



Avon Gardens Trust

# Bulletin

AUTUMN 2013

## First World War Centenary



In 2014, the country will be commemorating the First World War and already exhibitions are being planned at the Garden Museum in London and the Imperial War Museum. For Avon Gardens Trust, this commemoration year will be an appropriate time to research and collect material that will reveal some of the stories that military histories have overlooked.

### Conservation Management Plans

The Garden History Society has published its list of Conservation Management Plans, available at [www.parksandgardens.org](http://www.parksandgardens.org)

For Avon there are nearly twenty sites listed, several of which, such as Prior Park and Warmley, have more than one conservation management plan. There are over 1,000 entries, the majority of which have been submitted by landscape architecture practices.

### Capability Brown Tercentenary



Please take a look at the recently launched Lancelot 'Capability' Brown website.

[www.capabilitybrown.org](http://www.capabilitybrown.org)

It is envisaged the content will grow as the project takes off. Sign up now, the quarterly *Newsletter* will come straight to your inbox - an easy way to keep up with developments!



*The Great War Memorial in Arnos Vale Cemetery*

There are so many themes that can be included such as the impact on the large estates of the huge and tragic loss of man power as the departure and death of gardeners during the war introduced a generation of women to gardening. Another topic area is the impact of the conflict on Britain's heritage designed landscape as hundreds of parks and gardens were transformed by temporary uses such as training camps or food production.

Another more tangible area for research is the legacy of landscape memorials and memorial landscapes across Avon. The planting around war memorials and graves is little-studied and yet this planting has such a powerful symbolic place in the memorials both public and private.

The Trust is keen to hear about any stories or photographs that you might have. Please contact Ros Delany on [r.delany@virgin.net](mailto:r.delany@virgin.net)

# Chairman's Report

Now in its 27th year, the Trust has officially come of age and I am delighted that, building on the firm foundations that have been established by the committee, steady progress continues to be made. The committee members do marvellous work and all thanks go to them and to those members of both the research and recording working group and the conservation group who have contributed so much over the year.

Earlier in the year, Peggy Stembridge retired from the committee and it was for her exceptional contribution to the Trust that the committee unanimously agreed to award her with Life Membership. Alan Kempton also decided to stand down as Membership Secretary after seven years in the post. During his tenure, Alan set up a database of Trust members and became known as a great 'behind the scenes' helper as well our unofficial AGT photographer as you may have seen in our publications and on our website.

Anne Merriman has kindly taken on the role of Membership Secretary. Cynthia Troup has also joined the committee with responsibility for Education. Anne and Peter Hills, who have become actively involved in the Trust since moving to the area early last year, joined the committee in the autumn. These four new members, all with their different areas of experience and expertise, will be a tremendous asset to the Trust.

Despite the good summer this year, many of our visits were conducted in the rain. This was especially true of the visits to Acton Court and Yeo Valley Organic Gardens. Those of us who were at our Annual General Meeting at Acton Court will remember the interesting and lively talk by Dorothy Brown, while those visiting Yeo Valley will recall Sheila Dart and her enthusiasm - even in the rain.

Sadly both ladies passed away recently and fitting tributes are paid to them later in this *Bulletin*.

The gardens visited this year have been an intriguing mixture of historic and new, restored or in need of careful restoration. The unifying theme is that, as with all gardens, they have been created as the result of the vision of an individual. For every garden owner, regardless of whom they are or what they own, a garden is an expression of his or her own personality and is therefore unique. If you have been unable to come on a visit this year, I look forward to you joining us next year.

I hope you enjoy this first autumn *Bulletin* and find it both interesting and informative. Finally, I would like to wish you all a happy and peaceful Christmas.

*Ros Delany*

## Avon Gardens Trust welcomes new members:

Andy and Gill Brown  
Gareth Edwards  
Jeffrey Freeman and Laurie Farnsworth  
Lesley and Nicholas Kinsley



## Avon Gardens Trust

Patrons: Tony and Nancy Garrett

Registered Charity No. 900377 Company No. 2357099  
CREATE Centre, Smeaton Road, Bristol BS1 6XN

Chairman: Ros Delany 01275 371398  
[r.delany@virgin.net](mailto:r.delany@virgin.net)

Vice Chairman: Wendy Pollard 0117 973 7603  
[w.a.pollard@gmail.com](mailto:w.a.pollard@gmail.com)

Membership Sec.: Anne Merriman 01934 833619  
[membership@avongardenstrust.org.uk](mailto:membership@avongardenstrust.org.uk)

Trust publications are edited by  
Emma Jones 0117 239 9715  
[editor@avongardenstrust.org.uk](mailto:editor@avongardenstrust.org.uk)

[www.avongardenstrust.org.uk](http://www.avongardenstrust.org.uk)



*Cynthia with children and their crop of potatoes at Freshford Primary School*

## Education

As a new member of the committee, I have taken on the responsibility of Education. A retired primary teacher, I taught in various Bristol primaries but mainly Victoria Park, Bedminster; Gay Elms, Withywood and finally All Hallows Preparatory, Cranmore.

