

The Bucks Gardener

Issue 4

The Newsletter of the Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust

Winter 1998/9

From the Chair

To those of you who were expecting this a while ago, I can but apologise, to those saying 'another Newsletter already...' at least the printing should be better; I rather rushed the last issue. This is the last Newsletter of our first year of operation, although those members who started with us will realise that we have been going for nearer eighteen months. We have managed to produce a full programme of activities; the launch, two series of talks, a rich variety of walks, and the symposium. We have also managed to start a Research Group, a Schools Group, aided (we hope) Stowe in its bid for World Heritage Site status and responded to a couple of rather difficult planning problems. We are also starting an interesting project with Eric Throssel, more of which later.

We have begun to build a good relationship with many of the gardens of Buckinghamshire, both private and those, in their various forms, that are open to the public.

Another aspect to this is the number of schools which have begun to contact us for help, more on which inside.

We now have the difficult task of following all this, and retaining our existing members as well as recruiting many more in the coming year.

To those of you who have taken out Life Membership, many thanks. For the rest, we have a renewal form, with a standing order form, and a copy of our new Membership leaflet. It would be very helpful if you could fill this in and return it by 1st April.

We have another programme of walks, some to familiar places, others less so, and we are already thinking of next year's talks, though we may change the timing of these as attendance has been somewhat disappointing (this has led to me having to take quantities of cake home). There is one more to go, Susan Campbell will be speaking on Kitchen Gardens at the County Museum, Aylesbury at 2.15 pm on 20th March; we'll be glad to see you.

I think we can be well pleased with our activities so far and hope you will continue to support us as we (wait for it) enter the new Millennium. CB

Trouble at Hartwell

Some of you may have read the recent editorial in *Country Life* (February 11th) in praise of the new developments at Fairford Leys, near Aylesbury. In the light of last summer's visit to Hartwell House, and Eric Throssel's researches, I thought it wise to let you know our feelings on the situation. We have lodged a protest, too late to stop the houses, but against the further development of the fields towards Hartwell House.

The proposal is for a series of playing fields, a pavilion and parking for 140 cars. This development was going to go through on the nod until spotted by Richard Broyd at Hartwell. It is actually in the historic Grade II* listed parkland setting of Hartwell House, and would further affect the view of Aylesbury old town as seen in the Balthasar Nebot painting (below), particularly cars, lighting and hard surfaced courts. Unusually the planning authorities did not feel obliged to consult either English Heritage or The Garden History Society, despite a statutory obligation to do so. This above all shows the need for a local group particularly looking at the county's parks and gardens, and we are in the throes of setting up a planning group, to oversee the planning process. If you would be interested in joining this group, please contact the Secretary. *See article inside*



The parkland setting of the Grade II listed park & garden at Hartwell House, February 1999*

Walk at Hartwell House and Waddesdon

On a damp overcast day in June twenty keen enthusiasts met the architect of the restoration work, Mr Eric Throssell and the head gardener, Mr Brian Saunders. Mr Throssell gave a brief history of the buildings of the Hartwell Estate and outlined his work and restoration of the garden and its landscape buildings.

(this began its life as the central span of the old Kew bridge), designed and built by James Paine.

A large walled kitchen garden with a bowling green pavilion was built and planted in the 19th century. Last used as a working kitchen garden in 1954, it is now the site of tennis courts. The



The view towards Aylesbury Old Town, from the church at Hartwell in the 1730's (Balthazar Nebot), now in the County Museum

In the middle of the 18th century James Gibbs designed and built a series of garden buildings, which frequently completed a view; these are shown in seven pictures by Balthazar Nebot. Using the Nebot paintings of the garden, the originals of which are in the County Museum at Aylesbury, Mr Throssell has been able to draw up a pictorial map showing where many of the now missing statues, temples and buildings had been. The paintings show extensive walks, geometrical ponds, avenues and topiary. A ha-ha was added around the north, east and south sides of the house in the late 18th century. The splendid equestrian statue of Frederick, Prince of Wales, was commissioned in 1757 and has been moved to a prime position opposite the entrance to the house. The formal ponds and canal are now recognisable only as extensive stretches of water spanned by an attractive bridge

water tower remains but as a shelter from the rain. The main path winding its way back through the shrubbery is cobbled, and affords good views of the house from different aspects. In 1979 Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe prepared plans for the garden, some of which were put into effect for Historic Houses Hotels in 1990. Where James Gibbs designed a menagerie for the stable block, a new garden has recently been made in the stable courtyard and some statues have been reinstated. Progress has been made with replanting the north avenue with lime trees instead of the original beech, walnut, chestnut, oak and accacia.

Hartwell House was built in the early 17th century by Henry Keene, but has been remodelled several times since. The church, also by Henry Keene, remains and is a focal point once again. Hartwell House is now a luxury hotel.

As we left Hartwell, Michael Walker's smiling face beckoned us through the gated road over the Eythrop Estate to Waddesdon Manor, where a splendid tea awaited us. Michael then led us through the restored gardens (see Issue 1) and showed us what they hope to do next. It was especially enthralling to see the natural re-emergence of orchids in the Daffodil Valley, following a change in the mowing regime.

We then drove down to the Dairy where a rather damp group of Friends of the Aylesbury Vale awaited us. A glass of wine and

View from the new roundabout to Fairford Leys, clearly showing the site of the new playing fields, the sites propensity to flooding, and the ancient ridge and furrow, on which they are to be built



The planning problem, Hartwell's parkland

A planning application has been made for Coldharbour Farm, albeit for playing fields. On the site of Hartwell's Stowe Lodges, and just to the east of the Great North Avenue at Hartwell, this is a particularly unfortunate development. Whilst we can not decry the need for playing fields, the further extension of Aylesbury across the Roman Road and railway has developed since the 1960s. With Hartwell Park listed Grade II* and designated in the draft county plan as a green buffer zone this scheme should be

Roughly the same view as in the Nebot painting opposite.

Despite much building the view is intact, and may be restorable if development comes no nearer.



simple nibbles revived us and we then embarked on a tour of the restored and embellished Dairy gardens, with their intriguing Pulhamite rock work. By this stage we could practically see the acres of glass houses which had once stood here. We await further developments and hope to return again. Many thanks to all involved in organising this enchanting, if exhausting, day.

Jennifer M Woolveridge

unlikely to go ahead... However we have been alerted and will do our best to speak fairly on this one.

