

# Lincolnshire Gardens Trust Newsletter

November 2020

Registered Charity Number: 1050884

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## Sutton on Sea *Some you win and some you lose*

Efforts have been made since 2018 to have the Sutton on Sea Pleasure Gardens and War Memorial Garden listed. East Lindsey Council's plans to redevelop the adjacent Colonnade, has made the evaluation of these sites particularly important. While Historic England has rejected the Pleasure Gardens for listing, Sutton War Memorial garden and surrounding garden

walls, North of the Sutton on Sea Pleasure Gardens have been awarded Listed Building Status Grade II.

See the section on these important and much-loved sites in the Gardens Trust News inside and look forward to reading local conservationist and campaigner Liz Mayle's article on both sites in the LGT Spring issue.



Sutton on Sea Pleasure Gardens  
Photo: Liz Mayle  
Insert: Sutton on Sea War Memorial  
Garden, looking towards the Colonnade

To join go to [www.lincolnshiregardenstrust.org.uk](http://www.lincolnshiregardenstrust.org.uk) then click on Membership and then the link to the Membership Form

# Chairman's Letter



2020 has not been the best. As I sat down to write tonight, I thought 'Don't mention the war, Steffie...' meaning of course everyone's battles against the Covid virus pandemic. Among other much more serious consequences, it also put paid to **LGT's 25th Birthday celebrations**. Every single event we had planned had to be cancelled. However, we live in hope, that normal (or almost normal) LGT garden events/visits will be resumed next spring.

A vibrant **LGT Facebook Page** has now been set up by Elizabeth Bowskill. Several members now post regular comments, news and photos. Do go online to keep in touch with current news and to support this new 'string to our bow'. Special thanks to new member Frazer Chapman, for uploading fascinating images of many historic gardens both in and out of county. See also Frazer's article on Carpet Bedding at the end of this magazine.

Sadly, we have lost three active veteran founder members this year. I remember Pat Firman regularly coming to events with her husband, always

enthusing about garden visits. Her son Hugh writes, on behalf of Alice Firman and Rose Dooley: "Our mother Pat, who passed away peacefully on 24th April at the age of 92, was a keen supporter of the LGT. She and her husband Ron joined around 25 years ago and regularly attended meetings and visited gardens, with a particular interest in garden history. Although spending most of her life in Beeston, near Nottingham, she was born in Leadenham and maintained a strong love of Lincolnshire for the rest of her life. As many of you will appreciate, she loved speaking to fellow enthusiasts. Her last visit to a Lincolnshire garden was in February this year to one of her favourite gardens, Little Ponton, when she spent a considerable time discussing gardening with the owner over a cup of tea. She also enjoyed gardening at home in her lovely and productive large garden. We are still reaping the rewards of the potatoes, beans, apples, figs and soft fruit which she had nurtured. She even was pottering around in the garden the day before she died."



Geoffrey Grantham on the LGT visit to International Bomber Command Centre Lincoln. LGT AGM 2018  
Photo: ©Bob Wayne

Geoffrey Grantham too supported LGT throughout his wife Gwen's time as a founder trustee. After he was widowed, Geoffrey continued to enjoy their Woodhall Spa garden. Always interested in people and happenings, he joined members on many occasions right up into his mid-nineties. His dapper charm, wise advice and good company will be much missed by us all, and many in the farming community, especially in the Walcot and Woodhall Spa areas. In 1983 he received the CBE for services as Chairman of the Potato Marketing Board.