I retired early from teaching in 2002 in order to do the Garden History MA at Bristol University, where I had taken my first degree in Combined Arts in 1969. I am a governor of my local primary and that role plus my four grandsons certainly keeps me up to date with what's going on in education!

*The rainbow garden at Paulton Primary School*



*Cynthia Troup*

I loved visiting three of the primaries that had benefited from our grants in the summer term this year, and feel very enthusiastic about facilitating and supporting gardening in schools.

Especially impressive was Paulton Primary School, where a keen Teaching Assistant had worked wonders with the children who had designed a garden in rainbow colours, and gleefully showed off their healthy looking vegetables and little pond.



*Paulton Teaching Assistant Mrs Shackleton shows off tools bought with the AGT grant*

*Cynthia Troup*

*Healthy vegetables at Paulton*



*Cynthia Troup*

**STOP PRESS** I have now approached the four LEAs in our area re. next year's grant and they are spreading the word amongst their schools.

## Our New Membership Secretary

I am very pleased to be the new Membership Secretary of the Trust, taking over from Alan Kempton. My husband, Tony, has been Treasurer since 2003 and I know quite a few members already. We can do what we do for the Friends of the Art Gallery, where we hold the same positions, and continue to pass cheques to each other over the dining room table!

I have organised membership records for other local societies in the past, and always

enjoy meeting the members as well as taming the computer programmes to make contacts easier.

On that note, it would be very helpful to have more e-mail addresses and telephone numbers. Alan managed to collect some, but there are still a lot of gaps. Please send them to me at [merriman38@hotmail.com](mailto:merriman38@hotmail.com) or telephone 01934 833619. I'd be glad to hear from you – on any subject.

*Anne Merriman*

## Dorothy Brown OBE 1927 - 2013

It is with sadness that we have to report the death of Dorothy Brown, one of the first members of the Avon Gardens Trust.

Dorothy was born into farming heritage in the Scottish Borders. After graduating from Edinburgh University, she moved, together with her husband Tom, to Bristol in the early 1950s.

Bristol and especially Clifton, its history and buildings, became very important to Dorothy; she was one of the early members of the Clifton & Hotwells Improvement Society (CHIS).

One of Dorothy's first successful campaigns was to oppose a scheme to build a large hotel on the slopes of the Avon Gorge which would have destroyed the character of the SSSI and the setting of Brunel's Grade I Clifton Suspension Bridge. Following this, in 1971, Dorothy founded the Bristol Visual & Environmental Group and Trust.

Causes promoted by the BV&E Group led to the re-invigoration of old buildings in areas including Old Market, St. Michaels Hill and Frome as well as the Clifton Lido. Dorothy's work and advice with these and other projects was much appreciated by conservation groups. Arguably her greatest achievement was her discovery and rescue of Acton Court in Iron Acton which her Preservation Trust bought in 1984, thus saving one of the most important Tudor buildings in the country. This was acknowledged by the award of an MBE in 1988 and the award of an Honorary Degree by Bristol University in 1991.

Having helped instigate the setting up of Bristol CC's 'Conservation Advisory Panel' to allow amenity societies to comment upon planning applications in Conservation Areas in 1979, Dorothy attended these meetings regularly; she was present at the September meeting at City Hall this year.

The large congregation at her Commemoration Service represented many of the campaigns and groups Dorothy had founded and supported: Bristol Civic Society, Bristol Visual & Environmental Group & Trust, CHIS, Avon Gardens Trust, Winterbourne Mediaeval Barn Trust, Frome Building Preservation Trust and Acton Court.

Dorothy's commitment and hard work are an example to others; her description in a past copy of *The Civic Trust News* as "...one of the Boadiceas of the Conservation Movement" was well deserved. Her children, grand children and Bristolians feel much sadness that she is no longer here to support our causes.

*Anita Sims*

## Sheila Dart 1936 - 2013

We regret to report the death of Sheila Dart on 27 September this year.

Sheila and Peter were founder members, beginning with the launch in Goldney, and remained loyal supporters of the Trust. They will be known to many of our members as they attended visits, book launches and lectures. This often meant overcoming difficulties in recent years when Sheila needed a wheel chair. Sheila had suffered from a heart condition during her school and university days in Bristol, but developed a determined and hopeful attitude to life and its difficulties. She taught English at Westonbirt and then at Clifton High School. Sheila and Peter had wide interests, including gardens and historic landscapes. After their own visits, they organised holidays, particularly for groups of the Friends of the University Botanic Garden. They were also members of the Garden History Society.

