

ISLE OF WIGHT GARDENS TRUST



AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 2018





Front cover: Tender perennials on the steps at Northcourt.

This page and rear cover: Autumn colour at Northcourt.

ISLE OF WIGHT GARDENS TRUST

Charitable Incorporated Organisation No. 1165283

Member of the Gardens Trust

Committee of Management (Trustees) 2018-2019

John Brownscombe (Chairman), Moira Sibley (Secretary),
Tim Woodcock (Treasurer), Vicky Basford (Research),
Pamela England (Membership), Susan Dobbs, Patsy Thompson,
John Harrison, and Susie Wright.

Newsletter and Website Editor

John Brownscombe

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Vicky Basford, John Brownscombe and James Harrison

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telephone 01983 612132 or 01983 865662



An illustrated talk
by
Simon Goodenough



FOLLY FARM

LUTYENS AND JEKYLL REVISITED



Friday 2nd November at 7 pm
Ventnor Botanic Garden

Talk to be followed by buffet supper in edulis
(vegetarian based with add-on for the carnivores!)

Ticket prices: **£15 to include supper**
£10 lecture only

Please reserve tickets and arrange payment with Jenny Parker
jenniferparker126@hotmail.co.uk tel: 01983 730668

Proceeds towards the VBG Friends' Society Apprentice Fund

Plantation Cafe open 6.30 pm for drinks - Free Parking

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Chairman's Foreword

Dear Members,

I imagine that by the time that you receive this latest copy of our newsletter, autumn will be well and truly with us and the glorious but horticulturally challenging summer of 2018 will be fading from memory. As the nights grow longer and the evening chill sets in, I suspect like me, you will be starting to plan for how best to ensure colour in the garden next year.

In this addition we will be looking back at some of the Isle of Wight Gardens Trust events that have taken place since the spring and looking forward to what is coming up for the rest of this year and the early part of 2019.

I hope it makes for an interesting and enjoyable read.

May I take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support as without this we would not be able to achieve our charitable aims. Please may I also remind those annual subscribers who have yet to pay this year's fee to do so as soon as possible to ensure that your membership continues. Perhaps I could encourage you to pay by standing order in the future? If you need the details to do this, please contact either Pamela England, our Membership Secretary or Tim Woodcock, our Treasurer who will help you. Alternatively email us on membership@iowgardenstrust.co.uk.

I do hope to be able to meet many more of you over the coming year at one of our series of events or at our annual Christmas lunch.

Best wishes

John

John Brownscombe

Chairman, Isle of Wight Gardens Trust



Isle of Wight Gardens Trust Christmas Lunch

1pm Saturday 1st December 2018

The Consort Restaurant

Albert Cottage Hotel

East Cowes

This year we will be having our Christmas lunch at the Albert Cottage Hotel, East Cowes. An opportunity to enjoy a pleasurable afternoon with fellow members, these events are always popular so please book early as we have only 30 places on offer.

Menu options on the next page. Full payment and menu choices by November 1st please. Please use the enclosed booking form.

Contact Susie Wright for more details (01983 753436)





STARTERS

CHESTNUT SOUP

with 10W soft cheese fritters (V) (gf)

SMOKED CHICKEN AND HAM HOCK TERRINE

with mustard clotted cream and watercress

BETROOT AND DILL CURED TROUT

with rye beer cracker and beetroot tartar (GF)

MAIN COURSES

ROAST BREAST OF TURKEY

served with pigs in blankets and a sage and onion stuffing (gf)

SLOW ROAST RUMP OF BEEF

with Yorkshire pudding and horseradish mash (gf)

HOT SMOKED SALMON

with orange salsify, pickled clams (GF)

NUT ROAST

with vegetarian sausage, seasonal greens and a vegetable gravy (V)

HOUSE MADE DESSERTS

TRADITIONAL CHRISTMAS PUDDING

and brandy cream (V) (gf)

ORANGE AND COCONUT CAKE

with coconut sorbet (V) (GF)

WHITE CHOCOLATE TARTE

with yogurt sorbet (V)

CONSORT CHEESEBOARD

(£5 supplement as a dessert, £7.50 as additional course)

*Selection of cheeses with grapes, celery, Chef's fruit chutney
and savory biscuits (V) (gf)*

*(V) Vegetarian • (GF) Gluten Free • (gf) can be adapted to gluten free
Suitable vegan alternatives can be produced,
please enquire at time of booking.*

EVENTS PROGRAMME

Saturday 1st December 2018 1pm

Isle of Wight Gardens Trust Christmas Lunch

Albert Cottage, East Cowes.