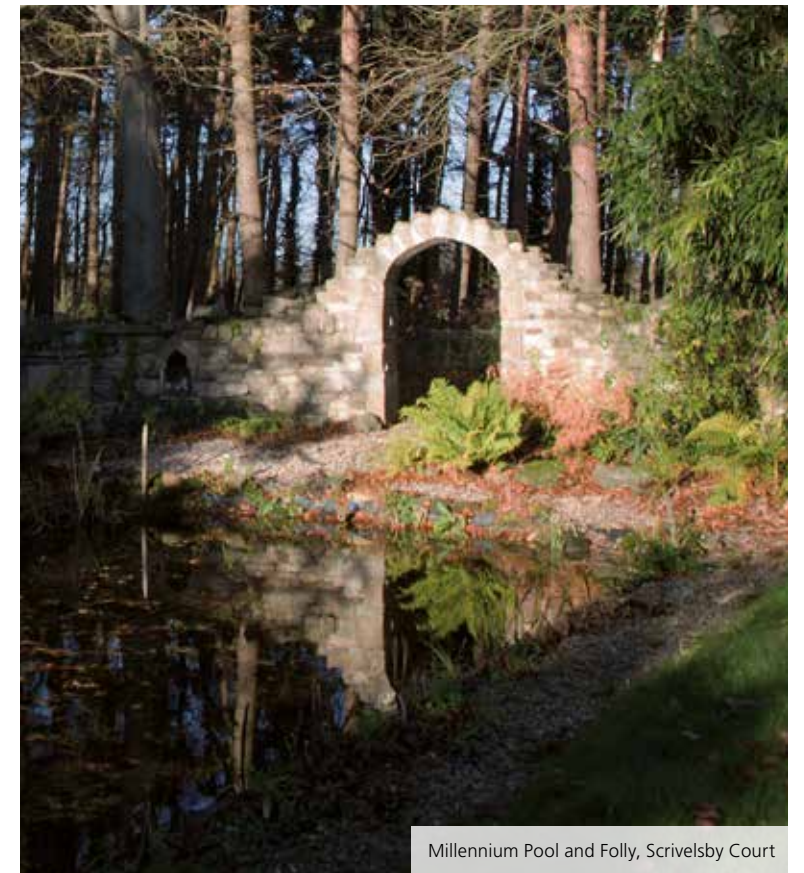


The late Pat Firman with the champion Hackthorn Hall vine  
©Rose Dooley

Many members will remember how Sue Dymoke and her husband John hosted several garden events, including in summer 2000 the hugely successful fund-raising LGT Millennium Plant Fair. In August, Sue passed away looking out at her garden. Speaking at her funeral, her son Charles Dymoke remembered her early life as a Fane living at Fulbeck Manor, and then later on helping to restore Scrivelsby: "There is no doubt that Sue had a great connection with the garden at Scrivelsby Court, and it was her imagination that created what we see today. Old photographs show the old garden to be non-existent after the big old house was pulled down. She cared deeply for plants, nature and wildlife, Francis, Philip and I loved playing in the garden as have all Sue's grandchildren. I know that kind people have on occasion been a tad frustrated by her protection of flowerbeds. Most notably her refusal to allow rotting ground floor windows to be replaced for fear of ruining a bed of Nerines. No one was able to persuade her to change her mind. Looking back I can only smile. With the benefit of hindsight perhaps it is obvious why she was so forthright. She asked Lawrence to set in stone a saying in her folly that she designed in 2000, 'Tread Lightly For It Is My dreams You Walk On'.

So with your continuing support, let us keep our friendly and caring County Gardens Trust moving forward – and when you have read this latest Newsletter – PASS IT ON to any family member or friend interested in gardens! I very much look forward to catching up with you all in 2021.

Steffie Shields



Millennium Pool and Folly, Scrivelsby Court

## Events 2021

Postcodes, directions & updates will be on the website: [www.lincolnshiregardenstrust.org.uk](http://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.**

**All payments made for 2020 are carried over to 2021 events.**

**You will be contacted personally by email.**

Wednesday 14th April

### SPRING BULBS

Mere House, Stow Road, Sturton by Stow, Lincoln LN1 2BZ  
DIRECTIONS: 1 mile from centre of Sturton village heading to Stow, house on Left. NB: Postcode will not bring you far enough out of Sturton village. Approx 1½ acres of established garden planted for the first time in 1975, redesigned in 1996. Renovated over the last 5yrs to incl new beds with drift planting but still incl the formal parterre. Spring bulbs and late summer colour are highlights. There is also a cutting garden, pleached hedges, vegetable garden and orchard. Work in progress incl a new garden project and long herbaceous border. Visit includes Tea and homemade cakes.

**Members £10; Non Members £12**

Tuesday 1st June

### LGT GOES TO THE SEASIDE

A morning visit to Mablethorpe Queen's Park \*\*: gather 11.30am to wander round park: lunch independently (picnic or otherwise) then head for Marigold Cottage Sutton on Sea for a 2.00pm start (5 min drive). Marigold Cottage, Hotchin Road, Sutton-on-Sea, Lincolnshire 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  
There may be Parking charges in Mablethorpe.

\*\* This is the address for the Park car park  
24 The Blvd, Mablethorpe LN12 2AD

Wednesday 7th July

### SUMMER FLOWERING WILDFLOWER MEADOWS

Brightwater Gardens, Saxby, Market Rasen, Lincoln 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."

The Church will also be open and Steffie Shields will say a few words about the Capability Brown connection

**Members £10; Non Members £12**

### SEPTEMBER EVENT

The proposed visit to Oven's Farm has not been able to be re-booked for 2021 at the time of going to print. We are looking at alternatives. Updates will be on the website.

### AGM 2021

Proposed date Saturday 20th November 2021 – to avoid Remembrance weekend. Details of venue etc will be provided later next year

Elizabeth Bowskill

New evidence has surfaced throwing much light on the **east coast works of Dame Sylvia Crowe** one of the first women landscape architects, a significant figure in the 20th Century promotion of landscape architecture in the UK. As a result, LGT has submitted an Application to Historic England for Spot Listing of Sutton on Sea Pleasure Gardens.

