

ISLE OF WIGHT GARDENS TRUST



SPRING NEWSLETTER 2021



ISLE OF WIGHT GARDENS TRUST

Charitable Incorporated Organisation No. 1165283

Member of the Gardens Trust

Committee of Management (Trustees) 2020-2021

John Brownscombe (Chairman), Moira Sibley (Secretary),

Vicky Basford (Research),

Pamela England (Membership), Susan Dobbs,

John Harrison (acting Treasurer), Sheila Caws, Susan Giles

Newsletter John Harrison

Website Editor

John Brownscombe

Conservation Committee

Vicky Basford, John Brownscombe and James Harrison

Registered address

Northcourt, Shorwell, Newport, Isle of Wight PO30 3JG

Website

www.iowgardenstrust.co.uk

Contacts

Events: please contact Susan Dobbs 01983612132

Membership: please email membership@iowgardenstrust.co.uk or telephone 01983 752194

For any other enquiries, please email contact@iowgardenstrust.co.uk or
telephone 01983 865662

Front cover image— Magnolia Campbellii Philip Tregunna named after the head gardener at Caerhays Castle 1956-1996

Flowering at Northcourt on the day of the first lockdown. Caerhays was a garden we hoped to visit this spring.

Chairman's Foreword

Yesterday, for the first time this year, I spent much of the day in the glorious Spring sunshine tidying my garden and enjoying the promise of the new growing season to come. In these continuing uncertain times nature is a great solace and can be depended upon to bring a sense of steadfast normality as well as awe and wonder. Aches and pains from muscles not used during the long cold winter are soon forgotten as all around us renewal and regrowth give great hope for the year to come. The increasing busyness of garden birds and their serenading at dawn, dusk and now also during the day adds to the enjoyment of the garden in springtime.

For the Isle of Wight Gardens Trust we face another year of disruption to our usual programme of events and work due to the continued measures related to Covid-19 restrictions. Normally at this time we would be gearing up for a full schedule of events where we can meet together to share our interest and passion for all things related to designed landscapes of parks and gardens. Thankfully, we do have more direction on what the gradual easing of restrictions might look like for the next few months and do hope that all being well we will be able to finally be free to once again enjoy events from late June onwards. To that end, we have given some details of dates for your diary and also the rescheduled trip to Folly Farm postponed from 2020.

We have recently started to share more online and virtual information with you via our email list. I do hope that you have enjoyed reading these and will take advantage of some of the free online lectures from John Phibbs and also the long awaited postponed talk by Kate Harwood which we are organising to take place via Zoom in two talks— please see details following .

Thank you to all who joined our Zoom 2019/20 AGM earlier this month. Whilst, I feel it was successful and enabled us to do what we needed to do for the work of the charity, I do hope that we will be able to meet up in Bembridge in 2021 and follow this with the planned garden visits that have been offered to us. We will be in contact in late May or early June to confirm the date for this in late summer.

Finally, myself and my fellow Trustees once again thank you for your continued support which allows us to carry on with our charitable work which includes providing comments on planning applications, planning policy and other policy or guidance documents where we believe these to have an impact on the registered and locally listed parks, gardens and designed landscapes of the Isle of Wight. It also allows us to continue to ensure we have extensive records to inform our comment and on occasion are able to undertake further research or contribute to research by others that further our knowledge.

I do hope you enjoy reading this latest newsletter - which on this occasion we have published solely electronically and distributed via email.

With my best wishes

John - chairman

Subscriptions are now due. If you have not paid by standing order please send cheque to membership secretary now.

Membership single £10, joint £15.

HELP Treasurer and Newsletter Editor required. We need you!

Good news from Covid—a new park . Thanks to the government Getting Building Fund .

The following is an extract from the Guardian on 4th August 2020:-

“The government is to contribute millions to fund Manchester’s first city-centre park in 100 years, as part of a series of investments in outdoor spaces in response to the coronavirus crisis.



The new 6.5-acre Mayfield park, touted as a “once-in-a-generation opportunity”, is part of a £1.4bn development to transform the under-loved urban area between Piccadilly station and Mancunian Way, running along the River Medlock.

The £23m pledged by the government for the project is to come from the government’s £900m Getting Building fund to increase jobs, skills and infrastructure in England in the wake of the pandemic. A city-centre park in Leeds is also among the plans to receive funding from the scheme, as is a landscaped “pocket park” in Sheffield city centre.

The announcement prompted public bodies and grassroots organisations to say the coronavirus crisis had highlighted the importance of outdoor spaces for communities, and to call on the government to increase resources for existing parks following the decimation of local authority budgets over the past decade.