As well as attending events and contributing some accounts for the *Newsletter*, Sheila and Peter supported the Trust's long campaign to

protect the threatened historic landscape at Stoke Park. They lived on land that was part of the park, before the M32 broke through it. They came on our visits to the park and mansion, following the progress of work, and even made it up to the roof when it was being repaired.

In spite of worsening health, supported so well by Peter, Sheila was still attending Trust events, including the last visit in August. Sheila was an example of determination and spirit and will be much missed. We offer our sympathy and condolences to Peter in his loss.

*Peggy Stenbridge*

## **Mavis Batey MBE 1921 - 2013**

As we were preparing to go to print sad news came that Mavis Batey had died.

In recent years, Mavis has become better known nationally, and internationally, for code-breaking work at Bletchley Park during World War II. In 1987, when she came to launch Avon Gardens Trust, she was well-known as a distinguished garden historian and promoter of the importance of urban parks: work just recognised with MBE.

A leading member of the Council of the Garden History Society for many years and President from 1985, she had worked to encourage the recording of historic gardens; this led to the publication of English Heritage's Register of Parks and Gardens in 1984. Her many books include some on literary landscapes and others on Bletchley Park.

In her busy life, Mavis has always followed our activities with interest, including writing for our 25th anniversary in *Journal No 6*. We are fortunate to have received her support as a member of our Trust. A fuller appreciation will appear in our next *Journal*.

*Peggy Stenbridge*

# Visits

## **Kings Weston Estate**

**Saturday 29 June**

We were met on the terrace of Kings Weston House by David Martyn, Chair of the Kings Weston Action Group (KWAG). Overlooking the Severn estuary (and a good vantage point to view ships moored at the entrance to the River Avon and Bristol docks), Kings Weston was purchased by Sir Robert Southwell in 1679, but his son Edward Southwell asked Sir John Vanbrugh to rebuild the house in the early eighteenth century. Vanbrugh also landscaped the gardens at this time and it is elements of this landscape that KWAG are keen to conserve and restore.

As we walked the estate, David explained that today the garden was a landscape formed of naturalistic rolling slopes and clumps of trees that replaced the old rigid terraces and avenues. We walked through a Lime Avenue created in circa 1710 with some of the original trees still standing. We arrived at the circle, a focal point of the estate where looking back, the house stood in isolation amongst the surrounding landscape.



*Emma Jones*



courtesy of KWAG

Walking toward Penpole Point, we arrived at a fern garden set in an old quarry, derelict but still distinct. Above, a circle of trees lines a small viewing mound set to take advantage of views across the Severn. Penpole Point was Common land used by the people of Shirehampton to graze their livestock.

Setting back on a path close to the Shirehampton Road, we passed foundations of military camps used to house soldiers during the Second World War. We arrived at an old Inn where people of Bristol and Clifton would ride their horses to enjoy the spectacular views from Kings Weston Hill. Turning back towards the house we arrived at The Echo, a magnificent stone pavilion built at the same time as the house by Vanbrugh, placed there to catch the eye from the main house. A statue was placed there on a plinth, but is sadly missing now. The pavilion is decorated with monstrous beasts around the urns on the roof.

We returned to the house down a long drive, now cleared of brambles and weeds by volunteers of the KWAG, to tea and cakes in the café on the terrace.

*Peter Hills*



Emma Jones

## Avon Gardens Trust AGM

**Saturday 27 July**

Acton Court, Iron Acton

Weather-wise, it was not AGT's lucky day. After the reasonably long heat-wave, more than 45 Trust members made it through pouring rain and crowded into Acton Court's tearoom, unable to make use of the beautifully sited tables and chairs set out on the lawn beneath big trees or to explore the garden as they would have wanted. However, we enjoyed delicious cake and biscuits, a chance to catch up with other members and an opportunity to buy some of the publications on sale and look at displays about Tudor Acton Court and its starring role in TV programmes recently.

As it was so wet, our two Blue Badge guides, AGT member Anita Sims, and June Jeffreys, were unable to start the guided tours with their usual full explanation of the site and the gardens, so we moved quickly to the East range interior. This building was constructed in less than nine months in 1535, in time to give King Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn appropriate accommodation for their royal weekend at Acton during their Progress around the West Country. We then visited the Great Hall in the North range dated approx. 1550 and the rooms downstairs (see *Bulletin* Summer 2013, p.4 for further description of the house and landscape).

Acton Court is open for public visits for just 30 days per year in July/early August. AGT was fortunate to hold its AGM in the royal 'Privy Chamber' – the room with the best secular wall paintings of the period (1535) anywhere in the country, we were told. We were also privileged to welcome Dorothy Brown, of the Bristol Visual and Environmental Group, MBE and long-time member of AGT, as our guest of honour.