Another site, Bulstrode Park, between Gerrards Cross and Beaconsfield has had its share of problems, despite a similar Grade II* listing, with the extensive gravel extraction and M40 widening in the Repton designed Park. It does seem that despite the best intentioned plans the designed landscape is continually at risk and does need us all to keep our eyes open. CB

BGT WORKING WITH SCHOOLS

Requests from schools in the County for help (ideas, advice, designs, plants, time & resources) with their gardens, and environment, are coming in to Charles Boot and myself without any effort on our part. Indeed, any effort would at the moment put a real strain on our slender resources (though *slender* is probably not the first word to spring to mind, certainly about me). We have tried our best to respond to all the requests received so far and work has started on some pilot projects;

A Long Crendon school is organising a **DIY Day** involving the whole school and the village community, working together on a wide variety of tasks to improve the school and its immediate environment. Peter Everett had initiated the contact with the school and when our deliberations with the Head were over, he was immediately pressed into service by Charles. They spent a happy, if twiggy, afternoon clearing a very neglected butterfly garden, discovering some wonderful, long lost, plants in the process. A poster which will help pupils identify the butterflies and birds in this small courtyard is badly needed, and if you would be interested in becoming involved in the **DIY Day**, do please ring either Charles or myself.

More Heligan-like activity happened at a school in Stoke Mandeville On a cold January Saturday, when staff (including the Headteacher, who spent a lot of time in the rubbish bin) worked with Clive Bostle, Charles and myself clearing a neglected quiet garden. The next project(s) are to begin a vegetable patch (or perhaps pots), and, in the longer term, create a shady area and plant some trees to break up a bleak playground. Chequerboard gardens for pupils might also be on the agenda. Some help with heavy digging might be needed—watch this space, or ring me.

Charles very recently visited a school in High Wycombe and may be designing a low maintenance garden for them, to fit into a space left by a demolished *Terrapin* building. The Headteacher has had a request from pupils to start a Gardening Club.

In an Aylesbury school for children with severe learning difficulties there are now two (at least) parts to the project. For the restored courtyard garden sensory plants are needed (anything scented or even smelly), or with unusually textured leaves (prickly or furry), or which will produce rattly seedheads.

A water feature would be wonderful, so would some seats (dreaming aloud now). An old house in the town has recently been sensitively converted into a centre where students over 16 can acquire skills they need to live independently. The garden is as the builders left it (bare earth). We have had a kind offer of expert help with planting ideas and possibly with design—manpower will be needed to carry out the design. There are other features which badly need upgrading—another bleak playground at the main school, neglected garden beds and chicken pens—on and on.

A school in Amersham has yet to be visited—*mea culpa*, a lot.

So, what have we learned over the past few months? I hope it is obvious from all this that things are moving, however slowly, and that initiatives are spread across the county, albeit being almost exclusively in the primary sector. We have made no attempt to encourage schools to come forward, and for the time being, dare not do this as the demand will almost certainly outstrip supply. Priorities, of equal importance, are becoming obvious.

The first is, of course, people. If you would be prepared to help, for a short or longer time, perhaps in school dear to your heart, or by meeting one of the needs I have tried to outline, or in an other way, do please contact me (01442 822 583) or Charles Boot (01494 488 669). We would be really pleased to hear from you

The second is the sordid subject of coin—funding. I am really grateful to AVDC who have recently supplied me with a generous amount of information about grants which may be available from various sources. However, I readily admit to being hopeless when it comes to asking for money, and entirely flummoxed, despite good advice from Ricky Gershon, the Education Officer at Waddesdon Manor, by the intricacies of Landfill Tax, E B Buckinghamshire, New Opportunities Fund, Groundwork Trust, etc. Yet another place to shout HELP, please!!!

Suzanne Millard

Do you have any unwanted plants, even turf, that schools may be able to use? Particularly useful would be those that are tough, scented, textured or noisy (!), and self seed with relish.
Alchemilla mollis, bluebells, foxgloves, ferns, snowdrops, lavender, thymes and other edible herbs spring to mind. Climbers (other than Russian Vine) may be useful for covering up chain link and other boundries. We are also hoping to start a vegetable garden so some good size seedlings might be useful. Perhaps we could start some nurseries, with our own spare plants?
Please contact Suzanne Millard
01442 822 583

ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO

ARTICLES FROM THE GARDENERS' CHRONICLE AND THE GARDENERS' MAGAZINE OF 1899

CRAB MR. LEOPOLD DE ROTHSCHILD

THOSE who are acquainted with the distinctive characteristics of the ornamental crabs will derive much satisfaction from the indications of the steadily increasing appreciation of these fruits. For the most part elegant in aspect they are exquisitely beautiful when their long slender branches are enwreathed in the delicately tinted flowers, and immensely attractive during the latter part of the summer and the beginning of the autumn, when the fruits have taken on their rich colouring. The majority may be employed to great advantage in the shrubbery border or as single specimens on the lawn; and when suitable positions are selected and sufficient attention devoted to the regulation of the growth to ensure the formation of shapely heads they are unsurpassed

of the crabs, and large numbers of seedlings have been raised in the nurseries of the firm at Langley. Some of these have reached the fruiting stage, and from them have been selected two which give promise of proving valuable additions to the group. One of these, Mrs. John Seden, was submitted to public notice in 1898, and created much interest among those who had an opportunity of seeing the fruits, and this season was exhibited at a meeting of the Royal Horticultural Society the second variety, **Mr Leopold de Rothschild**. The last-named was raised by the intercrossing of Cox's Orange Pippin apple and John Downie crab, and it is interesting to observe that while the effect of the first has been to increase the size and somewhat change the colour and shape



of the fruits, the prepotency of the crab was so strong as to prevent the apple imparting its delicious flavour to the flesh.

The latter is similar to that of the crab, with a little less acidity, and consequently the fruit, like that of John Downie, will be of a high degree of utility in the culinary art. The size and shape of the fruits of Mrs Leopold de Rothschild are admirably shown in the accompanying illustration, and with regard to their appearance it will suffice to say they are clear yellow on the shaded side, with a brilliant crimson cheek on the side next the sun.

G. G.

in effectiveness by other deciduous trees. Their merits are not, however, exhausted by a brief recapitulation of their usefulness in garden scenery. The fruits of a considerable proportion of the varieties are not only remarkably handsome when they have assumed their distinctive colouring, but they make excellent jelly and delicious preserves served whole. The fruit is indeed so useful in a preserved state that such varieties as John Downie, Dartmouth or Hyslop, Siberian, Transparent, and Transcendent are well worthy of being planted for culinary purposes.