Figures obtained from UK councils by Unison in 2018 found that more than £15m had been cut from parks and green spaces budgets between 2016-17 and 2018-19.

“Under the current public health restrictions, there’s been a massive increase in the usage of public green spaces, but there hasn’t been a comparable increase in the resources that is put into managing and maintaining these spaces. We need to ensure that the whole population have access to a quality local public green space within walking distance of where they live. In many areas there’s a need for additional green spaces,” Dave Morris the chair of the National Federation of Parks and Green spaces said.

Aimee Stimpson, the national lead for healthy places for Public Health England, said: “The Covid-19 pandemic has made many of us more aware of how much we value and rely on our outdoor spaces to support our health and wellbeing.

“Spending time in green spaces such as public parks can help us maintain a healthier weight, reduce our risk of conditions such as cardiovascular disease and boost our mental health.” Jenifer White, Historic England’s national landscape advisor, said many councils had been attempting to diversify their income to increase funding for park maintenance and management by hosting events, but that this had been brought to a halt because of social distancing measures during the pandemic.

“The Manchester park is wonderful because I think we only really get a once-in-a-generation opportunity to create new parks,” said White, noting that the last large park built in England was the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in Stratford, east London in 2012.

More Good Covid News;

As the government recognise how important heritage is for people and for the economy £138m was earmarked to support **cultural heritage** to ensure that organisations could see their way to opening up in Spring of this year.

445 heritage organisations and businesses have been helped . The full list is available on: <https://historicengland.org.uk/coronavirus/culturerecoveryfund/map/recipients-list/> Of these many beneficiaries have been gardens like Chelsea Physic Garden getting £428,300 and Chiswick House £308,000, but many smaller gardens benefitting as well. We can therefore look forward to all of our favorite gardens opening up, albeit with certain Covid controls in some cases.

Roadmap.

From March 29th—6 of us can meet in any garden. From April 12th NGS gardens can offer tea but prebooked visits only. From May 17th you can just turn up at a larger NGS garden and travel the length of England to do so!

Harcourt Sands Redevelopment: St Clare and Puckpool Estates

Members may recall the Trust commenting on the redevelopment of the Harcourt Sands holiday camp located on a key site overlooking Appley Beach in Ryde. Outline planning permission was granted in April 2016 to build 128 houses, as well as a 63-bed hotel or 15 holiday units. The first phase of 35 houses gained further approval in October 2016. Original developers Zero C withdrew in 2018 and the project is now being taken forward by K-Haus Limited. Work started on site last year and the demolition of the holiday camp is now almost complete. Recently a planning application was submitted to vary the road and plot layout. The Trust's main concern has been the conservation of the landscape features of the two estates – St Clare and Puckpool – which occupied the site prior to the holiday camp.

The St Clare estate extended to some 6 hectares (16 acres). Still wooded on western, eastern and partially on the north western boundaries the site can be seen from Appley Beach and Appley Walk, which runs along the seawall between the site and the beach. The main house was designed by London architect James Sanderson as a castellated mansion and built in 1823. It was badly damaged by fire in 1954 and demolished in the early 1960s. The walled kitchen garden was subdivided with individual private houses. Two lodges still exist: the former gatehouse lodge, now called Cedar Lodge Cottage and the Sea Lodge which is grade 11 listed but badly neglected. Most of the original park and gardens have been lost to the holiday camp. The formal gardens to the north of the main house became the site of the open-air swimming pool with its iconic imitation palm tree which featured on many of the brochures and posters promoting Ryde as a holiday destination. The original drive connecting the gate lodge, the main house and the sea lodge does still exist.



IMAGE OF PREVIOUS ADVERT WITH PHOTO ARCHIVE OF HERBIBLIOTHECAE AT ST CLARE, ONE OF WHICH, THE TERRACOTTA ARCH OF THE GREAT ENTRANCE IS
REPRODUCED FROM THE
PUBLISHED 1888-1891

The Puckpool estate, to the east of St Clare, originally included Puckpool Battery and Puckpool Park, to the north of the holiday camp, extending in total to 10.2 hectares (25 acres). Still heavily wooded on its southern, eastern and northern boundaries the area includes the original Puckpool House, which is to the south. Puckpool House is grade 11 listed, a cottage orne designed by Lewis Wyatt as his seaside retreat, originally built in 1824 and enlarged in the late 19th, and early 20th centuries. Puckpool Battery is a scheduled ancient monument and this and Puckpool Park lie outside the holiday camp area, as does Puckpool House itself.

