

Avon Gardens Trust

Bulletin



SPRING 2013

Page Park



Pip Meadleton

Page Park, in South Gloucestershire, has a newly restored bandstand. The Friends of Page Park raised an amazing £90,000 to make this happen. A day of celebrations around the Grand Bandstand Opening will take place on Saturday 4th May with performances planned for the bandstand throughout the year.

The Friends are also working with South Gloucestershire Council to submit an application to the Heritage Lottery fund with the hope of further restoration and regeneration within the park.

Page Park comprises 19 acres of land which was originally part of the Hill House estate; it was given to the inhabitants of Staple Hill and made into a park in 1910. When the park was opened it had, and still has today, a pavilion in the centre with an eight day, four dialled striking clock in the turret. Park seats were donated and in 1912 a drinking fountain was provided by public subscription. In 1923 Alderman

Page provided boys and girls public conveniences. The band stand was constructed in 1927. The original design provided an enclosed room, with shutters consisting of small panes of glass. Over the years the glass windows were broken and removed.

In 2011 the Friends decided to set about restoring the bandstand in order to bring music and other performances back to the park on a regular basis.

They look forward to attracting a wide variety of performers to entertain park users and the community throughout the coming years.

www.friendsofpagepark.co.uk

Philip White MBE

Philip White has joined the list of names honoured with an MBE in recognition of his services to Historic Garden Restoration. It is a well deserved appreciation of the



Rebecca Pow

20 years of work he has devoted to recovering the gardens at Hestercombe. He achieved his particular ambition, to find and restore the 18th century garden hidden by overgrown woodland and silted up lakes, making Hestercombe a particularly special place with its three gardening eras: the 18th century landscape garden around the valley, a Victorian terrace, as well as the Lutyens and Jekyll designed Edwardian garden.

Notes from the Chair

Last year was memorable both at the national level and for Avon Gardens Trust as we celebrated our 25th Anniversary and organised and hosted a successful Annual Conference for county gardens trusts. The 26th year of the Trust may be remembered for a couple of changes that will be implemented over the next few months.



Celebrating 25 years at Goldney

Pip Meddleton

Writing this on a rainy February day, I remembered a sentence I recently read. It was by Canon Ellacombe, the eminent former resident of Bitton Vicarage, who had such a profound influence on the plant world for over forty years. In his book *In A Gloucestershire Garden* he wrote "I think that February is almost the most interesting month of the year to the gardener: in no other month are there so many changes".

A possible increase in subscription rates was on the agenda at the last AGM: after discussion, the majority of members in attendance voted to increase rates with effect from July this year when the new membership year comes into force. It will have been twelve years since the last increase and we hope all our members will support us and understand the reasoning behind this decision.

The other change is that the Trust is in contact with a number of local organisations with a view to making

conservation grants. This is an area we are keen to take a greater part in and so it will be a priority during the year. There will be more about this in the next edition of the *Bulletin*.

In order to improve communication within the Trust, we would appreciate having as many members' e-mail addresses as possible. For those members already on our e-mail list, it has proved to be very effective as reminders can be easily sent about impending garden visits as well as enabling us to forward information we receive from other organisations and societies, including the Association of Gardens Trusts.

Ros Delany

Subscription Increase

It was agreed at the AGM held at Goldney House last July, that after holding subscriptions at the same level for many years, they would be increased. The new rates effective from 1st July 2013 are:

Single adult **£15**

2 adults at the same address **£20**

I would be grateful if those members who pay by standing order could contact their bank and increase their subscriptions accordingly.

Alan Kempton (Membership Secretary)

Please submit items for the Summer *Bulletin* by **14th May**.



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Events



Camerton Court ***A Magical Garden*** **Tuesday 9 April, 2.30pm**



Peggy Stenbridge

John Jarrett was a wealthy business man and entrepreneur whose fortune had been amassed through trade with the West Indies and by owning local collieries and Canal Company. He decided to make his mark on society by purchasing the manor house and estate at Camerton, near Bath in 1835.

He immediately pulled down the existing manor house that was near the church, a reflection possibly of its earlier ecclesiastical ownership. The new classical style house was built to a design by George Stanley Repton, son of the illustrious garden designer Humphry Repton. As befitted the period, the house was built in parkland away from the church and village.