Recognising the value of the ornamental crabs in the flower garden and the culinary art, Messrs J Veitch and Sons have of late years devoted a considerable share of attention to their improvement, and already achieved much success. An endeavour has been made to combine the high quality of some of the finest of the desert apples with the freedom of fruiting and the high colouration

STOWE, long one of the most famous seats in Buckinghamshire, is about to become the residence of Lady Kinloss, who has let Biddlesden Park, where she has resided for several years. The mansion is of immense size and handsome elevation, and the gardens are extensive and highly attractive. The latter obtained their celebrity from the alterations effected by Bridgeman in accordance with the instructions of Lord Cobham early in the last century. Stowe set the fashion in the use of statues, vases and other architectural ornaments. Kent was employed, some forty or fifty years later in making alterations, and he greatly improved the gardens by ridding them of some of their more formal features. In 1827 Loudon observed with reference to Stowe that "when beheld at a distance this place appears like a vast grove interspersed with columns, obelisks, and towers, which apparently emerge from a luxuriant mass of foliage."



THE CEDARS AT DROPMORE

Few people who have visited Dropmore, that paradise of Conifers, fail to view the remarkable Cedar avenue. It is not a conspicuous feature, leads to nowhere in particular, and is situated some hundred yards distant from, and parallel to, the road which traverses the grounds. The finest specimens of *Cedrus deodora* now extant at Dropmore were planted by Frost in 1834, which was soon after his appointment as gardener; but this avenue of Lebanon Cedars was probably planted ten or fifteen years later. The trees were planted in avenue form, we believe, in reality to get rid of them, so many Cedars having been dotted about the grounds as to be suggestive somewhat of monotony. But although it owes its origin to an accidental abundance of young plants, the avenue forms at this day a pleasing and unusual feature of tree planting in this country. The photograph from which our illustration was prepared was taken by Mr James of Farnham Royal.

The Gardeners' Chronicle March 9 1899.



EXHIBITION AYLESBURY HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY, JULY 13.

ESTABLISHED in 1822, this society held its seventy-eighth exhibition on the above date in the Corn Exchange and adjoining market, a pastoral entertainment being also organised and carried out in the recreation ground adjacent where some three dozen prettily-dressed girls displayed much tact and discipline in plaiting the maypole, reel dances, &c, a pyrotechnic display concluding the day's programme, resulted in a handsome return in the form of *gate money*. The weather out of doors was charming, but the powerful sun's rays through the glass roof of the Corn Exchange proved trying to the cut flower section, especially the roses, and

also to the visitors. High quality ruled in most departments, but the number of exhibits was fewer than the average. The arrangement of the products was much as in previous years, the groups of plants being ranged around the sides, the cut flowers and fruit filling a central table adorned with a line of well-grown fuchsias.

PLANTS.—In the open class for a group for effect, occupying sixty feet superficial, Colonel Hornsby Drake, Wootton house, Brill, was the only competitor. The arrangement was fairly showy, and contained a choice selection of fine-foliaged plants; while in the next class, on a similar area for flowering subjects, Mr. E. Mackrill was first, very prominent being his richly-coloured begonias; Mr. John Walker, Thame, second, his finest specimen being young, densely-flowered zonal geraniums; Miss Smith-Dorrien (gardener W. Tipler), third, altogether an effective class. For a collection of table plants and fruit Colonel E. Dyke Lee, Hartwell Park (gardener W. Robins), was first, plants and fruit excellent; Mr. E. T. Mackrill, second. In the three classes for zonal geraniums Mr. J. Walker was premier for six double, six scarlet, and six rose or light shades, Mrs. H. A. P. Cooper (gardener J. Morton)

being second in each class, the plants all fresh, dwarf-trained, and carrying a forest of trusses of bloom. Mr. Robins proved the only exhibitor in the classes for gloxinias and achimenes; of the latter he had grand pans of *Longiflora major*, *L. alba* and *Grandiflora*. The fuchsias were all nice pyramid bushes, fresh and laden with flowers, Mr. Morton taking the prizes for six and three specimens, one very fine plant, *Covent Garden White*, being noteworthy. He also led for a specimen plant in flower, staging a prime example of *Avalanche* fuchsia. For a dozen exotic ferns Lady de Rothschild, Aston Clinton (gardener H. Warren), led with choice large specimens; Colonel H. Drake, second. Six stove or greenhouse specimens was a fairly good class, Mr. Tipler and Mr. T. Field dividing the honours; while for a group of miscellaneous plants in or out of flower Mr. R. Hopkins, Market Place, Aylesbury, was the only competitor. Tuberous begonias made a nice bit of colouring, Mr. E. T. Mackrill taking the cards for single and double forms of good quality; but it was generally conceded that massing with small ferns is preferable to individual specimens. Some pretty examples of coleus were staged in competition, Mr. T. Field and

Mr. W. Tipler taking the highest honours; Mr. Robins leading in the class for a triplet of foliated plants, including a very fine example of caladium Triomphe de l'Exposition. For a basket of bedding plants Mr. J. Walker took the card, Mr. R. Hopkins second. Mrs. H. Gurney had selaginellas, which secured a first, and a like card fell to Pandanus Veitchi from the same exhibitor.