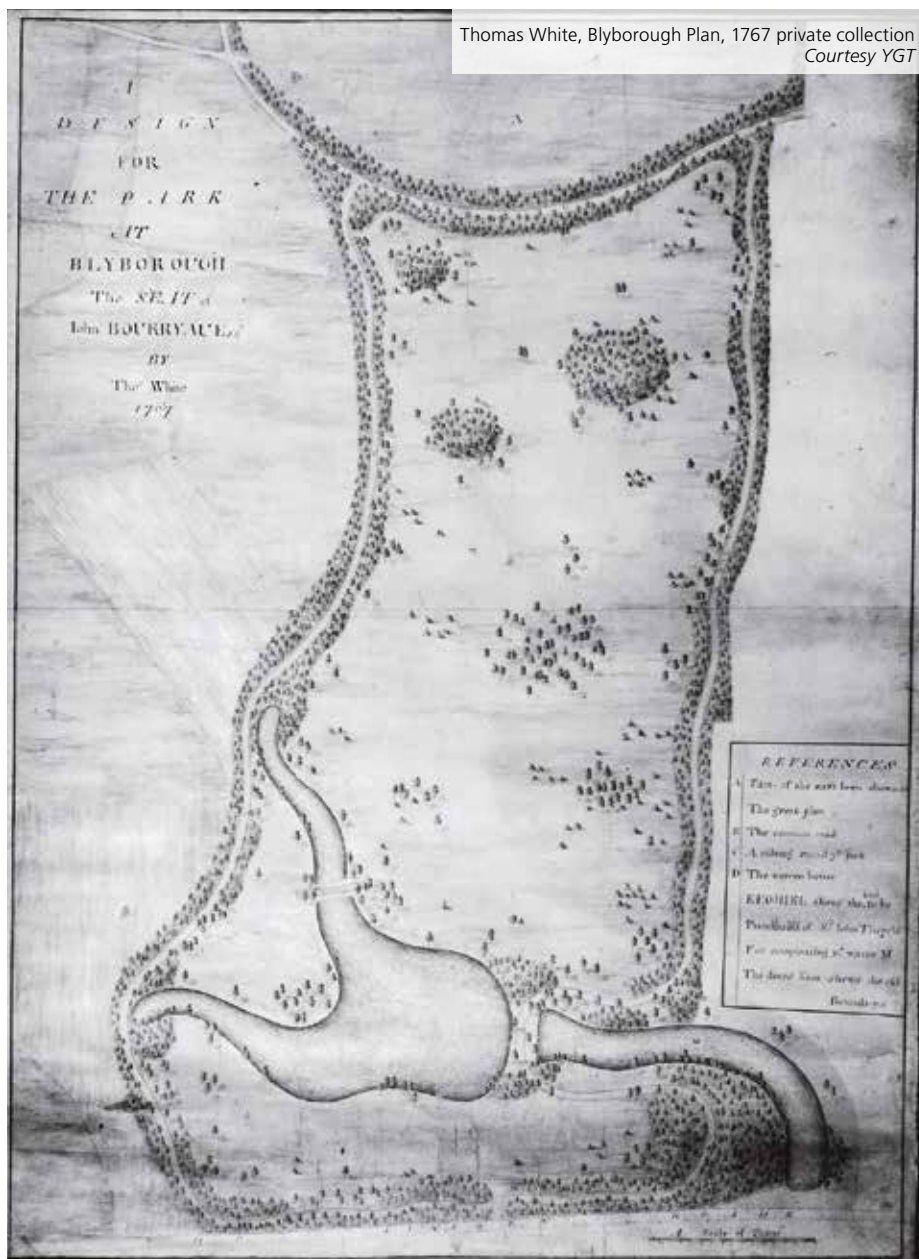
A Colonnade along with other features associated with the Pleasure Gardens, including paddling pool, bowling green, recreational sports areas and ornamental gardens have existed at Sutton on Sea since around 1938. In January 1953, the site was severely damaged when sea defences were breached during storms resulting in flooding that hit the majority of the East Coast of the UK. Following the flood devastation in which 42 lives were lost in the towns of Mablethorpe and Sutton-on-Sea, the urban district council prioritised new pleasure gardens to replace that lost to the floods. Designs for the new Sutton on Sea Pleasure Grounds and Colonnade were prepared by Sylvia Crowe (1901-1997) together with her assistant, Ivor Cunningham, who became a notable architect in his own right.

Crowe was also likely responsible for the small memorial garden surrounding the relocated War Memorial which bears similarities to her other designs in Sutton and Mablethorpe; the low stone walls continue elements of the adjacent Crowe pleasure garden. She also delivered an inventive zoning design sympathetic for the environment in the Sutton Dunes at the nearby Bohemia Caravan Park (which has since been subsumed into today's much larger Sutton Springs Holiday Estate). We plan to share more case study details in the next newsletter including fascinating extracts from her papers relating how she came to use Sutton on Sea as a prime example in her paper *'Recreational Landscape in England'*. This paper was given in America to the 6th Congress of the International Federation of Landscape Architects with over 3,500 world delegates.

Ref: *Landscape Architecture Magazine* Vol. 49, No. 1 (AUTUMN 1958) pages 32-35 published by the American Society of Landscape Architects.



LGT can report two more exciting and previously unrecorded finds: Researcher Louise Wickham, Yorkshire Gardens Trust passed on a copy of an 1767 plan for **Blyborough Hall** (West Lindsey) Thomas White (1739-1811), one of 'Capability' Brown's chief surveyors/foremen opened his own improvement practice based in Retford.



Thomas White, Blyborough Plan, 1767 private collection  
Courtesy YGT

John Bourryau commissioned a plan for the old park and gardens, namely the eastern part of his estate next to the road to Lincoln (Ermine Street) that runs north to south. The main house and its existing associated landscape were to the west

and the only change White proposed there was to move the main public road to the east. John Bourryau died in 1769 so it is likely that White's plan was never fully implemented (although it may have helped him to land the Norton Place



Blyborough Hollyhocks by George S. Elgood R.I.

commission which did come to fruition.)

This find prompted further digging, followed by another unexpected revelation, and window into the garden's later Edwardian era heyday: in the early 20th century garden designer **Gertrude Jekyll** (1843-1932) featured Blyborough gardens in her book *'Some English Gardens'* (1904) illustrated by a charming watercolour of the walled gardens by George S. Elgood R.I. (1851-1943) *'Hollyhocks at Blyborough'* (see previous page).

