may qualify for entering into the Green Flag Award (GFA) he prepared management plans, supported greenspace community groups and successfully guided some of the city's greenspaces towards achieving GFA status. In the latter part of the decade, Frazer managed Peterborough's allotment property folio. He has had a keen interest in the allotment movement throughout his career and enjoyed the diversity and individual characteristics of the city's sites. He supported the Peterborough Allotment Consortium and encouraged beekeeping, cutting down on plastic and reducing chemical use on sites. Nevertheless, he had problems with encouraging groups to take up no-dig cultivation though!

Frazer moved to Spalding in autumn 2016 and retired from full-time work in 2019. Retirement has offered time and opportunity to discover the fens and their history. Frazer has been interested in photography since childhood and has used the fens to rekindle this pursuit and to explore how he can interpret the spirit of fenland. He is a member of the Spalding Gentlemen's Society!

He remains interested in garden history and how we shape and relate to our environment.

25th Anniversary Annual Photographic Competition Results

Despite the 2020 Covid pandemic, with few gardens in the county open to the public during and after lockdown, Lincolnshire Gardens Trust were delighted to receive 126 digital entries of a high standard. Many emphasised how important our gardens and

wildlife have been to so many families during this difficult time. Judges: Caroline Bingham, Lincolnshire Life proprietor/editor, Garden Photographer Steffie Shields. Prizes donated by Lincolnshire County Council.

Main Prize: A picture taken in a Lincolnshire garden open at least once in 2020



1st Prize: £50 Daniel Rolit 'Baumber'



2nd Prize: £25 Daniel Rolit 'Doddington Bench'



3rd Prize: £10 Daniel Rolit 'Sculpture at Doddington'



Commended: Elisabeth Morris 'Daffodils in Central Park'

Junior Category - up to 16 years of age: *Let's get out There!*



1st Prize: £20 Jonathan Morris, aged 8 'Bee Collecting Pollen'



Highly Commended:
Izzy Schofield
'Amongst the Alliums –
tortoiseshell butterfly'

A Garden Personality - at work or play in the garden



1st Prize: £15 Elisabeth Morris 'Blackbird in Central Park'



Highly Commended: Heather Boothroyd 'Squirrel Eating Sunflower'

In my Lincolnshire Garden



1st Prize: £15 Lucienne Bennett
'Female Southern Hawker'



Commended: Elisabeth Morris 'A quiet hide-away! our grandson'

***Our thanks to all participants.
Do spread the word.
We are hoping for even more
entries next year!***

Taste of Lincolnshire



1st Prize: £15 donated by Lincolnshire Gardens Trust
Daniel Rolit 'Taste'

Plant Portrait



Special Prize: A year's subscription to
Lincolnshire Life Magazine Daniel Rolit 'Palm'



Highly Commended: Lucienne Bennett
'Asiatic Lily 'Red Power'

Events 2021

Postcodes, directions & updates will be on the website: www.lincolnshiregardenstrust.org.uk
All 2021 events are subject to change depending on government restrictions in place at the time. Restrictions may mean arrival has to be in small groups etc.
NB Pre-Booking is essential. Payments made for 2020 are carried over to 2021 events.
You will be contacted personally.

Tuesday 1st June 2021 11.30am or 2.00pm

LGT GOES TO THE SEASIDE!

Visit is in two parts both or just garden

A morning visit to Mablethorpe Queen's Park.

** (There may be parking charges in Mablethorpe.)

** Queen's Park car park address:

24 The Blvd, Mablethorpe LN12 2AD

Gather 11.30am before a wander round park: lunch independently (picnic or otherwise) then head for Marigold Cottage Sutton on Sea for 2.00pm start (5 min drive).

Marigold Cottage, Hotchin Road, Sutton-on-Sea, Lincs LN12 2NP

DIRECTIONS: Turn off A52 on High St at Cornerhouse Cafe. Follow road past playing field on R. Road turns away from the dunes. House 2nd on L.

Members £10; Non Members £12

which includes homemade tea and cakes.

Wednesday 7th July 2021 2.00pm

SUMMER-FLOWERING WILDFLOWER MEADOWS

Brightwater Gardens, Saxby, Market Rasen, Lincs. LN8 2DQ

Owner Chris Neave says: "Wildflower meadows are very topical at the moment and it is 10 years since we started creating our wildflower meadows here at Brightwater Gardens and Burial meadow. We started with fertile areas of ground and strong growing grasses however by haymaking and the addition of yellow rattle we are now well on the way the creating some pretty good meadow areas."

St Helen's Church will also be open. Steffie Shields will say a few words about a 'Capability' Brown connection.

Members £10; Non Members £12 to include refreshments

Tuesday 3rd August 2021 2.00pm - 4.00pm

AFTERNOON TEA WITH OUR LGT PRESIDENT CELEBRATING LGT'S 25 YEARS (1995 - 2020)

Willowholt, Folkingham, Sleaford, Lincs, NG34 0SA

Come and have some tea and cake with friends.

Enjoy a wander informally around the garden.

Special offer: £5

bring along family members and children, or a friend.

NB Pre-Booking is essential.

SEPTEMBER EVENT

The 2020 proposed visit to Oven's Farm has not YET been re-booked for 2021 at the time of going to print. We are looking at alternatives.

Updates will be by email and on LGT website.

LGT AGM 2021

Saturday 20th November 2021 2.00pm start

The Petwood Hotel, Stixwold Rd, Woodhall Spa, Lincolnshire LN10 6QG

Guest speaker: Michael Marriot,

David Austin rose expert (now retired) "Ravishing Roses".

Booking essential before 6th November please

Celebratory Afternoon Tea will be served.

Members £20 Non Members £25

This includes the AGM, Photographic Competition, Guest Speaker, followed by Afternoon Tea.

Elizabeth Bowskill

Members of the Council of Management of the Lincolnshire Gardens Trust

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