CUT FLOWERS.—The section claimed much attention from the visitors, although a number of the roses succumbed to the heat long ere the show closed. For three dozen roses, single trusses, Mr. J. Walker headed the list with a fine lot of blooms; specially fine were Mrs. W. J. Grant, Niphetos, White Lady, La France, Maréchal Niel, Duke of Fife, Reynolds Hole (a grand bloom of this old favourite), Catherine Mermet, Lady Mary Fitzwilliam, Caroline Testout, Comtesse d'Oxford, Her Majesty, Marquise de Litta, Maman Cochet, Gustave Piganeau, Earl of Dufferin, Marchioness of Dufferin, M. S. Rodocanachi, and Etienne Levet; Mr. H. Warren second, the last-named being first for twenty-four single trusses, his choicest blooms being Madame Cusin, Innocente Pirola, and Madame Hoste; Messrs. T. Gurney and Mr. Robins taking lower prizes. In the amateur class for twelve Mr. H. W. G. Morris, Thame, was first for a nice box including pretty blooms of Maman Cochet, Marchioness of Londonderry, Mrs. Sharman Crawford, and M. S. Rodocanachi. For a collection of cut flowers, six bunches, Mr. J. Walker, Colonel H. Drake, and Mr. E. T. Mackrill shared the awards; and in the class for two dozen bunches Mr. J. Walker made a fine display with tastily disposed gatherings of *Cenothera speciosa*, *Helenium magnifica*, *Begonia picta*, pink Snowflake, *Centaurea macrocephala*, *pelargonium* The Pearl, *gloxinia* Her Majesty, *Coreopsis grandiflora*, *gladiolus* The Bride, *Delphinium celestum*, Carnation Jack, rose Crimson Rambler, *Stenactis speciosa*, *achillea* The Pearl, and *delphinium* Wilson; Mr. T. Field, second. For a vase of cut blooms Mr. H. W. G. Morris was leading (sweet pea Lovely and light grasses); Mr. J. Walker presenting the most tasty bouquet. In the ladies' classes the table decorations (three vases) were attractively arranged; Miss B. Parrott first with cornflowers, white campanulas, light grasses, and trailing sprays of *Ampelopsis Veitchi*. Mrs. Morris, Thame, had the premier set of six button holes: *stephanotis*. carnations (two), rose buds (two), and tuberose; Miss Hopkins, second: orchids, tuberose, rose buds, and carnations (three); Mrs. Braidwood, third: *plumbago*, white stocks, double ivy geranium, *begonia*, and rose buds. Mrs. Morris was also placed first for an epergne of wild flowers. In the lower division Mr. Morris was premier in the classes for carnations and sweet peas; Mr. T. Anstiss, Brill, for eight bunches of cut flowers; and Mr. C. A. Boughton for six roses.

FRUIT.—This section is always an attractive feature here. For a collection of eight dishes Mr. H. Warren led with grandly-coloured, large specimens of Dymond peach, Waterloo strawberry, Brown Turkey fig, Black Tartarian and Bigarreau cherries, Muscat of Alexandria and Black Hamburg grapes; Mr. W. Robins, second, staging Black Hamburg and Foster's Seedling grapes beautifully finished, Black Tartarian cherry, Spencer nectarine, Queen pine, and Hero of Lockinge melon. In the dish classes Mr. Robins was first with Black Hamburg and also with White Hamburg grapes; Mr. Warren taking second cards with Muscat of Alexandria and Black Hamburg. For peaches Mr. T. Mackrill was first, Mr. Robins second for Barrington, Mr. Warren third with Dymond; while for nectarines Mr. Robins headed the list with Stanwick Eiruge very grandly coloured; Mr. Mackrill second with larger but paler specimens. Strawberries as exhibited by Mr. W. Earl, who had fine dishes of Monarch, Royal Sovereign, and President; Mr. J.

Morton, second, Mr. Warren had the finest sized cherries (Black Tartarian); Mr. W. Earl presenting the largest twelve gooseberries, his exhibit scarcely reaching the weight of those which secured him the card last year; and Colonel H. Drake staged the finest dish of red currants.

VEGETABLES.—Twenty-four classes were devoted to vegetables, exclusive of those reserved to cottagers and allotment-holders. To enumerate the classes seriatim would fill a page, so that only a casual note can be given here. For a dry season the show was an all-round good one, Colonel H. Drake securing the card for a dozen dishes with finely-developed examples; Mr. Robins first for tomatoes; Mr. W. Tipler led in the classes for kidney and round potatoes, basket of salad, and Messrs Sutton and Son's six dishes; Mr. Warren first for cauliflowers, carrots, and onions; Mr. W. Coleman led with four dishes of peas and one dish of peas; Mr. Hopkins the finest brace of cucumbers; and Mr. C. A. Boughton took the card for turnips. Mr. Coleman also scored five firsts in the amateur section.

To aid the display, Mr. T. Anstiss, Brill, staged a collection of choice carnations, single, show, and fancy dahlias in variety. Mr. John Walker, Thame, put up fifty handsome bouquets of sweet peas, including Chancellor, Colonist, Duchess of Sutherland, Lady Mary Currie, Black Knight, Prince of Wales, Lady Mary Balfour, Lady G. Hamilton &c; this exhibit was regarded as a charming addition.

The Gardeners' Magazine July 23 1899

QUEENS TREES.—We have to add another oak to the list of trees known to have been planted by HER MAJESTY, printed in our issue for June 19, 1897. On the occasion of the eightieth anniversary of her birthday, THE QUEEN planted an Oak near one of the lawns at Windsor. Floreat!

The Gardeners' Chronicle, May 27 1899

THE HARDY FRUIT GARDEN.

BY C. HERRIN, GARDENER TO LADY LOUISA FORTESCUE,
DROPMORE, MAIDENHEAD.

Planting Fruit Trees.—The very mild and open weather which has prevailed throughout the winter, with the exception only of a day or two in December, has been most favourable for all planting operations in connection with the outside fruit garden, and work of this kind will be in a generally forward condition. Where not already completed, planting may yet be successfully carried on in open weather, but the sooner, now, that is finished the better chances the trees will have to become settled in the ground, and ready to start into growth in the spring. Assuming that the ground has been properly prepared, the trees, if obtained from the trade, should have the roots thoroughly moistened if they are found to be in a dry condition, trimming off any broken portions or shortening others that are unduly long, and then embed them into moist soil till they are Planted. Should the soil be rather wet when this is done, a few shovelfuls of a mixture of dry earth, wood ashes and sandy road. scrapings should be afforded each tree in order to facilitate the planting and the production of young roots. Let this kind of material be well worked in about the roots, which should be laid out in a horizontal radiating position giving the tree a slight upward and downward shake when about half the operation of filling-in is finished, and press the soil moderately

firmly about the roots. Finish off with a mulching of littery or slightly rotten manure with a view to excluding frost, encouraging root action and, later, conserving the moisture in the soil.

Fastening trees.—Standard and bush-headed trees, should be secured to stakes placed firmly in the ground, the trees being fastened temporarily until well settled in the soil. Wall trees may be secured from harm by gathering the branches together loosely together with matting, and tying these temporarily to the wall from a nail on either side, leaving the training to be done later on. In planting wall trees, due allowance must also be made for the swelling of the stems, by planting six inches or more from the base of the wall, and sloping the stem upwards against the latter; and Pear-trees especially need this attention, as their stems swell to a considerable size. Apricots, too, canker and gum, and lose branches from a too severe pressure of the stem against the wall at the first point of contact. An important item with newly-planted trees is to properly label them before the nursery labels are lost; and for this purpose the Acme or Stratford labels, in various shapes, are both cheap and durable.