If you have been having a clear-out in this Lockdown year or have been sorting your family memorabilia, **LGT researchers would always be interested in seeing any old books, photographs, artworks, newspaper cuttings**. They could serve to enlighten further research for the LGT Gazetteer.



NB Upload your **photos of Lincolnshire's 'UNFORGETTABLE GARDENS'** to our LGT Facebook Page and/or send them to Heather Slater for the next newsletter and to Sally Bate at the Gardens Trust.



Between September and March, **the Gardens Trust's Historic Landscape Project** will be running a series of **free webinars** aimed at County Garden Trust volunteers. They will be

suitable for anyone interested in researching and conserving historic parks and gardens. The webinars will cover all aspects of planning – understanding threats, designation, setting and significance, writing a planning letter, legislation and policy - as well as how to build volunteer capacity and make sure your research is available to all. Check the events page <https://thegardenstrust.org/> for further details or join the HLP mailing list.



One of the more pleasant tasks this year for three trustees was the **judging of the Best Kept Village Competition in South Kesteven**. In July LGT committee members (Elizabeth, Emma and Steffie,) were invited to help judging SKDC'S shortlisted 12 villages and hamlets. It proved a long, rainy day out, but rewarding nonetheless, (giving opportunities to scout for veteran trees and less well-known historic gardens.) Our congratulations to Joint-winners Allington & Barrowby, and also to Irnham for winning the small village category.



Belton NT Estate and the Woodland Trust are **expanding Londonthorpe Woods** round to Brownlow Trousers to give greater public access and enclosing the boundary setting (Grantham Journal 3 July).



Barrowby floral feature with bench at road junction



The Environment Agency have installed a small **Heritage Orchard on land near Fiskerton**.



**Wyndham Park Sensory Garden 10th Anniversary Saturday 25th July 2020**

The Sensory Garden began as an idea during the summer of 2008, but it was not until June 2009 that a grant of £45,000 was secured through the Community Spaces Big Lottery Fund's Changing Spaces grant programme and planning in detail could begin. The design was drawn up by Tim Metcalfe-Kemp, a member of the Forum who is also an experienced horticulturalist and landscaper.

The design for the Sensory Garden originally featured a Horse Chestnut tree as a focal point and forms a circular shape between the path and the river bank. Although the tree was diseased, the fact that it had been grown from a seedling of the original Horse Chestnut which was in the Park when it was opened in 1924, required some reference to the original tree. The Forum considered the best option was to commission a local sculptor to produce a structure based on an Isaac Newton theme, using the remaining trunk of the tree. Nigel Sardeson worked on site during June 2010 to create the Hand and prepared the Apple – carved from Elm with the contours of the world on its surface- in his workshop.

Work on the garden was completed by the end of July and a special Launch was held on July 25th 2010, with the Sculpture (Isaac's Apple) unveiled by the Deputy Mayor. Local Primary Schools and the Alzheimer's Society helped with bulb planting. Over the years volunteers have helped with maintenance of the Sensory Garden.

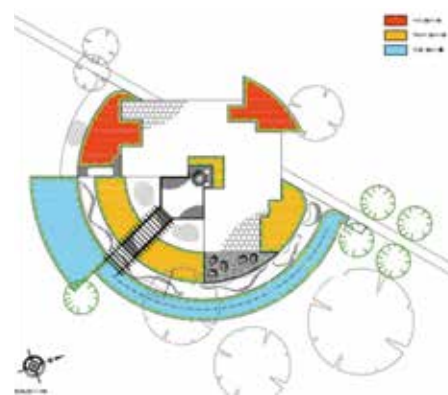
In 2016, our worst fears were realised. The Hand sculpture was developing issues with damp due to still being a tree trunk drawing moisture through the roots; fungi growing around the base, and damage to the fingers and palm of the hand.

The plan involves cutting off the sculpture at the "wrist" as close to the ground as possible. The sculpture would then be removed to Nigel's workshop where he will dry it out and treat it to prevent further growth on the wood. The stump and root were removed and the ground prepared to receive the renovated sculpture. A fundraising campaign was launched to raise the necessary cash to support this repair.

Once again we received support with tree work from specialists Jayne and Paul Bavin who had helped with the project in 2010.

The Sensory Garden has featured in many key publications produced by SKDC over the years, and is photographed by locals and visitors alike. Although it is arguably at its best in the summer months, the visual impact of the Sensory Garden to passers-by is striking at any times of year and creates a feature at one of the main entrances into the town centre.

The plan below shows the design of the garden with hot, warm and cool planting beds. Some plants have been replaced over the years and others self-set in adjacent beds, but otherwise the planting scheme is more or less as it was.



The Joseph Banks Society has agreed to take on the anchor tenant lease of the Joseph Banks Centre with the full support of the owners of the building, the Lincolnshire Community Foundation. This is a huge step for the society and one which came about due to the gift shops having to close because of difficult trading conditions – and of course COVID 19. The shops were run by Joseph Banks Ltd which the society will now take control of and use as its own trading arm. Trustees, assisted by sector specialists are now creating a new natural history/natural science and education centre or, more simply put **a museum based upon the collections of Joseph Banks at Soho Square**. These collections will form the basis of the society's educational work with schools and universities. They will also build upon their Lincolnshire Herbarium incorporating their Seaward and Love Lincs Plants collections, our Lane-Claypon art collection, and the living Joseph Banks tribute garden. The new library and reading room is now taking shape with books and resources accessible and available for members and researchers to use, and also houses David Robinson archives.