£30.00

Tuesday 26th March 2019 10.00am

Kate Harwood joins us again to continue our exploration of garden history taking us into the 20th century. Those who have joined us for one of Kate's previous talks will know how knowledgeable she is as an experienced lecturer in garden history, planning and conservation. As always, her illustrated talk promises to be both informative and entertaining.

10.00am Refreshments served

10.30am 'The Many Faces of the Arts and Crafts Garden'

11.15am Short break

11.30am 'Recreating Utopia: Garden Cities'

12.30pm Break for lunch

2.00pm Guided walk around Ventnor Botanic Garden

Ventnor Botanic Gardens, Undercliff Drive, Ventnor.

£25.00 to include lunch and tea/coffee

Tuesday 7th May 2019 10am

Study Day with County Archivist Richard Smout

Join us to learn more about Market Gardens, Allotments and Tea Gardens on the Isle of Wight during the 20th century.

£25.00 to include lunch tea/coffee

Menu and more details to follow in our Spring newsletter.

Annual General Meeting Held at Farringford, Freshwater 12TH JUNE, 2018

The 2018 Annual General Meeting of the Isle of Wight Gardens Trust was held at Farringford. Farringford has recently undergone a restoration project to take it back to how it would have looked in the days of Alfred Lord Tennyson.

Rebecca Fitzgerald purchased Farringford in 2007; work commenced in 2012 and was completed in 2017. Farringford House is a Grade I Listed Building (List No. 1219039) due to its historical interest as the home of Alfred Lord Tennyson.

The Poet Laureate and his wife Emily originally rented the house in November 1853 purchasing it in 1856. It had been built in the ‘Gothick’ style in the late 18th Century by John Rushworth, with extensions added in 1840, 1871 and the 20th Century.

Visitors to Farringford during Tennyson’s time there included Prince Albert; Benjamin Jowett (1817-1893) British classical scholar and Master of Baliol College, Oxford; Algernon Swinburne (1837-1909) English poet; Coventry Patmore (1823-1896) English writer; Edward Lear (1812-1888) English artist, illustrator, musician, author and poet; Sir John Everett Millais (1829-1896) English painter and illustrator, President of the Royal Academy 1896; William Holman Hunt (1827-1910) English painter; George Frederick Watts (1817-1904) English painter and sculptor; Sir Arthur Seymour Sullivan (1842-1900) English composer; Guiseppe Garibaldi 1807-1882 Italian General and naturalist.

It was Garibaldi who in 1864 planted the Wellingtonian given to Tennyson by the Duchess of Sutherland. (www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list-entry-1219039).

Tennyson wrote of it :

*“the waving pine which here
The Warrior of Caprera set
A name that earth will not forget
Till earth has rolled her latest year ”*

Twenty-two members of the IWGT were fortunate to have a conducted tour

of the house prior to the AGM.

Patsy Thompson saying a few words after receiving thanks and a small gift.



Thanks were given to Patsy Thompson who will be stepping down as our Events Coordinator as she and her husband Jack are planning on leaving the Isle of Wight. Happily, Patsy will be staying on the Committee and as a Trustee until she moves away.

Tour of the grounds and garden.



After closing the meeting John Brownscombe invited the members to join a tour of the walled garden led by the head gardeners. The walled kitchen garden is featured in the ‘Walled Kitchen Gardens of the Isle of Wight’ produced by members of the IWGT. It is shown on the 1862 OS map as being laid out with regular paths with a central axial path leading east directly towards the house.

References from Emily Tennyson’s journal note ‘Alfred checking on potatoes he had planted; lighting the brick stove in the greenhouse for the first time; tying up lettuces and planting ‘roses and clematis and woodbine near his chair in the corner of the kitchen garden and one rose tree near our arbour’ . (Walled Kitchen Gardens of the Isle of Wight, IWGT, 2014)



Moira in the walled kitchen garden with its new planting

The Isle of Wight Gardens Trust helped to fund (along with the West Wight Landscape Partnership) a Conservation Plan for the Parkland and Gardens of Farringford which was authored by John Brownscombe in 2010.