Thirty years ago, when Ken and Ivy Biggs, purchased the estate, the house was in a poor state of repair and the twenty acres of gardens were neglected and overgrown. Gradually the garden has been lovingly restored and is now full of what have been described as 'garden

incidents'. These include a Japanese garden with pools, and bridges, a sunken garden and a rocky water course with miniature cascades.

This spring visit should ensure we see the spring flowers, bulbs and shrubs in all their glory. The AGT visited Camerton Court three years ago when it proved a very popular visit and since then, there has been further work including restoration of the kitchen garden.

Tea and cake will be served in the Orangery after a guided tour.

Cost of the visit is £7 for members and £9 for non-members.

Therapeutic Landscapes:

An exploration of 19th & 20th century hospital gardens in and around Bristol

A talk by Dr Clare Hickman

Thursday 25 April, 7 for 7.30pm

Apostle Room, Clifton Cathedral, Bristol
Coffee from 7 pm, talk to start at 7.30 pm

Focusing on examples from the Bristol area, this talk will bring together historical and contemporary debates on the use of the garden as a therapeutic space. Specifically it will explore landscapes associated with psychiatric, general and specialist medical institutions and

Keystone Convalescent Home



courtesy of Dr Clare Hickman

ask what did they look like, how were they used and how did this relate to medical concepts? Using examples such as Brislington House, Bristol General Hospital, Winford orthopaedic hospital and the Homeopathic Hospital, the narrative will trace this history from the grottos and summer houses of elite 19th century lunatic asylums, through Florence Nightingale's championing of the Victorian pavilion hospital design with its courtyard gardens, and the open-air institutions of the Edwardian period with their revolving chalets. It will conclude with a discussion of new hospital gardens being created in the 21st century.

Clare Hickman is a historian with an interest in the connections between landscape design and medical practice. From 2007 to 2011 she worked as a Research Assistant on the Leverhulme Trust funded Historic Gardens & Landscapes of England project with Professor Timothy Mowl at the University of Bristol. As a fledgling garden historian Clare won the first Garden History Society Essay Prize in 2005 for her article on the gardens surrounding Brislington House, the psychiatric institution in Bristol.

Her doctoral research on the history of hospital gardens will be published by Manchester University Press in May 2013 as *Therapeutic Landscapes: A History of English Hospital Gardens Since 1800*. Her work on the use of cold baths and plunge pools in the 18th century garden led to her TV debut on Channel 4's *Restoration Man* in 2012. From April 2013 she will be a Wellcome Fellow in Medical History and Humanities at Kings College London, where she will be exploring the use of gardens as scientific spaces by medical practitioners in the long 18th century. Cost of the talk is £7 for members and £9 for non-members.

Tour of the Kings Weston Estate Saturday 29 June, 1.15pm



KWAG

Walk through four hundred years of history on a guided tour taking in some of the park's familiar, and not so familiar, landmarks. David Martyn, founder of Kings Weston Action Group, will take you through the history of the estate from the 17th century to the modern day, shedding light on the people that created it and the legacy they left to the City of Bristol. The walk offers new insights based on KWAG's recent research.

Tea and cake will be served in the vaulted tea rooms after the tour.

Cost of the visit is £8 for members and £10 for non-members.

Kings Weston Action Group comprises local people, users of the park and anyone interested in the conservation of the Grade II listed landscape and the Grade I listed house. It was set up to protect the Kings Weston Park and House, fight for its future, and protect its past. Regular

working parties are held to cut back vegetation and restore paths and views.

Avon Gardens Trust congratulation KWAG, ably led by David Martyn, for being short listed as Project of the Year at the Bristol Green Volunteer Awards Ceremony that was held on 5 December in central Bristol.

The awards are made annually to a wide range of environmental projects across the City and recognise the dedication and involvement of the huge number of volunteers who drive them. Competition was tough and the award went to the Golden Hill Community Garden.

Please book with the enclosed forms, including a stamped addressed envelope for tickets and directions. If you would prefer to receive these by e-mail, please supply your e-mail address. Enquiries by phone to Ros Delany, 01275 371398 or by e-mail to r.delany@virgin.net.

Forthcoming Events



AGM at Acton Court

Saturday 27 July, 4.45pm

Dorothy Brown will tell us how she rescued the Tudor house from decay.