The Harcourt Sands Holiday Camp was created out of two earlier holiday camps. The Warners' Puckpool camp was opened in 1939, and the Warners' St Clare camp after WW11, amalgamated in 1992, closed in 2006 and remained derelict up to 2020. The landscape character of the overall Harcourt Sands site is particularly significant, especially as the site adjoins Appley Park to the west, originally part of the St.John's House grounds attributed to Humphrey Repton, and Appley Beach and the Solent to the north. As indicated above there are many mature trees, including some exotic planting and long woodland belts.

In its comments on the 2015/16 planning application the Trust particularly emphasised the need to retain as much as possible of the mature trees and woodland on the site and to retain the open aspect of the site to the north. In large part the 2016 planning permission did do this, although there is still concern at the potential impact of the newly designed flat roofed 'modernist' houses to be built facing across the Solent. The Trust will also be watching closely that building operations do not disturb the mature trees which are to be retained.



Later this year it is hoped to organise a guided walk for Trust members around this fascinating area.

Mike Dawson.

To left photo showing the Old Harcourt Sands holiday centre with Puckpool Park top right corner.

Challenges of the seasons.

In the last spring newsletter I wrote about the importance of shelterbelts citing Caerhays Castle. Then I was referring to the protection these gardens like our own at Northcourt needed from salty South-Westerly gales. Nothing prepared me for the devastation in our garden caused by the Beast from the East 2 , experienced in early February with windchills of minus 5-7 almost incessant for 4 days. Our garden on an East facing slopes provides no such protection so I was most devastated to see scorched ceanothus, cistus , olearias, echiums , buddleias, phlomis , melianthus, evergreen magnolias and other evergreens desiccated . Thank goodness we have our garden open for the NGS on May 23rd and not April 5th as last year, as there will be some chance of recovery.

I wondered how many of my favourite gardens had fared.

We did manage a brief escape in October to take advantage of our membership of the NT, RHS, EH and the Historic Houses Association and managed to clock up 8 houses and gardens visits in three and a half days in East Anglia.

First we visited Hyde Hall, the fairly new RHS garden perched on a hill, and then admired just what seemed to survive in the Mediterranean and Australian garden – I dare not go back for a year or two until dead plants have been replaced. Not the ideal spot for a garden!

After visiting Sheringham Park, Wolterton, Mannington and Blickling we went to East Ruston Gardens for the fourth time (*on right*). This is a garden that must have been battered by the very worst of the beast from the east.

I first visited this with the Norfolk Gardens Trust in just the third weekend conference of the new Association of Gardens Trust in about 1995. The owners



were then creating an ambitious garden just one and a half miles from the Norfolk coast in the flattest of land , exceptionally exposed to the North sea. There were views of five churches and the Happisburgh light-house . First the owners had created avenues pointing towards some of these features and planted the essential shelterbelts by acquiring more land.

Now the shelterbelts have matured the owners have created a series of protected rooms of extraordinary exotic plants with garden rooms to enjoy the aspects .

The survival of the exotic plants grown there is hard to comprehend , with aconiums surviving winters outside alongside bananas and others which we only expect to see in our South-western gardens (and Ventnor of course !). The low rainfall must help.



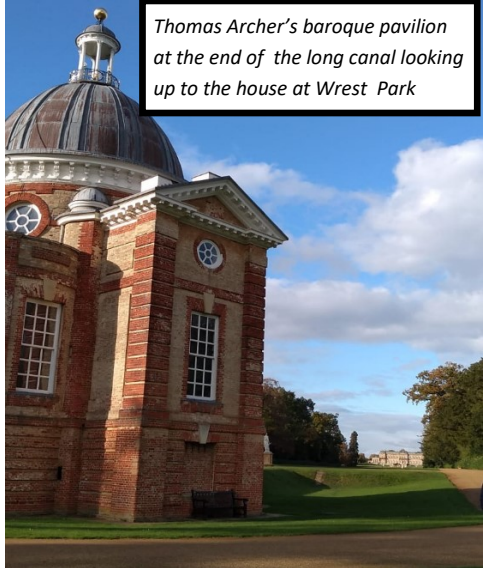
I came away feeling this is the best new garden created in the last 30 years , through both its exceptional design, and the plants , all in such an unlikely location. I felt what a disappointment Hyde Hall and many institutionalised gardens are compared with the freedom of expression that these two private gentlemen have created. www.e-ruston-oldvicaragegardens.co.uk

But just how has it coped with those exceptional winds? How has the pine shelterbelt and the inner hedges of beech, privet and others protected it? And how will the garden sustain itself after the present owners have gone? Some 20 miles from a City and 40 miles from a motorway.???