Pruning and Cleaning Orchard Trees.—Orchards of Apple and Pear trees are often left pretty much to look after themselves excepting at fruit-gathering time and consequently orchards in a bad condition are rather common, although much has been written and done in recent years, and a great improvement in thin respect has resulted. The present is a suitable time for a judicious thinning and pruning of neglected standard-trees. Where the crowns have been much neglected, with the result that the branches are crowded the pruning should be carried out gradually in order that no considerable check be given to the tree, the thinning in such cases being extended over two or three seasons. Begin by removing the innermost branches, and those that cross each other a few at a time at each winter's pruning. After sawing-off a branch the wound should be smoothed over with a sharp pruning knife, and if very large painted over with lead colour.

Dressing for Trees.—Trees infested with lichen should be cleansed, and moss or other growing rubbish removed from the base of the tree. The main branches may be brushed over with lime-wash made from freshly-slaked lime, or fresh lime in powder may be scattered over them when moist. One of the best and simplest winter dressings for fruit trees of all kinds I have yet tried is that made from an American recipe that appeared a few years since in a contemporary. It consists of caustic soda and potash in equal quantities. The proportions as follows:—1lb. of caustic soda, 1lb. of crude potash, to be dissolved in a little hot water, adding to this sufficient clear soft water to make 10 gallons, or if more or less be required in similar proportions. If the preparation be used at a temperature of about 120°, it is the more effectual. This wash will remove moss and other parasites, and also kill most kinds of insects and their eggs, and leave the trees in a clean and healthy-looking condition. If used for Peach and Apricot trees the above quantities should be diluted with 12 gallons of water, and be used only while the buds are in a somewhat dormant state.

The Gardeners' Chronicle January 7 1899.

DATE OF FLOWERING OF THE SNOWDROP.

—The snowdrop was first observed in bloom in a Middlesex garden on Jan 22 this year. In the same garden and in the same border the dates of flowering since 1890 were as follows: 1890, Jan 9; 1891, Feb 6; 1892, Jan 22; 1893, Jan 30; 1894, Jan 21; 1895, Jan 17; 1896, Jan 16; 1897, not recorded; 1898, Jan 18;

1899, Jan 22. The 19th of Jan being the earliest date; Feb 6 or the thirty seventh day of the year the latest. The Hazel was observed in bloom on Jan 21 but was seen some days earlier in the same neighbourhood. In 1894 the Hazel was recorded to be in bloom on Dec 30, the usual dates being among the earliest days in February.

The Gardeners Chronicle Jan 28 1899

LADY LOUSIA FORTESCUE.

—The death of this lady at an advanced age took place at Torquay on the 9th inst. Her estate at Dropmore, near Maidenhead, is well known for its fine collection of Conifers. The estate we believe, passes to the only surviving son.

The Gardeners' Chronicle Jan 14 1899.

SCHOOL CHILDREN'S HERBARIUMS.

—Of the premiums offered for Herbarium's to the schoolchildren of Hartford Connecticut, noticed heretofore in Meehan's Monthly, Mrs Seliger says:—

“We have had our Herbarium Exhibition of what the school children brought together. It was the centre of attraction at the Chrysanthemum Show, and a more pleasing feature one cannot well imagine. Notably perfect was the arrangement of displaying the flower sheets on double screens, hooked together and standing free with the passage between the rows. This showed to great advantage the specimens collected. About 6,000 of such had been sent in for the contest. All of them had some merit of more or less degree, and considering this is the first occasion that this has been set in motion, it was a grand success. Many visitors were surprised that we have so many native flowers, but you know the least and often most noxious weeds make the prettiest specimen for herbariums; while bright & showy flowers mostly show to disadvantage on account of having lost their colours.”

Meehan's Monthly Jan 1899.

WE CANNOT RECOMMEND ANY OF THE CHEMICALS LISTED IN THE DROPMORE ARTICLE, THEY ARE PROBABLY ILLEGAL. WE, AND YOU, MAY GET INTO SERIOUS TROUBLE IF YOU USE THEM. CB

Knot gardens & parterres

Robin Whalley and Anne Jennings

Barn Elms, 1998, £25.

A tale in two parts, this book comprises an extensive and fascinating history of the knot as pattern, its existence in gardens and its transformation over time into the parterre. The second part is a shorter, but instructive, section on how to lay out your own scheme. In her foreword the Marchioness of Salisbury, herself the instigator of new gardens at Hatfield House, stresses the value of having all these various sides of the subject within the one book, which, with its bibliography and illustrations, is a valuable addition to the bookshelves.

As with other Barn Elms books this is a scholarly, though very readable, account. Robin Whalley's chapters draw out the variety of the knot, its appearance in archaeology, illuminated manuscripts and print as well as in architecture and embroidery, through many well chosen examples, notably in paintings. The wide range of illustrations shows the cultural importance of the knot, and makes inevitable its appearance in the garden, extending the story as told through the great variety of books gardeners have always written and read. He also illustrates the variety of current knottery, from the great schemes at Hampton Court, Ham and Hatfield, to more modest ones such as those at Chenies Manor and Rousham (Oxon). It is encouraging to see that many of the gardens illustrated are in as good shape as they ever have been, and indeed more are being restored, or planted anew.

One thinks of the outstanding restoration of the great parterre at Waddesdon (this year in a new colour scheme), the newly-made gardens at The Manor House, Bledlow, and at Ascott, Wing, and the restoration of Mary Anne Disraeli's wowsy flower beds at Hughenden in our own county. A recent visit to the garden at Charlecote, Warks, produced the restored Victorian scheme, which survived last Easter's floods.

This leads to the vexed question of when a knot, when a parterre? The knot has parts that appear to interweave and is

planted with box. In reality both *facts* are wrong, indeed box did not become used until the seventeenth-century in England (apparently the smell was thought to kill bees, though try telling this to the swarm I saw in the lovely layout at Tythrop Park a couple of years ago). Ultimately it seems to be a question of scale but both are amply covered.