Holt Farm

Wednesday 14 August at 2.30pm

Organic gardens and glorious meadows with great views in the Yeo Valley.

Dyrham Park

Sunday 15 September at 2pm

A guided tour with access to areas not usually seen by the general public.

Tyntesfield

Saturday 26 October at 2 pm

Autumn colours with a guided tour from the Head Gardener.

Full details of these events in the next *Bulletin* or see our website.

Camerton Court

A Magical Garden

Tuesday 9 April, 2.30pm

Please make your own travel arrangements and share cars where possible.

members' tickets @ £7.00

non-members' tickets @ £9.00

tickets include tea and cake

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

E-mail: _____

Your e-mail address will be used only in connection with this booking. If, however, you would like us to use it to keep you informed of possible future news and events connected with the Trust please tick this box.

Note that your personal details are kept only for Avon Gardens Trust purposes and are not shared with any third party.

Please enclose a cheque payable to 'Avon Gardens Trust' and a stamped, addressed envelope for ticket and directions, or an e-mail address for these if preferred, to:

Ros Delany, Pendle House, Church Road, Abbots Leigh, Bristol BS8 3QU by **5 April**

Your Arnos Vale

Arnos Vale Cemetery Trust is running an oral history project to mark the 25th anniversary of the Friends of Arnos Vale Cemetery. They will be audio-recording interviews with people who remember the campaign to save Arnos Vale in the period 1987 to 2003. Anyone with a story to share can be part of the project which is to be called *Your Arnos Vale – A People's History of Arnos Vale Cemetery*.



Pip Meddleton

They will also include people with a family grave at Arnos Vale, or a local connection, fond memories and pivotal life moments. The interviews will be used to create audio clips for visitors to listen to in a variety of formats, including audio posts, smartphone apps and a cemetery trail. The oral histories will also be added to the cemetery's historic archive and some will be selected for the oral history collection at M Shed.

The project is funded by a grant of £35,100 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and match-funded by the Friends of Arnos Vale Cemetery. It is supported by M shed, the University of Bristol, the University of the West of England and *The Post* and will run until September.

Submit your story at www.arnosvale.org.uk/index.php/news/488-your-arnos-vale
e-mail YourArnosVale@arnosvale.org.uk
or collect a form from the East Lodge.

Please return by 5 April
Don't forget to enclose a cheque with
either your e-mail address or a stamped
addressed envelope so that we can
send you tickets and directions.

Therapeutic Landscapes

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Thursday 25 April, 7 for 7.30pm

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members' tickets @ £7.00

non-members' tickets @ £9.00

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Please enclose a cheque payable to 'Avon Gardens Trust' and a stamped, addressed envelope for ticket and directions, or an e-mail address for these if preferred, to:

Ros Delany, Pendle House, Church Road, Abbots Leigh, Bristol BS8 3QU by **19 April**



Tour of the

Kings Weston Estate

Saturday 29 June, 1.15pm

Please make your own travel arrangements and share cars where possible.

members' tickets @ £8.00

non-members' tickets @ £10.00

tickets include tea and cake

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

E-mail: _____

Your e-mail address will be used only in connection with this booking. If, however, you would like us to use it to keep you informed of possible future news and events connected with the Trust please tick this box.

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Ros Delany, Pendle House, Church Road, Abbots Leigh, Bristol BS8 3QU by **19 June**

Please return by 19 April

Don't forget to enclose a cheque with either your e-mail address or a stamped addressed envelope so that we can send you tickets and directions.

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AGT Education Grants

So far this year, eleven primary schools across Avon have applied to the Trust for a small grant to help with the development of their school garden. These are different schools from those who have applied over the last two years.

This means that, in the three years since we introduced this policy of applying for small grants, over 30 primary schools across Avon have received some financial help to develop their school gardens.

Parks & Gardens UK

Their redesigned website at www.parksandgardens.org is now up and running with improved search speed. Redirects are in place from the old website to the new, but there is a new e-mail address for queries: info@parksandgardens.org

Over the coming months they will be adding new content as well as working with volunteers to continue with uploading information and images to the database records.

The Bulldog Trust enabled these improvements by their generous grant.