Dorothy gave fascinating insights into the early days of the conservation movement in Bristol (where 400 listed buildings were

under threat in 1968) and into the process of acquiring Acton Court at auction, when its full importance was yet to be recognised. Subsequent finds such as the Tudor sundial and the wall paintings were often discovered through a mixture of serendipity, inspiration, sheer hard work and the knowledge and expertise of those, like Dorothy, who know what they're talking about!

The business of the AGM followed. It has been a busy and active year for the Trust and, as the shadows lengthened and the evening came, we had just enough time to finish the meeting before the Tudor building –without electric lighting – finished it for us!

Our thanks to those at Acton Court for providing a memorable and glorious setting for our AGM.

*Angela Nutbrown*



Anne Hills

## Yeo Valley Organic Gardens

### Wednesday 14 August

We were greeted by the Head Gardener, James Cox, brandishing the current copy of *The English Garden*: the garden we were about to tour was featured on the front cover!

James gave a brief history of Holt Farm describing how the conversion to wholly organic was achieved in 2009 and the Soil Association's certification was awarded in 2010. It is the only organically certified ornamental garden in the UK.

Well briefed, we toured the six acres, with James's guidance and numerous umbrellas that he thoughtfully provided. By now it was



Anne Hills

pouring with rain and the test would be to observe the slugs versus James's tried and tested three slug defences comprising three waterings of Nematodes in the Spring, deep copper rings around vulnerable salad crops and 'fresh' beer traps.

It is a garden to be visited in every season, to appreciate the colour succession. The *Salix Alba Britzensis* in the willow garden, we were told, looked like a forest of orange lollipops during the winter.

A field strip of *Calamagrostis Karl Forster* and *Stipa Gigantea* under-planted with successive flowering Iris, Alliums and poppies makes a subtly changing colour palette. We all stood and gazed at a golden meadow of *Coreopsis* which two months earlier was blue with cornflowers.

Every planting area we entered, James gave us the benefit of his experience as well as his favourite compost recipe.

'Smell-free Comfrey' liquid feed. Use variety 'Bocking 14' and pack the container with comfrey leaves and no water. Leave for six weeks. Dilute the resultant liquid, 1 part with 10 of water.

Just as we entered the gravel garden the sun shone, the lake in the distance glistened and the mist continued to roll down the Mendips. Very beautiful.

*Anne Hills*

# Dyrham Park

**Sunday 15 September**

Unfortunately the weather forecasters were right – it was windy and cool. Nevertheless, 21 members braved the weather and did some minor mountaineering on the steep north terrace. It was well worthwhile. We were guided by the enthusiastic Head Gardener, Dale Dennehy.

Dale gave us a very comprehensive history of the house and garden and reminded us that the property came into public hands in 1956 as a National War Memorial to the fallen of World War Two.

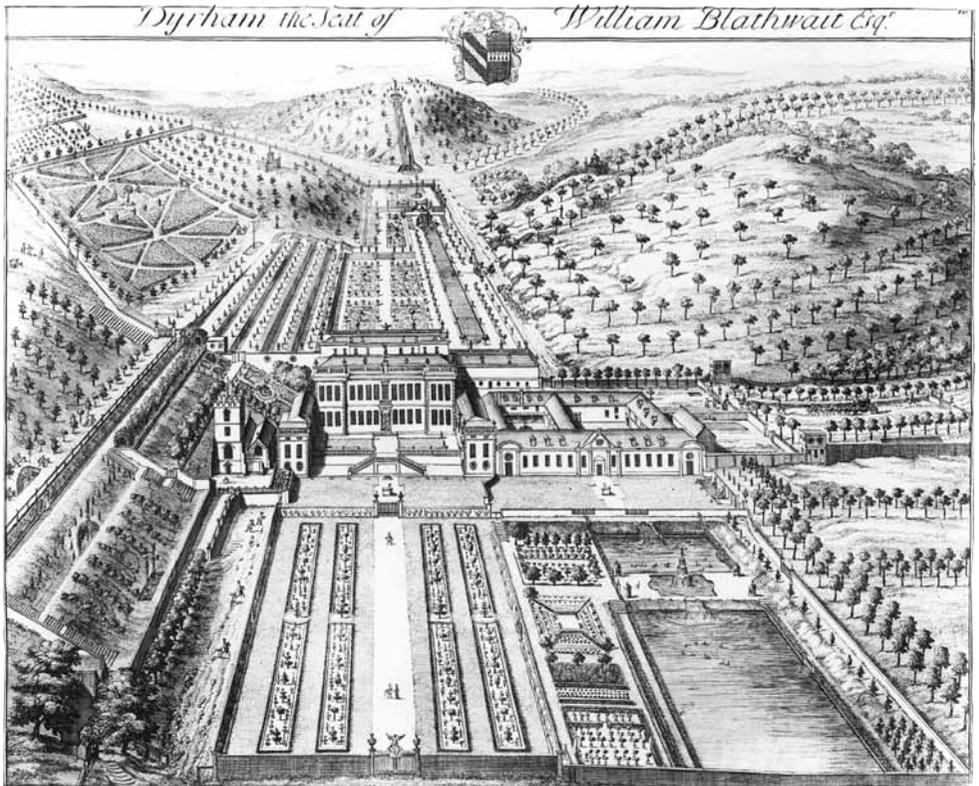
The talk, given in the Orangery, set the scene, spanning the events from the battle of Dyrham in 516 to the present day; it included details of ownership, buildings and gardens. Several buildings and