Find 90% of their books on <https://www.joseph-banks.org.uk/library-reading-room>. Due to Covid 19 restrictions only 2 people can use the library at any one time. (Check out opening hours advisable to ring before travelling:- 01507 700012).



#### The Gardens Trust Response to National Trust announcement on 8 October 2020

The Gardens Trust welcomes the cap on National Trust landscape staff redundancies. The Gardens Trust sincerely regrets the scale of the redundancies announced today by the

National Trust and the impact this will have on their heritage responsibilities. We are relieved to note, however, that our appeals to protect their landscape and garden conservation work have been heeded, with a cap on redundancies in this sector. The National Trust has announced measures intended to save around £100 million in annual expenditure. The total number of redundancies attributed to the Covid 19 pandemic is put at over 1,450. This appears to represent approximately 15% of the total workforce. The Gardens Trust sincerely regrets that the Trust has felt it necessary to take such drastic steps to cut expenditure and is concerned at the impact of the loss of such a large number of skilled and experienced specialist staff on its ability to discharge its heritage and conservation responsibilities. The Gardens Trust extends its sympathies to all those directly affected by these redundancies and their families.

We note, though, that the scale of the reduction in the garden and designed landscape sector of the Trust's work has been capped. Whilst even this loss of skilled staff is a retrograde step, we are grateful that our pleas for this sector have been acknowledged. We also welcome the re-statement of the Trust's commitment to maintaining conservation standards.

#### Partnership working and volunteers

The National Trust's new vision includes great emphasis on working with partners. Partnership working is at the heart of what the Gardens Trust does, and we are ready to seek out opportunities to work with the National Trust. With our affiliated County Gardens Trusts we have a huge volunteer workforce, renowned for

its enthusiasm, energy and expertise. However, we remain clear that volunteer effort functions best when it is designed to complement rather than replace paid professional staff.

#### Conservation 'for everyone, for ever'

We remain concerned about other changes that the Trust appears to be envisaging to its future role and the possibility that it is considering taking a more 'relaxed' approach to how it looks after and presents the gardens under its custodianship. Many of these are of national, and some of international, historic significance. It is essential that there should be no dilution in the Trust's commitment to their conservation for the benefit of present and future generations, and we will take a keen interest as further details of its vision for the future are revealed.

Read GT's the reply from the National Trust: - <http://thegardenstrust.org/gt-welcomes-the-cap-on-national-trust-landscape-staff-redundancies/>



**The Garden Museum** in London is devoted to the history of British gardens and gardening. offering courses on plants, food and health, hosts exhibitions about trends in gardening, and maintaining links with the local schools and people. During the lockdown the Museum was closed and has lost its income. To make up the £270,000 deficit the Museum's director, Christopher Woodward, undertook in October a sponsored swim from Newlyn in Cornwall to Treco Abbey Gardens on the Isle of Scilly – 50 miles (80km) along a difficult coast and across the sea. To donate towards Christopher's swim, go to online: <https://gardenmuseum.org.uk> – to find a Donate button, and also see more of the inspiring work done by the Garden Museum.



Cottage garden in Irnham

# Using the Outdoors to Support Pupils Return to School

## LGT Schools Liaison Council Member Emma Schofield considers the importance of outdoor spaces for young people in these Covid 19 threatened times.

The impending return in September 2020 to school, to college or university was a great cause of anxiety for many. You may know or have children or grandchildren who had worries about being back in an educational setting - whether they be a pupil or a member of staff. We are all under no illusion that all educational establishments are under enormous pressure to keep young people safe whilst also trying to continue providing them with an education. Further, there are many reports about young people being worried about falling behind, having altered friendships, of mixing with people again, of catching the virus and of spreading it to loved ones in their family.

We as members of Lincolnshire Garden Trust are aware, through many years of promoting the benefits of outdoor learning in school and our own love of gardens, of the place outdoor spaces have in keeping our minds and bodies well. So we are not surprised that schools have been developing more lesson time outdoors. There are many online helpful websites with ideas to help staff plan the outdoors into their daily routines and lessons- the more the children are outside the better!

Some simple tips:

- 1 Plan ahead for spaces you could use ensure there is space for all
- 2 Plan outdoor lessons into school schedules to keep learning on track
- 3 Mix indoor and outdoor lesson time as part of the day-care for environment and each other
- 4 Clipboards and other resources on hand to grab and go!
- 5 Keep it simple!
- 6 And of course, don't forget the weather make sure footwear and clothing is suitable
- 7 Get out there and have fun!

Some of you may have seen the recent Look North News report (10th September) of a visit to Lincoln, Washingborough Primary Academy to look at the children using the school garden as part of their learning. They are not alone; more and more Primary schools are using elements of gardening or the school grounds as a resource to help with social distancing and children's well-being.