Bristol History Mapped

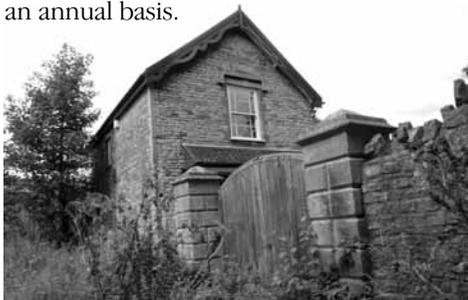
New layers have been added to Bristol City Council's excellent mapping tool at www.bristol.gov.uk/knowyourplace including aerial photography taken in 1946. From a parks point of view it illustrates just how many were turned over to allotments during the war.

Another City Council map at www.bristol.gov.uk/explore-bristol-city enables you to locate and find out more about all manner of sites, including historic parks and gardens.

Heath House, Stapleton

Adjoining Stoke Park gets all the publicity these days, but Heath House deserves a higher profile, especially considering the Smyth family used to alternate between residence here and at Ashton Court on an annual basis.

Richard Webber



The old entrance to the park reached via Sir John's Lane, with Heath House Lane not brought into use until the 20th century.

The main house, purchased by Priory Hospitals Group as a private psychiatric centre in 1991, was designed by Zachary Bailey and built by John Hensley of Bath for Thomas Smyth in 1784. There was an Elizabethan Manor House in the grounds prior to this I believe. The surviving Heath Cottages date from about the 1820s and the Lodge from the 1860s. By far the oldest building is the Barn, now abandoned as unsafe, which dates back to the 1760s.

Should any member have information on the layout of the general garden and grounds, I would love to hear from you.

Richard Webber

richard.g.webber@hotmail.com

The walled garden, contemporary with the main house.

Richard Webber



The Walled Garden Project

An Award Winning Community Garden in Bristol

Tucked away behind the Georgian facade of the old St. Luke's Vicarage on the corner of Queen Anne Road in Barton Hill lies a spacious, historic walled garden in the area of the ancient ecclesiastical parish of Temple or Holy Cross. Dearly loved and beautifully laid out in earlier times, it had become neglected. Rather than the property being put on the open market, Dr Chris Sunderland of Agora, a charitable organisation which works to promote active citizenship, persuaded the Bristol diocesan authorities to allow Agora to find tenants for the house and for Agora to initiate a community garden within the walled garden and courtyard.

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, the Walled Garden has joined up with the Somali Allotments in Royate Hill and the Asylum Seekers Allotments in St George to form the Three Leaf Gardening Collective, which runs outreach programmes



courtesy of Barton Hill Walled Garden



encouraging local communities to come together. The Walled Garden Project was initiated in 2010 and invited people to help restore the garden, providing space for a community garden. With enthusiasm and hard work, fruit, vegetables and flowers are grown there, including a spectacularly fruitful cultivar of chinese pumpkin. The addition of a polytunnel enables 30 species of summer tomatoes and winter salad greens to flourish; all produce grown is shared, there are no individual garden plots.

The garden project has blossomed with a key person as leader each open day to coordinate activities. Wednesdays are for women and young families and on Fridays local people can drop in or groups visit by appointment to learn and participate in horticultural skills. On one of my visits, young men from the Acorn Trust (which provides a residential facility for young people with support needs) were being shown how to help with tree and shrub work.

In 2011 the Barton Hill Walled Garden was declared the Bristol Green Volunteer Project of the Year by Bristol City Council with Bristol in Bloom giving them their second highest level of award.

Early on in the project a local craftsman, working with the community, built an outdoor shelter in the courtyard as an outdoor kitchen in the summer and general workshop. On open days



ENGLISH HERITAGE

100 Years of Protecting the Past

In 1913 the government recognised the State's duty to protect the physical remains of its history by passing The Ancient Monuments Consolidation and Amendments Act. This Act introduced the scheduling of ancient monuments and introduced a compulsory 'purchase order' which formed the first steps towards today's statutory protection for our heritage. Just as significant, the Act demonstrated government commitment and justified state interventions on private ownership for national benefit.

Today EH is the government's principal adviser on heritage in England as well as caring for the country's National Heritage Collection. This Collection is Britain's outdoor museum consisting of 880 historic sites that are now in the care of English Heritage, CADW and Historic Scotland. This national collection spans 5,000 years, ranges from prehistoric stone circles to a 1960s Cold War Bunker, and includes Stonehenge and Hadrian's Wall.