Our last visit was to Wrest Park , in contrast just a few miles from the M1, and four miles from Bedford. The landscape features and buildings of Nicholas Hawksmoor , William Kent and others stunned me and all credit for English Heritage in rescuing it—yet how little do we hear about its existence. No attempt here to grow any exotics . Only sensible Victorian evergreens and a few dahlias to lighten up the fading October evening light.

With the benefit of a large population on its doorstep it is clearly more sustainable.

In the earliest days of the IW Gardens Trust, I remember Vicky Basford asking me whether I just grew plants which were period correct. If only I had it would have saved me much propagating, planting out, and searching nurseries for those new introductions and half hardy exotics which I love, that remind me of those exotic holidays I have missed over the last year. Also reminding me to visit Abbotsbury or my favorites in Cornwall where I had hoped to share some of the best gardens with members this April.



Thomas Archer's baroque pavilion at the end of the long canal looking up to the house at Wrest Park

Have I learnt any lessons? Could I create a new shelterbelt that would protect us from the North-East? But as one called by Public Health England as being of a vulnerable age would I ever see the benefits? Or shall I give up my newly discovered and half hardy exotics? Northcourt was built in a period of a mini iceage so only the hardiest of native plants would have been grown.

Retreating to my greenhouse where one can escape from all the problems of the world, I spotted half hardy *Salvia Waverly* in flower, bought at East Ruston. A smaller pinker version of *Phylis fancy*, both being discovered as chance crosses from *S.Leucantha* in California. Gardening is a challenge and despite all that nature throws at us, I badly need some challenges now that Spring is coming and lockdown easing is in sight. Out will come my half-hardies again!



John Harrison @ Northcourt . March 8th 2021. (garden open for NGS May 23rd 12.00-17.00) . No prebooking required as it is after May 17th. Garden freedom day!

EVENTS PROGRAMME

Glasshouses and exotics through the ages - Kate Harwood Talk.

Two separate talks by Zoom.

Thursday April 8th and 15th at 19.30

Kate Harwood has agreed to return to talk about glasshouses and exotics through the ages. 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. However due to Covid restrictions the talk will be divided into two parts given by zoom, each lasting about 45 minutes..

Zooming in from 19.15 for a chat , lecture starting at 19.30 and an opportunity for questions afterwards .

Email Susan Dobbs. Email Sk.dobbs@icloud.com by April 1st for zoom login code and password. Telephone:01983 612132 if you have any questions .

Annual General Meeting and Garden Visits

Dates to be fixed depending on Covid restrictions—but provisional programme

Bembridge Sailing Club, Embankment Road, Bembridge. PO35 5NR.
Plenty of parking in the car park opposite the Club House next to Spinaker Chandlery.

Tea and coffee will be available at £1.50 per person

2:30pm AGM

Before the AGM some of us will be meeting from 12:30pm at The Pilot Boat Inn for a light lunch (payable locally), please join us if you wish.

After the AGM there is an opportunity to visit the private gardens at Tyne Hall (courtesy of Mr and Mrs Grimaldi) and East Cliff (courtesy of Sir Ian and Lady Cheshire). Parking for this will be available in the large field adjacent to Tyne Hall.



Restored glasshouse Wallington, Northumbria. Photo by Kate Harwood.

Below Folly Farm.



Visit to Folly Farm

Thursday July 22nd 2021

The Isle of Wight Gardens Trust have been offered a guided visit to Folly Farm through Simon Goodenough the Estate Manager and former curator of Ventnor Botanic Gardens.

Folly Farm at Sulhampstead, near Reading was one of the finest collaborations between Edwin Lutyens and Gertrude Jekyll. Much had been lost when Jonathan and Jennifer Oppenheimer acquired it for their family home a decade ago. Together with the Lutyens Trust, Jennifer set about researching the C17th house history and regenerating the gardens and landscape setting. A 'dream team' of architects and garden design including Dan Pearson was assembled, and managed by Simon Goodenough.

Sadly Jennifer died May 2017 but the work continues as a tribute to her vision and energy. On a few special occasions when the family are away the estate is open to small groups of 30 with donations to Perennial Gardeners Royal Benevolent Society

TRAVEL

This will be in two 16 seater mini buses from the Wight Minibus Company One starting from Shanklin one from Chale crossing on Red Funnel Ferry. 9.30am East Cowes to Southampton Return 7.15pm Southampton to East Cowes (depending on traffic)
Pick up points and times will be confirmed nearer the time.

LUNCH

The Spring Inn at Sulhampstead will provide a light lunch for us before the 1.00pm visit to Folly Farm with guided tour and afternoon tea. We depart Folly Farm 4.30pm.