Alan Kempton

*The side of house from top terrace*

gardens have come and gone; later Dale explained that some features still exist below the present planting and could be resurrected in the future if wished. We were given a photocopy of the 1712 Kip engraving and told that the water garden was once rated second only to Chatsworth.





*The top terrace*

We moved on from the Orangery, stopping to view the beautiful engraved glass War Memorial Plaque, and onwards to see behind a normally locked door. Inside were half of the stables from the 1692 (current)

house that are still in use today (the horses were out grazing).

Then we walked along the west front of the house - the original front entrance - and through the 'new' formal garden. When Dyrham was



taken on by the Ministry of Works in 1956 this was just rough grass; the only area of interest was the house. The property passed to The National Trust in 1959 and was opened to the public in 1961. (The 1961 guide book mentioned the park and gardens that had once been there).

We walked through the colourful autumnal garden to the original entrance gate and turned to look towards the house. Dale came here in 1994 and over the years various ideas were discussed for the garden. It was not until 2005 that he was able to create the current lovely setting for the west front of the house.

Another padlocked door led onto the lower north terrace. From here we had to use our imaginations and Dale's vision of restoration/conservation.

We walked, with some difficulty, along the lowest (fourth) terraced path moving on to terraces 3 and 2. We were shown areas where features in the Kip engraving existed. The plan is to make the path and entrance safe, to lop and remove old, non-native planting and to open up the views; then snowdrops, aconites, cyclamen and bluebells can be established (donations welcome!).

Terrace 2 gave a much clearer idea of the potential. On the way up we saw a number of roe deer in the distance, reminding us of Dale's responsibilities for the herd. We finally returned to the teashop for delicious cake and tea/coffee.

We enjoyed an interesting afternoon with a dedicated and enthusiastic manager, who is looking to the long-term future. As Dale explained, the gardens need to reflect the memorial aspect through quiet and reflective areas, together with other areas of interest for families. The gardens at Dyrham Park are in good hands.

*Ann Osmond*

## Tyntesfield

**Saturday 26 October**

The final visit of the year was in late October to the Victorian estate of Tyntesfield in north Somerset. Since being acquired by the National Trust in 2002, the gardens and estate buildings are being sympathetically restored as funding permits.

Paul Evans, the Head Gardener, took Trust members on a guided tour of the grounds that ended in the kitchen gardens which have remained in continuous cultivation since the 1830s. His

talk was augmented by many old maps and photographs which helped to recreate what the estate looked like when the Gibbs family lived there.



*Ros Delany*

*Paul Evans*



Peter Jorjes

We were delighted that the Leader of North Somerset Council, Councillor Nigel Ashton, along with Councillor Felicity Baker, took time out from their busy schedules and joined us as our invited guests.



Wendy Pollard



Peter Jorjes

*Below: standing above the rose garden, surrounded by bits from the old clock tower, looking at the view*



Ros Delany

## Events for 2014

**These are some of the ideas we have for visits in 2014:**

- Corsham Court, Wiltshire
- University of Bristol Botanic Gardens
- Barrow Court, Somerset
- Serridge House, Coalpit Heath
- Camers Garden, Old Sodbury, S. Glos
- Milton Lodge Gardens and Arboretum, near Wells

# A Peace Garden in Bristol

Bringing communities together



Wendy Pollard

*Ros Delany presents a cheque to representatives from the Somali Resource Centre and Agora in front of the Mosque, 12 June 2013*

Belying the summer to come, on a cold and grey June day a cheque was handed over to representatives from the Somali Resource Centre and the charity Agora in front of the Peace Garden on the forecourt of the inclusive community Mosque in Barton Hill. Our visit to the Somali Resource Centre at the Barton Hill Settlement in November 2012 and subsequently meeting a representative from Agora had led on to their initial application for a grant to help



courtesy of Barton Hill Walled Garden

with the planting of fruit trees on the forecourt of the mosque together with fruit bushes and fruit trees for the Somali Allotments. The Centre works to create a strong and vibrant Somali community that is fully integrated into British Society as active civic, social and economic participants. The Settlement is a community led regeneration project and it is in Barton Hill many of the Somali and other immigrant communities have settled.