Anne Jennings's describes how to design and lay out your own knot, drawing on experiences at the Museum of Garden History and its sister garden at the The Ark, Lambeth. These eminently



Spring bulbs at Chenies Manor, the ruin is a backdrop to the formality of the topiary and pleached trees

practical chapters lead you into progressively more complex designs, and make the particular and, I find, very practical suggestion for laying a knot in even the smallest front garden, a ploy I have used several times. It certainly attracts comment and allows the artful disguise of manhole covers, as well as providing a lift to the sterility common to so many front gardens.

As an introduction to a complex aspect of garden history, or as a thoughtfully illustrated guide to some very beautiful gardens, and their inspiration, this book makes a splendid feast, for mind and eye.

Charles Boot

New Year's Day Flower Count

The idea of the New Year's Day Flower Count was to compare the flowers out this year with those showing on the same date 100 years ago. We have had to revise this as I couldn't find a relevant list, but my researches did pull out the **100 Years Ago** feature, with its Snowdrop flowering dates. I hope those who sent me a list enjoyed compiling it, I was certainly impressed.

John Rotheroe, Tring (just out-side Bucks

Chimonanthus praecox
Crocus chrysanthus
Helleborus foetidus
Jasminium nudiflorum
Mahonia aquifolium
Mahonia bealei
Petasites fragrans
Primula vulgaris flora-plena 'Dawn Ansell'
Prunus subhirtella 'Autumnalis'
Rosa 'Queen Elizabeth'
Rosa 'Raubritter'
Viburnum fragrans
Viburnum Tinus
Viburnum tinus 'Pink Prelude'
Vinca minor

Candida Godber, Little Linford, (Milton Keynes)

Aconite
Ceanothus 'Autumnal Blue'
Clematis Jingle Bells (?)
Cyclamen coum
Escallonia 'Donard Star'
Helleborus x ericsmithii
Helleborus foetidus
Helleborus x sternii
Helleborus orientalis
Helleborus corsicus
Helleborus niger
Hydrangea
Jasminum nudiflorum
Limonanthes (poached Egg Plant)
Mahonia 'Charity'
Mahonia lomariifolia
Pachysandra terminalis
Pieris japonica
Primrose
Primula
Prunus x subhirtella 'Autumnallis'
Rosa Memory Lane
Rosa Sweet Juliet
Rosa Wiltshire
Symphytum caucasicum

Viburnum tinus 'Gwenllian'
Viburnum farreri (fragrans)
Viburnum 'Willowood'
Daisy!

Stephanie Lawrence, Beechampton

Alyssum saxatile
Caltha palustris (Marsh marigold)
Chrysanthemum Charm
Chrysanthemum Snowstorm
Hasminus humile
Hebe (purple leaf)
Hesperis matronalis (Sweet rocket)
Hellebore
Lamium
Polyanthus
Pussy willow
Rosa Queen Elizabeth

Penny Frost, Little Brickhill

Abutilon
Brompton Stocks
Daphne Somerset
Fatsia Japonica
Hedera (Ivy)
Helleborus viridus
Jasminus nudiflorum
Mahonia japonica Bealii
Primula
Polyanthus
Rosebuds
Rosa Iceberg
Sarcococca
Scabious
Schizostylus
Skimmia
Snowdrops
Viburnum bodnensis Dawn
Viburnum tinus
Small pink violet
Violas
Wallflower

(I apologise if some of the spellings are a bit off, but I tried, CB.)

Patricia Liechti, Chesham Bois

Arbutus unedo
Clematis cirrhosa balearica
Coronilla glauca citrina
Cyclamen coum
Daphne Laureola
Erysium Bowles Mauve
Galanthus x magnet
Galanthus nivalis
Garrya elliptica
Hebe Autumn Glory
Hebe Blue Tom
Hebe Mauve
Hebe Purple
Helleborus atrorubens
Helleborus corsicus
Helleborus cyclophyllus
Helleborus foetidus
Helleborus orientalis (20+ plants)
Helleborus niger
Hepatica triloba
Iris unguicularis
Jasminium nudiflorum
Mahonia Charity
Mahonia Lionel Fortiscue
Penstemon King George
Primula Ghurka
Primula Marie Crousse
Primula Snow Cushion
Pulmonaria Red Start
Rosa Alberic Barbier
Rosa Chinensis mutabilis
Sarcococca hookeriana dignya
Sarcococca ruscifolia
Schizostylis coccinea
Skimmia japonica Rubella
Viburnum bodnantense Dawn
Viburnum Charle Lamont
Viburnum foetens
Viburnum fragrans
Viburnum Park Farm hybrid
Viburnum tinus

Kate felus at Stowe offers up a Pansy, how many acres of them, I wonder, An Elysian field full?
Well done to all concerned



Jacques Rigaud, view from the Head of the Lake at Stowe

Thoughts on the Stowe Symposium

We assembled in the House where Rupert Litherland (the Bursar) made us most welcome (together with a spontaneous interruption by the Headmaster to say the same), which set the weekend off to a good start. It is very good to hear of the formation of the Stowe House Preservation Trust and of the partnership of the three elements of the House, the Gardens and the Park to utilise the Heritage Lottery funds to their best advantage. His last comment was especially apt “the mind is like a parachute; only useful when open!”

George Clarke introduced the Symposium and was followed by Richard Wheeler on the changing face of the Conservation Plan; this being based on (1) survey (2) conservation (3) restoration (4) management and (5) implementation.

The first speaker on Saturday was George Clarke on the research which at Stowe was like a river winding and meandering on, full of surprises and the unexpected.

Richard Wheeler and Kate Felus reported on the research methodology being used by the National Trust on the 1,000 acres at Stowe, both gardens and park, together with the plans covered by the Heritage Lottery grant and their implications.

Peter Inskip, who has been involved with Stowe for some time, discussed “drawing it all together, the buildings and landscape”. He drew our attention to six points concerning Stowe (1) as a site of innovation (2) as a recent site of institutionalisation (3) its good documentation (4) its use of local stone (5) the importance of the iconography and (6) the continuous recycling of materials and ornamentation.

I went with Kate Felus in the afternoon on the “Park Beyond Tour”. It was fascinating to look from the park outside into the pleasure grounds; down the rides and from the monuments to the main house.

Michael Bevington, a present master and Andrew Rudolf, a former master, took parties on tours of the public rooms of the mansion.

Todd Longstaffe-Gowan told of the problems concerning the landscapes of London, especially the squares.

Sunday brought John Phibbs with a fascinating theory about yew rows and his observations, reading the landscape (you don't need records to say what was there if you do) at Croome Park and Wotton Underwood, both exceptional Brown landscapes.