## An update from Queen Elizabeth Grammar School in Horncastle

LGT gave them a small grant back in the Spring. Some students who have been in school at QEGS during the Summer term had made a start on the garden area in their school grounds and have posted a the accompanying photos on Twitter. It is an adaptation for this year of the original



design – but they are using the great outdoors as a vehicle to engage the students in this unusual time. They have lost a few plants to greedy birds but beans, tomatoes and leeks are going strong! They are planning to make a Scarecrow.

In the update received at the end of July the school co-ordinator reported that they had kept busy in the garden and, having seen how well the students had looked after the garden and the benefits to their well-being, the intention is to broaden the project. QEGS will be using our grant to stock up on the equipment required during this school term (Autumn) and I will be in touch with them to see how things are going.

## Growing Our Gardens Legacy – Project Update

In May I had a Zoom online meeting about Growing Our Gardens Legacy, with Tamsin McMillan, David Littlewood, Christine Addison, Jason Mordan and Sarah Grundy. After a few technical issues and a giggle getting going we had a productive meeting. Due to the Covid situation timings have all changed and so we eventually encompass 6 East Midlands regions and will be in partnership with the GT Historic Landscapes project, 4 county Garden Trusts and all relevant County Council based Historic Environment records.

We cannot start our pilot Project until our bid has been accepted and thus cannot go forward to gain the funding. Because our applying for funding has been delayed by Covid we don't yet have a start date and so we are holding off a big launch. We hope to use two main sites; these are possibly -

- Bestwood County Park, Notts
- Queens Park Mablethorpe and Sutton Sea Pleasure Gardens on the Lincolnshire Coast

Neither of these is on the public register of parks and gardens of special historic interest so are less protected in the planning process and both would benefit from research to further understand their history and significance. We plan to involve and train new local volunteers to take part in surveys and write a statement of significance/ work with community groups and so the next stage is to ask for a list of our members who are specifically living in those areas.

Things are embryonic but we felt at the end of the meeting there was a real positivity about it all and it will be lovely project that people will want to engage with. In the wake of the crisis we all realise how important our green spaces are. So again as the year unfolds and I find out more I will be sharing further details with the committee and our members.

# Tapestries of Delight – the craze for carpet bedding

....who wants flower-beds to look like carpets? They may strike you at first as being ingenious, and even pretty, but the feeling is at once followed by a sense of their essential debasement as regards gardening....<sup>1</sup>

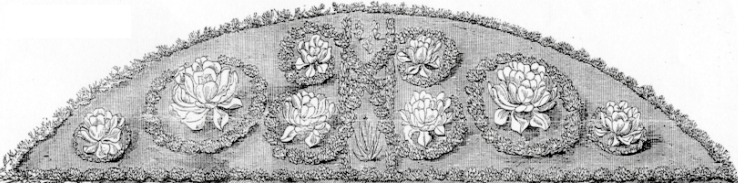


The answer to Henry Bright's question from 1881 was everyone, from the great country houses and estates to the newly formed municipal authorities, from Kew Gardens to Hampton Court Palace. The country was pursuing the carpet bedding style and vying for planting the most elaborate patterns.

What had provoked parks superintendents, country estate owners and plantsman to forego their *Pelargoniums* and other established bedders?

Around the middle of the 19th-century small foliage plants from South America were introduced to Britain and plantsman began to trial these plants to assess their potential, specifically *Alternanthera*. The red, green and pink colours of *Alternanthera*, the green and greys of *Echeveria* and greens of *Sempervivum* plus *Sedums* provided the palette for planting and creating patterns.

Who was the first gardener and plantsman to create a carpet bed? The consensus for this innovation is John Fleming at Cliveden who created a carpet bed displaying the monogram of the Duchess of Sutherland circa 1868.



| PLANT TYPE                        | USE WITHIN DESIGN                              |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Arabis lucida variegata</i>    | To form the <b>H</b> in the design             |
| <i>Echeveria secunda glauca</i>   | To form the two <b>S</b> s and largest circles |
| <i>Echeveria hirtum</i>           | Eight centre plants                            |
| <i>Gasteria verrucosa</i>         | Centre angle, front side, three plants.        |
| <i>Mesembryanthemum</i> (various) | Rear angle spaces.                             |
| <i>Sedum carneum variegatum</i>   | Back edging.                                   |
| <i>Sedum glaucum</i>              | To form silvery carpet within bed.             |
| <i>Sedum</i> (deep green variety) | To form green carpet to counterpoint above.    |
| <i>Sedum denticulatum rubrum</i>  | Used to form corner carpet fill.               |
| <i>Sempervivum californicum</i>   | Front edging.                                  |
| <i>Sempervivum hirtum</i>         | Two small circles.                             |



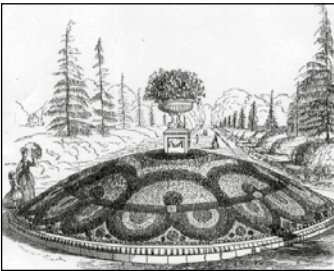
Hampton Court Carpet Bed <sup>3</sup>

Portraying butterflies as accurately as possible in public parks, seemed to fascinate park superintendents and examples of butterfly design planting could be found in Crystal Palace Park and Victoria Park (London). Who thought of using butterfly designs? A plan can be found in the 1878 and 1881 revisions of Thomson's, *The Gardener's Assistant*, by Thomas Moore.<sup>4</sup> The butterfly design became famous not only in the UK but also throughout Europe.