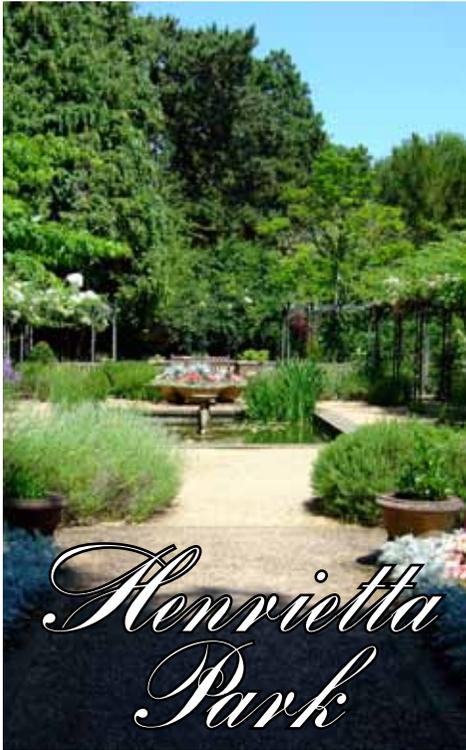
The Somali community allotment site is on Strawberry Lane. It is here on a sunny, sloping site the Somali community has been given space for their allotments. Over two years the ground has been cleared and is now being planted with vegetables, fruit bushes and fruit trees.

Barton Hill is an area of Bristol with few green spaces and little opportunity for residents to interact with the natural world or with horticulture. Under the auspices of Agora, a charitable organization which works to promote active citizenship, the Three Leaf Gardening Collective was set up to run outreach programmes encouraging local communities to come together.

A subsequent grant application related to the creation of a herb garden within the Walled Garden Project, a sunny space tucked away behind the Georgian facade of the old St Luke's vicarage and forming the third element of the gardening collective. Initiated in 2010 all local people were invited to help restore the neglected garden as a community space. With enthusiasm and hard work fruit, vegetables and flowers are grown here and the herbs will be used for medicinal as well as culinary purposes.

Every year the Avon Gardens Trust is able to give grants to school and community projects. The determination of the Somali Resource Centre to provide a stable hub for their community and the dedication and enthusiasm shown by the leaders from Agora were initiatives we were pleased to support.

*Wendy Pollard*



*Lesley Gallant*

When people think of the parks in Bath they naturally refer to Royal Victoria Park, Parade Gardens and even Alexandra Park. However, if you walk down Great Pulteney Street towards the Holburne Museum and turn left at the first roundabout you will come to a little gem. Henrietta Park covers about 7 acres and is full of beautiful trees, many shrub and flower beds and is an obvious favourite with the locals. It is a flat park in an irregular shape. You can enter from several different points. The paths run criss-cross over the area with a circular path in the centre. The land was transferred to the ownership of the council in the summer of 1897 and laid out the same year to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria who actually made a visit.

Within the park is the King George V Memorial Garden where you will find unusual flower beds, a pergola covered with wild roses and clematis surrounding a central

rectangular pool and a fountain. It has been laid out as a scented garden for the blind. The ambience is purposefully quiet and contemplative.

The park was named after Henrietta Laura Pulteney (1766-1808). She was 11 when her portrait was painted by Angelica Kaufman in 1777 and described as 'the richest girl in Europe'. The painting is in the Holburne Museum.

Henrietta was the only daughter of William Johnstone and the heiress Frances Pulteney who was first cousin once removed to the 1st Earl of Bath, William Pulteney. Her mother Frances inherited not only his fortune and estates in 1764 but that of his younger brother and heir in 1767. At that point Johnstone changed the family name to Pulteney. When her mother died in 1782, Henrietta inherited the vast Pulteney estates and managed them with her father. Together they created Bathwick which extends from Pulteney Bridge through Laura Place to Sydney Gardens.

There is a town called Henrietta in Monroe County, NY State established in 1818 as a result of her father's interests in America.

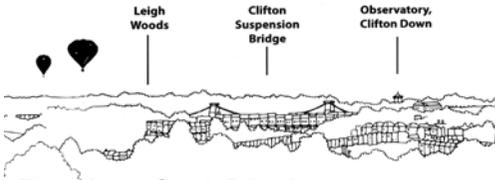
Henrietta became Baroness of Bath in 1792 and Countess of Bath in 1805. She died at Brighton at the age of 41; she had no children and left £600,000. Her remains are in the South Cloister of Westminster Abbey.

*Lesley Gallant*



*Lesley Gallant*

# PERRETT'S PARK



## Totterdown, South Bristol

Totterdown is situated just south of the River Avon and south east of Temple Meads railway station. Perrett Park was laid out in 1929 and 'donated' to the people of Bristol in 1932. It was so named after C R Perrett who in 1916 set up a housing charity in the area but who had also given £500 towards the cost of £1000 that enabled Bristol City Council then known as the 'Corporation' to buy the land from the Smythes of Ashton Court. The original size of the park extended to beyond the trees on the right but this is now taken up by allotments which must have the best views in Bristol. It also has a play area at the bottom for the under 10s.