COST

£70.00 to include all transport costs, lunch, entrance to Folly Farm with donation to "Perennial" and tea.

RESERVATION

We are limited to 30 places. Booking is on a first come first served basis.
£70.00 is required by **June 1st 2021**.

Please complete the enclosed booking form. Further enquiries to Susan Dobbs.
Email Sk.dobbs@icloud.com Telephone: 01983 612132.

Other Events and Talks.

Osborne House are staging a gardening event during the weekend of June 26th-27th and we have been asked to man a stand. Look out for details , either in the local press or on our website. Offers of help to man the stand would be appreciated.

www.iowgardenstrust.co.uk . Do often check this for news and events .

There are back issues of our newsletters and research articles to read. See archive tab.

Do also look at www.thegardenstrust for other events on the mainland but more importantly lectures you can listen to online.

The present series includes :

Unforgettable gardens—a series Other voices in the garden history-series

Plant hunting in the Himalayas Adapting our gardens for insects

Gardens of the Early 17th century –series What is wild?

Thanks to help from the Gardens Trust on 21st August 2020 Historic England added a number of new sites to the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens. Of these Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe's Shute House garden, Shaftesbury is worthy of a visit from us in the future. John Brooke's garden of Denmans beyond Chichester we visited some 20 years ago was added along with Beth Chatto's garden in Essex. All being well a visit to Shute could be



arranged for 2022. combined with another Dorset garden.

Here are two images from the garden designed between 1969 and 1988.



Garden Visit to Northcourt , Shorwell, PO303JG. Tuesday July 6th.



Photo Northcourt July 2nd 2020

(Covid restrictions permitting , whatever the weather)

Bring your own picnic, folding chair or rug. (Swimsuit if you fancy a dip in the restored pool).

Short Talk at 12.30 by Shaun Kiddell of the Heritage Lottery Fund on some of their parks and garden projects . Garden tours 11.45 and 12.30 (if weather suitable) or wander on your own..

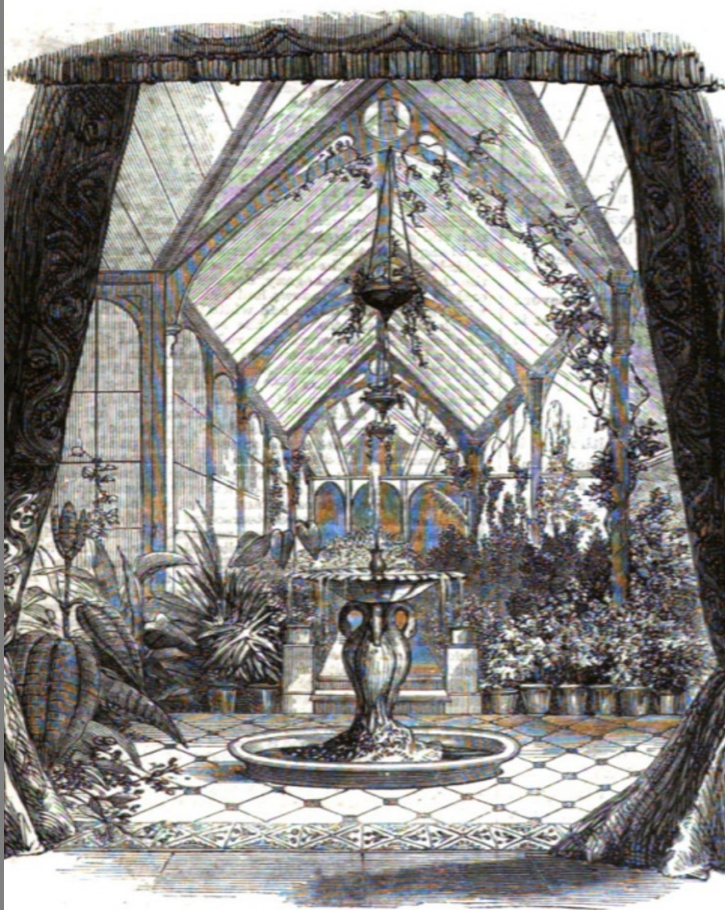
Bring an umbrella in case of rain! Suggested donation £5 pp.

On a tablet at the end of the Wallington glasshouse is written (thanks to Kate Harwood for this) . ***“When wearied and overwrought by***

study or affairs of business repair

to these haunts and refresh your

mind by a stroll amidst the flowers” Wearied by lockdowns let us do just that and look forward to meeting one another in the flesh on July 6th .



Glasshouses and exotics – inside the conservatory of St. Clare