Today plants grown in the garden are based on the descriptions given in Emily’s journal and also on Helen Allingham’s watercolours of the garden. Plants such as poet’s laurel (*Danae racemosa*), Delphiniums ‘King Arthur’, ‘Galahad’ and ‘Guinevere’; *Nicotinia sylvestris*; and apple and quince trees are being planted. <https://farringford.co.uk/house-isle-of-wight/garden-and-grounds>

Moira Sibley

Isle of Wight Gardens Trust trip to Kent and Sussex

We have just returned from a wonderful 4-day trip to see some gardens in Kent and Sussex which was very competently organised by Sue Wakefield. We stayed at the Spa Hotel in Tunbridge Wells and there were 21 of us occupying a 50-seater coach. So comfort was of the highest order with plenty of room for luggage and, of course, a very large amount of purchases of plants, books and other bits and pieces.

We set off bright and early on the morning of September 5th. Most of us boarded the coach at Seaview, the rest in Fishbourne. Our first stop was a private garden in Sussex near West Wittering . It was called Rymans and

surrounded a beautiful old 15th century house. It had everything, and was huge. The lady who owns it is rather disabled now and can no longer garden but she does have a wonderful full-time gardener. The garden surrounded the house and



Rymans C15th stone house

our first stop was a parterre, then a water garden, and then we drifted around the corner and through a very pretty gate to a large lawn area planted with many interesting trees and shrubs. At the far end, dividing it from the overflowing vegetable garden was a rose-walk, under which were two borders planted with a superb late summer border ablaze with colour provided by Dahlias, Asters, Rudbeckias and many other plants, too many to mention but creating a stunning vivid sunset colour scheme. We followed this with a delicious pre-ordered lunch in a pub. This was real test of the skill of our driver, as the lane was incredibly narrow and twisty and busy! We made it there and back.

After lunch, we visited Nymans which is famous for its wonderful long borders. They did not disappoint and were beautifully planted with carefully graded plants with not an inch of soil to be seen. As you may know the much

-altered house had been burnt down and is no longer habitable. The garden area covers a very large area and commands breath-taking views of the Sussex countryside. Many of the standing trees were blown down in the storm of 1987, these have been replaced by superb specimens. After a cup of tea, we set off for the hotel in Tunbridge Wells.



Nymans house ruined by fire in 1947 now shelters exotic plants

We awoke on Wednesday to a rather gloomy day which was wet at times and certainly chilly. Never mind, we duly met the head gardener of Penshurst Place who was so proud and enthusiastic about ‘his’ garden. The earliest part of the house is the great hall built in 1341. The gardens are all contained within a series of walled gardens, each one different and all beautifully maintained. The interesting fact about this garden is that it has kept the formal Tudor enclosed gardens. There was a bit of a discussion about this as so many similar gardens disappeared under the desire to either employ Capability Brown to ‘landscape’ a garden and estate or someone like him, to remove all vestiges of walled gardens and other buildings which were deemed to be in the way of the new emerging ‘natural’ landscaped garden and parkland. Perhaps the family at the time had cash-flow problems



Penshurst Place—sunken Italianate garden.

or liked things as they were. Penshurst Place is so beautiful and there is so much to see, it is well-worth a special trip and needs at least a day to absorb it all.

After a very tasty snack lunch we drove to Emmetts garden, which is a NT property. This largely a park-like garden set on top of the

Sussex Downs overlooking the Weald of Kent.

We were shown around by the head gardener, who had worked there since he was a boy. He showed us the newly mown wild flower meadow, and then the 1930's rockery. This was followed by a very lovely rose garden - all of which were flourishing.

There was a ring of roses surrounding a fountain and interspersed with standard roses. The gardens were very damaged in the 1987 storm and many of their precious trees were lost. The arboretum has since been re-planted with fine specimens.



Emmetts, Ide Hill—Edwardian rose garden.

On the way back to the hotel, some of us were dropped off in Tunbridge Wells so that we could explore the Pantiles. Mostly small boutique shops but the best one was a fascinating ‘old-fashioned’ hardware shop. It has been owned by the same family for over 40 years and there is nothing that they do not stock. Many purchases were made. After which, we stopped for a little light refreshment before returning to the hotel.

Just enough time the following morning to indulge in a delicious cooked breakfast and then off for a longish drive to Sissinghurst. We were all very



Sissinghurst—White Garden

excited to see this famous garden. Particularly Susan Dobbs, who used to play there with her cousins when she was a little girl! We went as ‘early-birds’, which meant it was just our group having a private guided tour, before the general public were admitted. Just as

beautiful as I remembered it having visited many many years ago. I think I enjoyed it more as I now know so much more about gardening than I did then. Again, it was the late flowering plants that stole the show, but even so, the iconic white garden was still very pretty and contained plenty of white flowers and grey foliage plants.