Bayham Road and Sylvia Avenue front onto a natural amphitheatre providing a good spot to view the balloon ascents during the summer balloon festival as well as lending itself to sledging after it snows. A marble drinking fountain with copper mugs on chains once stood in the top corner of the park near the site of a spring which issued as a stream down into St Johns Lane. At some point the fountain disappeared only to be found again a couple of years ago ironically

in the sunken garden at Ashton Court and campaigners are now trying to get it returned to the original site. The Park has always been well used but a couple of years ago a group of local people organised themselves into the Community of Perrett Park (COPP) to have a say in park matters such as upkeep, planning and repairs. Events such as the annual picnic raised £1,200 for a plaque, designed by local artist Emily Ketteringham, which shows the outline of the view from where the Clifton Suspension Bridge and other landmarks can be seen.



Lesley Gallant

As a public art project with scientific overtones children from several local schools designed a human sundial made from mosaic tiles on a concrete base. It works by standing on a slab of the appropriate month and telling the time from where your shadow falls. COPP raised over £5000 for the work by local fundraising and grants from Quartet Foundation and Awards for All. It is a well-supported organisation and has set the tone for the park and managed to get more people in the area involved in its work which has also benefited the whole neighbourhood by providing a safe oasis. It has organised events for nine months of this year from extending the wild in March, Easter egg rolling (April), an edible garden project (RHS seed day) (May), Picnic in the park (June), Love Parks Week (July) Balloon Festival Sunday/Fun day the fountain fundraising event, Cinema in the Park in September to Carols in December.

*Lesley Gallant*

Find COPP at [www.perrettspark.org](http://www.perrettspark.org)



*Verena McCaig (left) and Linden Groves*

## "Hello Avon Gardens Trust!"

I am writing to introduce myself as the new Historic Landscape Project Officer, working to support your Trust in undertaking conservation work.

As you may be aware, the Historic Landscape Project (HLP) is an initiative led by the Association that has been running since 2010 and has been doing great work in capacity building and supporting the county gardens trusts to use their unique skills and resources to help with the conservation of historic designed landscapes in England, working with external stakeholders such as English Heritage, Natural England and now particularly, the Garden History Society.

Many of you will already know Verena McCaig, who has been the sole HLP Officer so far, but I am delighted to have joined her on a part-time job share basis for this new Phase 2 of the project.

I have worked for over a decade within the GHS conservation team and so know first hand the exciting challenges facing CGTs, and am therefore delighted to be able to work together and support you in this new capacity.

In Phase 1, the HLP was focussed largely on the south east, and to a lesser extent the south west, delivering a range of support including training workshops, one-to-one advice, downloadable handouts and networking links.

The project has now been extended geographically and Verena is covering the north, Midlands and east of England, whilst I will be working with you in the south west (Avon, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Glos, Wiltshire), as well as the south east (Berks, Bucks, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Kent, Oxon, Surrey, Sussex) and London.

I have already been in touch with your committee and am looking forward to getting to know you all better and to do what I can to help with your important work.

*Linden Groves*

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## What is Significant about Significance?

It's getting increasingly difficult to avoid discussions on conserving our historic parks and gardens without finding ourselves faced with the question 'what is significant about it?'

Cadw and English Heritage have both produced guidance on why it's important to understand the significance of a landscape. They argue, perfectly reasonably, that it is difficult to know what it is that we are trying to conserve if we don't know what it is about a site that is important. Once we know what it is that makes a site special, then we

can begin to find ways to conserve this, or manage changes to ensure that they have as little impact as possible on these special qualities. When we research a landscape and visit in order to record what is extant, that is the perfect opportunity to work out what is significant about a site, and what features remain that embody that significance.

This approach to understanding a site has now been enshrined in planning policy too. The requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which now

underpins all planning decisions in England and Wales, must be taken into account in all planning decisions. Whilst significance is touched on all the way through the NPPF, it starts off laying out core principles, including that planning should “conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations”. So, if we want to conserve our historic designed landscapes, and explain to others what it is about them that needs to be conserved, we need to be able to articulate their specialness!

Cadw and EH offer us some principles to help with managing change to historic landscapes: *Conservation Principles*. We can usefully describe a landscape in terms of where its importance lies, what *values* we can give it. So, think about a designed landscape you know well and see if it displays any of the following:

**Evidential value:** the potential to yield new evidence about past human activity; how it matters for future research – the humps and bumps of garden archaeology are a good example of this

**Historical value:** the ways in which a site is connected to past events and people; how it tells our national story – this could be with an artist, designer, writer etc, or be a place that evokes or illustrates past events, such as Petworth, West Sussex, which was extensively painted by Turner

**Aesthetic value:** the way a place can give us sensory and intellectual stimulation and how people respond emotionally – it doesn't necessarily have to be beautiful in the traditional sense! Its appeal might be designed or fortuitous. So many wonderful examples spring to mind – of whole landscapes or single features!