Kate Clark was the most thought provoking speaker on the Use and Abuse of the Conservation Plan. “What are we trying to do?” She explained her experiences at the Ironbridge Museum and the problems facing Whitby, its Abbey and headland. The significance of the site and gaining an understanding of its different layers being of most importance, then to find a policy to cope with all the factors. Nothing is cut and dried, every project has its own set of criteria, and therefore much thought must go into each one individually.

George Clarke closed the Symposium and was presented with some documents relating to Stowe by Barbara Edmondson, who found them in her cellar at Castle House in Buckingham.

In the afternoon, there was a coach trip to Wotton Underwood. This is a very important house in the Grenville history that was rescued by the late Mrs Elaine Brunner, and is now in the custody of her daughter and son in law David Gladstone. This was a magical afternoon, spent walking round the pleasure grounds and follies, with all the elements of surprise and in glorious colour of a late golden autumn. This is also the long time home of the Chinese house now at Stowe.

It was a fascinating weekend much enjoyed.

Stephanie Lawrence

OUR EVENTS IN 1999

We have a series of events large and small for this year, and we hope to see many of you at them. If you have places you wish to visit please let us know. As ever please book in advance enclosing a cheque and an SAE, details on the booking form. You will be sent a ticket and any instructions needed to locate the event.

Wotton Underwood

Saturday, April 17th, 2.00pm

Those who attended the Symposium will need little persuading to come again to Wotton which must be one of the most exciting garden *rediscoveries* of recent times. It may seem a bit soon to be going again, but we feel that all our members should be given a chance to visit and we are very grateful to be invited back. I refer you back to the last *Newsletter* for details of the extensive network of lakes, temples and views; and the Symposium review for comment. Suffice to say, you will need a stout pair of shoes/boots, and do bring refreshments.

Parking limited, so if you can double up it would be appreciated.

Cost £6 members £8 non-members.

Milton Keynes Green Lands, Great Linford Manor & Chicheley Hall

Tuesday May 18th, 10.00am

We will meet at Milton Keynes Parks Trust's headquarters at Campbell Park for coffee at 10am. At 10.30 we will walk through Campbell Park and see the formal planting and the ponds which mingle with the informal on the woodland ridge. The informal area is seeded with wild flowers, and the bluebells should be out. It is a good example of contrasts in management, and sheep graze the middle park.

We then go to Great Linford where the grounds of the Manor House were originally laid out in the 18th century. The water gardens were cut in half by the building of the Grand Union Canal, and the Parks Trust are putting in a Lottery bid for their restoration. There is much to see and we expect to have the garden historian with us and to visit the private walled Manor garden by kind permission of Mr Peter Winkleman.

Picnic lunch back at Campbell Park.

In the afternoon we visit nearby Chicheley Hall, a fine early-18th century house. Mrs Nutting, or one of the family, will show us round. Sir John Chester laid out the formal three-sided canal in 1700; this was designed by George London who with his partner Henry Wise laid out Hampton Court gardens.

Tea and biscuits will complete the day.

All in all a day of contrasts from the modern imaginative design in Campbell Park to historic Chicheley.

Please bring a picnic lunch.

Cost £7 members £8 non-members.

The Manor House, Bledlow.

Wednesday 30th June, 2.30 to 5.00pm

The gardens here have recently been receiving considerable good publicity. The creation of Lord and Lady Carrington, with the designer Robert Adams, the gardens are in three parts. The formal gardens around the house, together with the superb walled vegetable gardens need little explanation. These lead into the informal, though extensively planted, sculpture garden, planned around existing mature trees. The Lyde Garden, across the lane, comes as an unexpected contrast, with its dramatic valley form, abundant planting and use of water. It will be a great pleasure to visit these gardens as Lord Carrington is a founder member.

Pre booking essential, (price includes tea in the village hall).

Cost £ 6 members, £7 non members.

Tyringham House

Thursday July 15th

Tyringham is perhaps best known for the work of Sir John Soane, for Sir William Praed, (MP and Grand Junction Canal Company director), and although much of this has gone, the recently restored gate house shows what might have been.

The house and gardens were much *improved* in the Edwardian period. Although the original walled gardens remain near the stables, the evidence of Repton's involvement is harder to find. Charles F Rees was responsible for formalising the gardens, laying out the front court, terraces, pergola and rose garden, but it was Ned Lutyens who made the real impact. He extended the formal layout with two long pools, a round pool with leopard topped columns connecting the two, with two domed pavillions, *temples* to bathing and music (see above).



Although this is a landscape in decline, a landscape plan has been prepared by Mick Thompson of Ashridge, who will be showing us around. It is an important landscape. The house is now a health spa.

One for the diary, details in the next Newsletter.

Booking form: **The Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust**

Wotton Underwood, Aylesbury

Saturday April 17th, 2.00pm

(bring stout walking shoes, its a long walk)

Please send ticket(s) at £6.00 (members), tickets at £8.00 (non-members)

Cheque for £ enclosed, with stamped addressed **A4** envelope.

Name

Address

.....

.....Postcodetelephone

**Return to: Mrs P A Liechti, Campden Cottage 51 Clifton Road, Chesham Bois,
Amersham, Buckinghamshire HP6 5PN**

Booking form: **The Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust**

Milton Keynes Green Lands, Great Linford Manor & Chicheley Hall

Tuesday May 18th, 10.00am

(bring a picnic lunch, price includes morning coffee, afternoon tea)

Please send ticket(s) at £7.00 (members), tickets at £8.00 (non-members)

Cheque for £ enclosed, with stamped addressed **A4** envelope.

Name

Address

.....

.....Postcodetelephone

**Return to: Mrs P A Liechti, Campden Cottage 51 Clifton Road, Chesham Bois,
Amersham, Buckinghamshire HP6 5PN**

Booking form: **The Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust**

The Manor House, Bledlow, Princes Risborough

Wednesday June 30th, 2.30pm

(includes tea)

Please send ticket(s) at £6.00 (members), tickets at £7.00 (non-members)

Cheque for £ enclosed, with stamped addressed **A4** envelope.

Name

Address

.....