We left there mid-morning and headed for Sarah Ravens' garden at Perch Hill. We got a little lost and had to make diversion which resulted in driving the coach very slowly down a very narrow lane with over-hanging branches. But our stalwart driver stayed cool and we got there.

A special and very delicious lunch had been prepared for us. It was all so lovely. The quiche and salad were carefully placed on each plate and were beautifully prepared, and the flower arrangements, the cutlery handles and napkins were all coloured co-ordinated, so the overall effect was glorious. In many ways it was all so familiar as the plants, the tubs etc have all appeared in Sarah Ravens' sumptuous catalogues. The dahlias were taller than me and were vibrant and beautiful. The tubs were so densely planted, mostly with perennials and some were enormous. The shop benefitted as



Sissinghurst



Lunch at Perch Hill

everyone bought something, but to my disappointment there were no plants for sale, so I will have to order from the catalogue. So a bunch of very happy but quite tired people returned to the hotel. The coach quickly fell silent!

The final day will remain in our memories for a long time as the grand finale was a visit to the Sussex Prairie gardens. Oh wow!. Stunning is an understatement. No herbaceous borders, rockeries, pergolas or anything else that you expect in an English Country garden. This was an enormous absolutely flat field, filled to the brim with grasses and perennials some of which were at least 6ft tall. The beds of perennials are planted in sweeping drifts with wide grass borders in between. There is a



formal lay-out pattern and there are a few hornbeam hedges and trees, but the overall impression is informality. Narrow paths wind through these beds and we were instructed to walk slowly through the grasses and perennials to, as the owner said, to get close and personal! Also, around the



Final pub lunch on our way home.

sales area, there were huge, very huge tubs brimming with massive plants, salvias, banana plants and grasses. Pauline the owner, who is a small person but with a very big personality gave us a talk whilst we drank a welcome coffee, on how she and her husband started the gardens 10 years ago. What a talk, it was like being knocked over by a force 8 gale! She was amazing. Stunned, we left the gardens for another pre-ordered lunch in a nearby pub, again very delicious and then set off for Portsmouth and home. Another fabulous IWGT trip.

We all thanked Susan Wakefield for such a superbly organised trip and thanks to the driver for coping with, as he said, a very unusual bunch of ladies and gents.!

Conservation and Research

19th Century Grounds at Westbrook Recorded

Westbrook, to the east of Ryde, is a 19th century property now used as a residential youth centre by the 'Urban Saints' (formerly the Crusaders Union). A brief entry for this site was included in the Isle of Wight Gardens Trust Inventory of Historic Parks and Gardens. The Down to the Coast Project has been providing advice to Westbrook and approached us for further information. In June Vicky Basford visited the property and prepared a new inventory entry using the standard template introduced by Helen Thomas in 2013. There is an area of parkland with a few mature oaks, a perimeter shelter belt, woodland with oaks and hornbeams, a wildlife meadow, terrace with retaining wall, balusters and steps to east of house and an underground structure, possibly a former ice house used as a World War II air raid shelter. This property has local significance as a surviving example of the relatively modest properties with small park/pastures which grew up around Ryde in the 19th century.

Planning

The Conservation Committee has provided comment to the Isle of Wight Council on planning applications relating to historic parks and gardens across the Isle of Wight. We have also been involved in pre application discussions for Priory Hotel and are helping Historic England with their forthcoming workshop on Norris Castle.



The Isle of Wight Gardens Trust continues to mark the celebrations of 200 hundred years since the death of Humphry Repton, here are some details of what we have been doing.

Isle of Wight Walking
Festival Spring 2018

Isle of Wight Gardens Trust
—Humphry Repton Walk

Sunday 29th April 2018

Mike Dawson led a walk around the Appley and St Johns area of Ryde to share its designed landscape history and in particular the influence that Humphry Repton had on the St John's Estate in the late 18th century.

Twenty people joined the walk and also heard more about our work and events. We hope to offer more walks in the future.