**Communal value:** the meanings we give to a place through our collective experience or memory of it; how it brings people together - this is particularly important for landscapes we cherish locally or places with spiritual value.

So how can we make sure that our research gets to the bottom of what is significant about the landscape? When you have completed your research and really understand its historic development and current survival, ask yourself what it is that makes this landscape special. You could follow the list of values (not all of them might be relevant) and write some short bullet points - include this with your research report as it will really help your CGT to work out what needs protecting and what can be changed without having a hugely negative effect on the specialness of the place. This crucial step can make all the difference to your CGT when responding to planning applications or talking to owners – and your efforts might just provide the important nuggets of information that prevent a vulnerable landscape from losing what makes it special.

You can find more detailed information on how you might go about this on the 'Significance' section of the CGT web forum (see below). You can also read more about Conservation Principles and significance at [www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/advice/conservation-principles/](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/advice/conservation-principles/)

*Verena McCaig*

## Web Forum

Join the discussion at the CGT web forum at [www.gardenstrusts.org.uk/hlp.html](http://www.gardenstrusts.org.uk/hlp.html)

It's the perfect place to read about conservation projects that are going on in other areas. Find out how other CGTs are dealing with their conservation issues and then sign up and share your own experiences. You'll also find many useful resources to download.

## Contact us

[lindengroves@agt.org.uk](mailto:lindengroves@agt.org.uk)

telephone 07585 963 361

[verenamccaig@agt.org.uk](mailto:verenamccaig@agt.org.uk)

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or follow us on Twitter [@leapthahaha](https://twitter.com/leapthahaha)

# Planning News

Following consultations with groups including the Trust, Bristol CC has completed its Conservation Management Plan for the Grade II registered **Kings Weston** park. A steering group including the Council, National Trust, Kings Weston House and Kings Weston Action Group has been set up to explore how to prioritise and secure the recommendations of the Plan, and look for funding.

A second application for 11,000 sq ft of industrial and warehousing units adjacent to Karakol, Penpole Lane, **Kings Weston**, has been refused because of its damaging effect upon the park, setting of the Vanbrugh-designed Grade I listed House and Conservation Area. Objections had been made by English Heritage, the National Trust, Georgian Group, KWAG, Bristol Civic Society, the Trust and many local people. (App. No. 13/03374/P)

We asked Bristol CC to designate the designed open spaces of **Sea Mills Garden Suburb** as a Historic Park and Garden (or Sea Mills Square and Recreation Ground as a minimum). However, the Council approved its draft Site Allocations and Development Management Document last January without such protection for these historic open spaces. We have submitted representations to the Government Inspector considering the Document, making the case for designation.

In June the Trust objected to a fenced children's playground on one of the five, grassed greens of Sea Mills Square, rather than in the Recreation Ground replacing the existing one. We considered this would harm the formal geometric layout and green, open nature of the Square, the centre-piece of the Garden Suburb. The playground was approved, however, at a Neighbourhood Partnership meeting by councillors voting two to one in favour of it.

Permission was sought for an energy centre at Leyhill Open Prison on land in the setting of the Grade II\* registered **Tortworth Court**, S. Glos. English Heritage and the Trust raised concerns about its effect upon the historic park. Following amended plans which included changing the details of a screen bund, this has been approved. (App. No. PT12/3724/F)

The proposal mentioned in the summer *Bulletin* for a house in the garden of **4 Cleveland Place West**, Bath, was refused because it would harm the setting of the adjoining listed buildings, the garden, Conservation Area and World Heritage Site. (App. No. 12/05547/FUL)

Permissions were sought for the conversion of derelict outbuildings into estate staff offices and residential accommodation at **Kelston Park**, B&NES, (curtilage listed buildings within the Grade II\* registered park). English Heritage and the Trust commented on this scheme, which has now been approved subject to conditions including one requiring the uses of the buildings to be ancillary to the Kelston Park estate. (App. No. 13/03846/FUL and 13/03847/LBA)

An application for building in the grounds of **Clevedon Hall**, N. Somerset has been approved (*Gazetteer of Historic Parks*, and setting of a Grade II\* listed building). The scheme was reduced to 18 houses on the north field, 8 hotel suites in the walled garden and 24 houses on the south field. English Heritage withdrew its objection to the overall development subject to assurances that the mitigation and landscaping would reinstate the quality of the estate. (App. No. 12/P/1539/F)

An application has been submitted to convert the house at **Bracken Hill, Leigh Woods**, N. Somerset, into two houses, subdividing the Grade II registered gardens around the house with railings and planting. We have objected because it would detract from the unified appearance of the garden and bring parking areas closer to the house. (App. No. 13/P/1587/F)