.....Postcodetelephone

**Return to: Mrs P A Liechti, Campden Cottage 51 Clifton Road, Chesham Bois,
Amersham, Buckinghamshire HP6 5PN**

Ashridge, Berkhamstead (partly in Bucks)

Saturday October 16th

Many of you will know the Ashridge Estate and its monument to the Duke of Bridgewater. Although Ashridge has been famous since the 13th century as the site of a monastery and was later taken over as a palace by Henry VIII, it should be best known for the landscapes created by Capability Brown and Humphry Repton, who worked for the 7th Earl Bridgewater, from 1813. Here, in one of his last and greatest works, he created a series of small and intimate gardens inspired by their monastic predecessors, within the wider landscape parkland. As is the way of things, these plans were *interpreted* by the Countess and her head

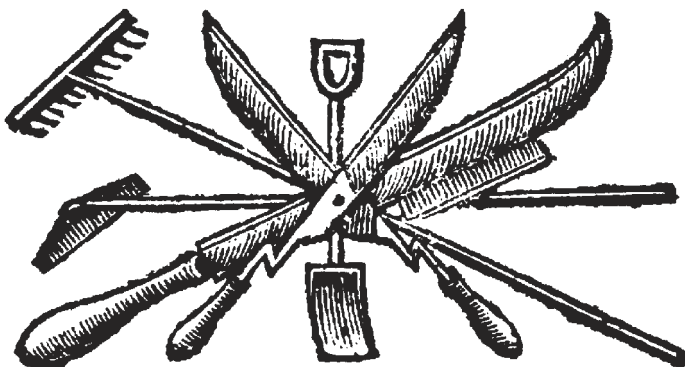


gardener Hemmings and have changed over the years.

With the National Trust doing much work on the park landscape (another of Richard Wheeler's pet projects) there is much to be seen. We hope to start the day with an introductory talk from the Ashridge College Gardens Manager Mick Thompson who has prepared the conservation plan.

This is going to be an all day event probably including lunch. Pencil the date in your diary, further details in the next Newsletter.

We will alert surrounding Garden Trusts to these visits, please book in advance, you will be sent further details with your ticket.



OTHER PEOPLE'S EVENTS

Rare Plants Fair

Court Gardens, Pound Lane, Marlow

Saturday 17th April, 11.00am to 4.00pm

This series of plant fairs continues. Many specialist nurseries will be exhibiting, with rare and unusual plants, as well as more traditional varieties. An opportunity to see this Georgian mansion in the centre of the town, situated in beautiful parkland sweeping down to the Thames.

Ample pay and display nearby

Chilterns Historic Gardens Group

Contact Patricia Liechti on 01494 726 818, or write, enclosing an A5 SAE, to Mrs P A Liechti, Campden Cottage, 51 Clifton Road, Chesham Bois, Amersham, Bucks HP6 5PN for further details of these enterprising trips, be prepared for a great day out with Bucks' plant addicts

Copton Ash Gardens & Long Acre, Kent

Wednesday 28th April, 8.15am, Cost, £17.00

Little Court, Crawley & Longstock Park, Hants

Tuesday 11th May, 8.45am, Cost, £20.00

Cabbages and Kings & Clinton Lodge, E Sussex

Thursday 27th May, 8.45am, Cost, £20.00

Buckinghamshire Artists Trail

Bledlow Manor gardens

Saturday 22nd May, 11.00am to 5.00pm

Bledlow Manor's extensive formal gardens and sculpture garden, lent by Lord Carrington, will provide an ideal setting for this year's Artists Trail, when over 30 artists will set up their easels and sell their works, alongside sculptors and potters, in aid of the Buckinghamshire County Museum.

A trail of umbrellas placed throughout these famous gardens will mark the places where about 30 invited painters will be working. Annie Gunning, and Di Hammond are highly successful landscape artists. Marie Lewis will be doing quick charcoal portraits. Lorna Cassidy is known for her architectural drawings. Dawn Oliver is a popular miniaturist, and Rosina Flower is known for her watercolours of flowers.

Amongst the craftspeople, Julia Drummond will be making pots, Mick Waterhouse, the *Green Man* woodcarver, will be chipping away, and Joyce Playle making wire sculptures of animals. Visitors can try their hand at sculpting in clay with Annette Mostyn. Liz Young will display hand bound books, albums and note pads, and Helen White will have hand painted cards with Celtic motifs. All works will be for sale.

A brass band, playing on the front lawn, and a wind instrument group in the sculpture garden will add to the garden party atmosphere of this event. Teas will be served. Children can have a go at action painting, or have their faces painted.

Serious gardeners will enjoy the nine acre gardens devised by Lord and Lady Carrington with Robert Adams, over the past 30 years. Also the shrubs and topiary in the extensive sculpture garden which features the Carrington's collection of modern works.

This is the second **Artists Trail** organised by the **Friends of the Buckinghamshire County Museum**, the first being held in Aylesbury last summer.

Entrance is £3.00, children free.

*For further information please contact Caroline Meynell
tel and fax 01844 342556*

Email ordbuck@anglican.oxford.org

Mentmore Towers Gardeners' Weekend Saturday 29th to Monday 31st May, 10.00am to 5.00pm

OK, so it's in Bedfordshire, but it's part of the History of Rothschildshire as well. This is a Hobby-Horse Gardening Show, with a mixture of plants, sundries and crafts.

Further information on 0121 711 4728.

Visions of delight Ashridge Garden History Summer School In conjunction with the National Trust 13th-18th August 1999

A stimulating programme has been arranged for the fifth Summer School to be held at Ashridge near Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire. Specialist lecturers will examine the garden in relation to painting, literature, theatre, designers, politics, philosophy and the **Grand Tour** and visits are arranged to **Nuneham Park, Shotover House, Strawberry Hill, Popes Grotto, Rousham, Farnborough Hall, West Wycombe, Claremont** and a whole day will be spent at **Stowe** to enjoy talks and walks explaining the ongoing restoration.

Speakers and guides will include John Harris, Anthony Mitchell; Charles Quest-Ritson, Kay Sanecki, Christopher Thacker, Richard Wheeler, John Whitely.

*Further information and programme are available from:
Carol Johnston, Conference Manager, Ashridge, Berkhamsted,
Hertfordshire, HP4 1NS.*

Tel; 01442 841 027, Fax; 01442 841 936,

Email; carol.johnston@ashridge.org.uk

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Suzanne Millard; 7 Stanley Gardens, Tring, Hertfordshire,
HP23 4BS. T 01442 822 583

You can also contact us at the office:

Scots Craig, Hillcrest Waye, Gerrards Cross,
Buckinghamshire, SL9 8DN. T 01753 884 119

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