During 2013, a series of exhibitions, a book, and a BBC television series will all mark the centenary of this heritage milestone. In the spring, a new BBC Four series, *Heritage! The Battle for Britain's Past*, will follow the movement to protect the nation's heritage from its early days in the 19th century through to today while in May a new book by Dr Simon Thurley, *The Men from the Ministry: How Britain Saved its Heritage* (Yale University Press), will tell the full story of the role played by the State in the heritage protection movement.

delicious food is cooked whilst there is still space for some raised beds and a display of hanging baskets. The craftsman later ran a timber framed roundhouse course and over a period of two or three months the basic structure of the roundhouse was substantially complete. Various techniques were used, for instance the roof follows an overlapping, self supporting design used by some North American Indian groups. The cord wall technique comes from Scandinavia. The walls are held together by cob, a mixture of clay, sand and straw sheltered from the rain by overhanging eaves. Cob cottages can still be seen in Dorset. The timber framed roundhouse is designed to be a shelter and a quiet, reflective space and is proving very popular. It needs a little more work, including a door to keep out draughts and an intended green roof seems to be seeding itself quite happily

They were selected for their Green Volunteer Project of the Year award for "bringing the community together by creating a growing garden where residents can garden, grow, cook and eat healthy, sustainable meals." An 18th century garden designed for the use and pleasure of the rectors and their families is now being redesigned and reinvented as a productive community space.

Wendy Pollard

bartonhillwalledgarden.wordpress.com

www.agora.uk.com



Dates for your Diary

Stop Press

Stoke Park Consultation

Bristol City Council is looking for views on their management plan for Stoke Park. Public exhibitions are being held during March - rather short notice for this *Bulletin*. Find out more and leave your comments before 4 April at www.citizenspace.com/bristol/bristol-city-council/stokeparkplan

Friends of the University of Bristol Botanic Garden

Stourhead:

The History, Conservation and Management of the Garden

Thursday 21 March, 8pm

Lecture by Alan Power, Head Gardener, Room B75, School of Biological Sciences, Woodland Road, Bristol BS8 1UG. Free to Friends, £5 donation from non-Friends (after the Friends' AGM at 7.30).

University of Bristol

Goldney Garden and Royal Fort Garden Tours

Tours will be led by garden historian and AGT member Angela Nutbrown and will last approximately 1½ hours. £5.50, ticket only in advance, numbers limited.

Goldney Garden on the following **Sundays: 12 May; 9 June; 28 July; 18 August; 15 September**. Tours begin at **10.30am and 2.00pm**

Royal Fort Garden tours on:

Friday 10 May, 2.00pm

Wednesday 19 June, 2pm

Wednesday 17 July, 6pm

Tuesday 20 August, 2pm

Wednesday 18 September, 2pm

More details: 0117 331 4901 or Nicolette.Smith@bristol.ac.uk

Banwell Bone Cave, Follies and Tower Open Days

Sunday 26 May

Saturday 14 September

Sunday 15 September

Open 10.30 to 4.30 pm. Filled Rolls, cream Teas and Cakes available.

Admission free but donations towards further restoration welcome.

www.banwellcaves.org

University of Oxford / Garden History Society

Gardens and Art

Friday 7 - Sunday 9 June

From Utens's lunettes of Medici estates in the Italian Renaissance through to Monet and Giverny, the depiction of gardens has often had an agenda that goes far beyond mere representation. This weekend school at Rewley House, Oxford, will be concerned primarily with the way in which gardens have been portrayed in art. Visits to Worcester College Garden, and the Ashmolean Museum. More details: www.conted.ox.ac.uk/V200-76 or e-mail: ppdayweek@conted.ox.ac.uk

Association of Gardens Trusts



AGM & Conference

London 6 - 8 September

Eastern Promise - Transforming London's Landscapes from Abercrombie to the Olympics

Hosted by the London Parks & Gardens Trust and based at Queen Mary's College, the conference will look at the transformation of East London's landscapes since Patrick Abercrombie's seminal 1940s London Plan.

More details: 0207 839 3969 or office@londongardenstrust.org

Details of these and other events at our website www.avongardenstrust.org.uk