Photographs by Susan Dobbs

Repton Exhibition at the Garden Museum

To commemorate the bicentenary of Humphry Repton's death there will be a Repton exhibition at the Garden Museum in London from 24 Oct 2018—3 Feb 2019. The exhibition is entitled Repton revealed: The Art of the Landscape Gardening and features Repton's rare and beautiful Red Books and watercolour paintings. 23 Red Books will be on display, so named by Repton due to the distinctive red leather bindings he favoured. Very few remain, and this exhibition reunites the largest number of Red Books in one place in 25 years. The exhibition has been curated by Stephen Daniels, Professor Emeritus at the University of Nottingham, who will share what he has learned about Repton in a lifetime of research, and 20 years since the publication of his classic book 'Humphry Repton: Landscape Gardening and the Geography of Georgian England'. For further details of this exhibition visit the Garden Museum website <https://gardenmuseum.org.uk/exhibitions/repton-revealed/>

Oakfield Primary School and the Resilient Mr Repton

From about 1799 the St John's House estate on the edge of Ryde was landscaped by Humphry Repton. The house and its former pleasure grounds are now occupied by Oakfield Church of England Primary School. As part of our Repton Bicentenary celebrations the Isle of Wight Gardens Trust invited Oakfield Primary School to work with us in finding out about the work of Humphry Repton at St John's. Vicky Basford and Susan Dobbs met with Vicky Bridle's Year 2 class of six and seven year olds in the spring term. Vicky explained that St John's House, now the main building at the school, was built in 1769 for Colonel Amherst but that Repton carried out work for Edward Simeon to whom the estate was sold in 1796. We talked about Repton's famous 'Red Book's where he painted watercolour views showing the landscape before and after his proposed alterations. We also discussed Repton's life, looking at the setbacks he had encountered in his working life before realising his talent for designing landscapes. One of the children said that Repton had shown 'resilience'. We showed the image of Repton which has been adopted as the logo for the bicentenary celebrations. This image, taken from Repton's trade card, shows the designer taking a bearing with his theodolite. Susan Dobbs

had borrowed a modern theodolite from a surveyor friend and loaned this to the class for a week.

In the summer term we helped the children to be landscape detectives, trying to discover clues to the landscape of St John's and other grand houses surrounding it. Vicky Basford and Patsy Thompson met with the children, their teacher and helpers at the school. We went into the school grounds and examined a Giant Sequoia tree. This is probably one of the oldest trees surviving in the grounds but post-dates the time of Repton since it was not introduced into Britain until 1853. The children linked arms around the tree to estimate its girth.



We then walked down to Appley Park, once part of the St John's landscape. In the park we looked at Appley Tower, built on the seafront as a watch tower and ornamental feature by Sir William Hutt who owned the Appley Tower estate in the 19th century. Some of the children enjoyed following the map in the 'Landscapes Detective' leaflet for Appley and St John's, prepared for the 'Down to the Coast' Project by our Chairman John Brownscombe. From Appley Park we walked a short way down Appley Rise, following the north-east boundary of the St John's pleasure grounds. In the shrubbery



behind the modern fence we spotted a Gothic stone ruin built as an eye-catcher and folly, probably by W.B. Page of Southampton who was engaged to landscape the grounds for John Peter Gassiot when he bought St John's in 1871.

On 15th September the Isle of Wight Gardens Trust organised a Heritage Open

Day walk, led by Mike Dawson, to introduce the public to the landscape of St John's and Appley.

At the end of the walk we were invited into Oakfield Primary School for refreshments and to see an exhibition of the children's work on Repton.

Following in Repton's footsteps, the children had done watercolour sketches of St John's House and had prepared prints of Repton's 'trade card' medallion. They had also written accounts of our 'landscape detectives' walk and these were illustrated by photographs taken by a member of staff. It was clear from the exhibition that the children had enjoyed learning about Repton.

On a summers afternoon the class sat on the grass at the back of St John's house. They sketched the outline of the house and grass. When they returned to the class they mixed watercolours to create their paintings. The children were aged between six and seven.



We are grateful to Oakfield Primary School and its staff, particularly Vicky Bridle and Rosie Barnard, for welcoming us into the school and helping us to celebrate Repton's bicentenary.

Vicky Basford



Repton's influence on the Isle of Wight

Vicky Basford has been working on a more detailed report of the known work and influence of Humphry Repton on the Isle of Wight. Helen Thomas has kindly agreed to put this into a publication for us. We will be printing this towards the end of this year and will be sending a copy to all members and to the Gardens Trust.

We will also be sending a copy to the Gardens Trust as a record of our contribution to the celebrations.

The Trustees are looking for more volunteers to help us with our work for the Isle of Wight Gardens Trust. Could you spare some time to help us with our communications (website, newsletter etc.)? Could you help us by being part of the team putting together our annual events programme? If so, please get in touch. Send an email to contact@iowgardenstrust.org.uk or call Moira Sibley on 01983 874512.