The location and profile of a carpet bed were important because visitors admiring a bed needed to see the whole design. Kew Gardens created a mound for the plants to enable the pattern to be seen appropriately.<sup>5</sup> Also, the bed should also be kept away from trees. Often beds were set at an angle to allow the pattern to be seen from a path (often protected by low fencing). The perspective was essential to enable the pattern to be correctly seen.

The design would be marked out using sand and then planted. Sometimes card stencils would be used to define the pattern. Sometimes coloured sand (or similar) was used to emphasise part of the motif.

Maintenance was achieved by laying raised ladders or wooden planks over the bed supported by angle frames. Gardens would lay on the planks or ladders and clip the design with shears.



The popularity of the style increased, and while country house gardeners were obliged to follow their employer's design wishes, others could let their imagination run riot. Part of the attraction was the length of a carpet-beds life (or season) this was longer than customary summer bedding displays. The season would last until the first frosts arrived. However, as the craze grew, head gardeners and parks superintendents began to realise that carpet beds were labour-intensive and consequently, expensive. Although no deadheading was necessary, keeping the beds trimmed and level kept gardeners busy throughout the season.

Towards the end of the 19th century, the stage was set for municipal crests, pianos, organs, commemorative badges, motifs, flags, cuckoo clocks (with working cuckoo!) rolled carpets, plus human and animal shapes to be planted as carpet beds in the country's public parks and gardens.

What did planting-up a carpet bed mean? To the owner of the country house, it demonstrated that the family were keeping up with current fashions and horticultural styles. (It is not such a big leap in thought from a parterre to a carpet bed as may first be thought) To the local councils, it demonstrated civic pride. It informed visitors that "we are proud of our town, we are proud of our park, we are proud of our gardening team's skills; we can do this, and we can do it well".

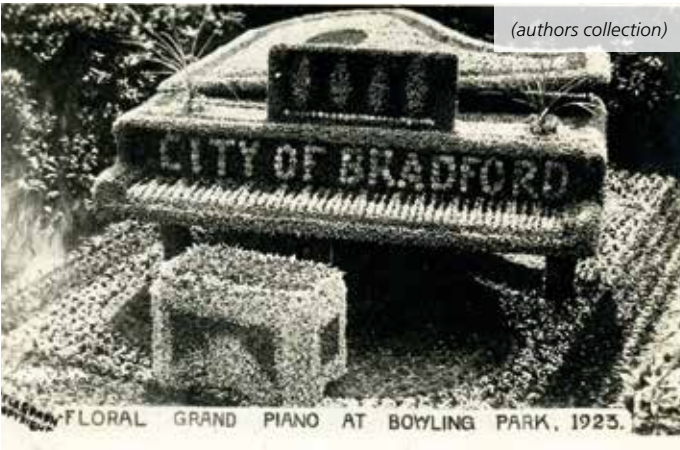
By the turn of the century, the tide was beginning to turn, and carpet bedding attracted ridicule from the garden press and horticulturists. A 100-yard carpet bed advertising the Glasgow Herald was derided for its



Hesketh Park Southport 1938 (authors collection)

ostentatious statement.<sup>6</sup> This horticultural practice went from cutting-edge style to the epitome of bad-taste in just a few years.

Nevertheless, visitors to parks enjoyed the carpet bedding displays, as they did summer and spring bedding displays.



(authors collection)

From 1900 onwards carpet bedding was used as a tourist promotion tool for attracting and entertaining visitors to coastal towns, examples are, Skegness, Eastbourne, Bournemouth and Bridlington. Clean, safe and well-maintained parks and promenades encouraged visitors to return year after year until cheap foreign travel provided an opportunity to holiday abroad.

Public parks began to decline from the early 1960s onwards as television became the recreation activity of choice. Car ownership increased, enabling people to drive to the countryside or coast for their leisure time. In the 1970s, the old order of the municipal Parks Department was lost as parks became part of Leisure Services. The country park with a modern visitor centre and café became the destination of choice for many people. Many parks lost their in-house gardeners and superintendents, and in the 1980s, Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT) turned amenity horticulture into employment with little need for skilled gardeners. Parks across the country became an easy target for budget cuts. Parks deteriorated.

Did this marked decline mean the end of carpet bedding? In many local authorities, carpet beds had not been planted since the early 1950s. Nevertheless, Coastal towns for example, Eastbourne, continued to keep up



Postcard from 1910 (authors collection)

the practice in the town's Carpet Gardens adjacent to the promenade. They continue to plant carpet beds.

Eastbourne Council's website offers the following information.

**Carpet and Seafront Gardens** – Located by the pier these gardens are the world-famous centrepiece of Eastbourne's elegant seafront. Traditional bedding is used to create stunning floral patterns for spring and summer. Spring displays use brightly coloured tulips, pansies and wallflowers. Summer planting includes begonias, petunias, geraniums and other favourites.

During the summer special beds are also planted in geometric patterns in a 'carpet bedding' technique first established by the Victorians. One bed at the west end of the main garden usually has a special theme. This is planted in June and remains until the autumn. <sup>7</sup>

The National Trust's Waddesdon Manor (the Rothschild's house) also continues to plant a large carpet bed. The design is produced by artists and reflects the label on Waddesdon's wines.<sup>8</sup> (The website is informative and worth a looking at and includes recent photographs).

Is there a case for conservation? Flower beds planted with carpet beds,



Waddesdon Manor's 'Museum of the Year' carpet, July 1998 (authors collection)

summer bedding and spring displays are ephemeral. They can be grassed-over without any significant impact on their parkscape; it is important to preserve the foundation, of the park (or green space). If the purpose, size and position of beds are recorded before removal, flower beds can easily be put-back-in. Eastbourne's Carpet Gardens and Waddesdon Manor demonstrate that if the resources are in place to support the care and maintenance of carpet bedding, then they are worth preserving. People continue to be fascinated by them. If funding is an issue (and sponsorship not possible), then beds should be removed. A poorly maintained display undermines a parkscape.

Nevertheless, the company Instaplant <sup>9</sup> offer a carpet bed supply and installation service for local authorities and organisations who want to commemorate an anniversary or to promote their culture. Instaplant recognises the loss of carpet bedding skills and can offer a solution as the need arises. Their existence demonstrates that the carpet bed is not wholly consigned to history yet.

Frazer Chapman

# Hay Making in Queen Elizabeth Park

Over the spring and summer months, visitors to Queen Elizabeth Park will have noticed that several areas in the park have been allowed to grow long. This was done in accordance with recommendations made by Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust which carried out an ecology and biodiversity survey in the summer of 2019. Having a mixture of grass and wildflower meadows, where there is already an interesting mix of plants, will lead to greater biodiversity, a wider variety of butterflies, insects, wildflowers, invertebrates and small mammals.

So the grass was allowed to grow, and with paths mown across for pedestrian access, the meadows have been enjoyed by people and dogs alike.

However the grass then needs cutting – and whilst the Friends of Queen Elizabeth Park volunteers were more than willing to work in the heat and develop their scything skills using traditional Austrian scythes, there was far too much to cut by hand and so as a group we called in the help of local farmer Phil Marshall, who in turn organised his team to make the hay – a complicated and lengthy process. Phil tells us: "Hay making is all about the weather and constantly watching the forecast and then logistically getting everyone organised with timings and availability.

Adam Madge [company name AM & EH Madge] mowed the grass and also spread and rowed up. Tony Warner did the round baling, John Dickinson helped with gates and overlooking daytime activities with the public along with Friends of Q E Park secretary Elizabeth Bowskill.

Daryl Ellis provided his trailer and land rover to help cart the hay away.

The hay that the grass has provided will go for winter keep for the Woodhook herd of Pedigree Dexter cattle once they come home to Woodhook Farm for the winter. The quality of the hay this year is very

<sup>1</sup> Bright, Henry A., *The English Flower Garden*, (London, Macmillan and Co., 1881), pp.23-25.

<sup>2</sup> Carpet woven prior to 1880 showing weavings common to Turkey, Persia and the Caucasus. Image from, Thompson Jon, *CARPETS From Tents, Cottages and Workshops of Asia*, (London, Barrie and Jenkins, 1988), p.79.

<sup>3</sup> Lithograph from Gotze's *Album for Teppichgartnerei*, c. 1900, Elliott B. *Victorian Gardens*, (Portland, Timber Press, 1986), p.157.

<sup>4</sup> Thompson Robert & Moore Thomas *The Gardener's Assistant* (London, Blackie and Son 1881 (revision)) Plate 12 pp.794-795.

<sup>5</sup> Carpet bed in Kew Gardens, 1870. Image from, *The Gardener's Chronicle and Agricultural Gazette*, (1870), p.1344.

<sup>6</sup> Elliott B. *Victorian Gardens*, (Portland, Timber Press, 1986), p.157.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/leisure-and-events/parks-and-gardens-in-eastbourne/carpet-and-seafront-gardens/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://waddesdon.org.uk/your-visit/gardens/parterre-carpet-bedding/>  
<https://waddesdon.org.uk/your-visit/gardens/parterre-carpet-bedding/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.instaplant.co.uk/>



Carpet Gardens, Eastbourne, 1997 (authors collection)



Land Girls: Elizabeth Bowskill, Jenifer Grannum and Carole Boyle

good as is the quantity, considering no fertiliser or chemicals are used in producing any of the grass used for feeding the cattle all year, both while out grazing in the summer months and back home for winter."

The Friends of Queen Elizabeth Park are very pleased with the result and hope to repeat it in some form next year. Obviously as the different areas develop the hay making process will need to be adjusted. The margins of some areas will be left to grow and have not been cut to allow a different habitat for other vegetation and the insects etc.

More information will soon be on the newly created website

[www.queenelizabethparkgrantham.co.uk](http://www.queenelizabethparkgrantham.co.uk)

and in the meantime the Facebook page will keep you informed.

**Friends-of-Queen-Elizabeth-Park-Grantham**

# Dean's Green Lincoln Completed

New gardens have been created in the Lincoln Cathedral precinct. The development named Dean's Green is part of a Heritage Lottery funded project designed to improve the experience of visitors to the Cathedral.

The new gardens, designed by Manchester firm Landscape Projects contain elements such as the Lord Tennyson fountain, a stone statue and

an oak bench.

The Dean's Green is part of a larger initiative named Lincoln Connect; the Old Deanery has been redeveloped as a visitor centre while the Dean's Green has been created on what was a playground in the Minster School grounds.



Photos: Deniss Pileckis

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