

## CONTENTS



|  |    |
|--|----|
| Message from the Chair                                 | 2  |
| Changes to AGT Membership                              | 3  |
| The AGT Library  | 4  |
| Volunteers Garden History Research Day                 | 5  |
| Garden Visit to South Kelding                          | 6  |
| News from Avon's Friends Groups                        | 7  |
| Tulipmania at Dyrham & Return of the Deer              | 10 |
| Winter Lecture Series                                  | 11 |
| Garden News from around Avon                           | 13 |
| Urgent Appeal for new Committee members and Volunteers | 15 |
| Upcoming AGT Events— Spring 2024                       | 16 |

## Message from the Chair

It doesn't seem a moment since I wrote for the last newsletter, yet this Saturday we saw the last of our Winter season of lectures. I must say, it was a fascinating lecture to end with. Christopher Pound explored the emergence of Bath's spa gardens from the earliest beginnings as promenades to their blossoming as Pleasure Gardens, and ultimately the Royal Victoria Park, this intended for all, not just the elite.

At the end of April our first collaborative venture with the Garden Trusts of Somerset, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire came to fruition. A Study Day in Garden Research at Wiltshire History Centre was a resounding success with around 40 of us. Claire de Carle, Chair of Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust, archivists and AGT members Jo and Colin Johnston and Tamsin McMillan from The Gardens Trust gave us some terrific case histories, resource suggestions and a table full of garden related documents in the Reading Room. We are all keen to run another day in 6 months time, so watch this space! We desperately need volunteer researchers to help us with this, not least in researching both existing and potential additions to our Gazetteer. We have started looking at Local Lists for all four authorities, so if you have a few spare hours and would like to be involved, especially if it is in your local area, please do get in touch for a chat [chairman@avongardenstrust.org.uk](mailto:chairman@avongardenstrust.org.uk). This research is vital for planning applications, and the more information we can collect, the better equipped we will be to help advise, comment and protect our gardens and landscapes.

April was a busy month, with our first Garden Visit to the wonderful South Kelding in Upton Cheyney, home of Wendy and Barry Smale. Despite threatening clouds, we had a very successful tour of the arboretum, bog gardens and much more, followed by delicious cakes and tea. Our next visit is to the Parsonage Farm in Publow on 14th May promises to be a treat, so book now! It is followed on 12th June by a private visit to the gardens at Belcombe Court, Bradford on Avon led by our President, Professor Timothy Mowl.

As ever, I look forward to meeting many of you during our summer garden visits, and as you will see (Page 14) AGT will have a stall at two of the NGS Open Gardens in June, so come along and join us there. If you would like to come and help man a stall, please get in touch. All we need now is some sunshine!

**Kay Ross**

## Changes to AGT Membership

AGT have revised the method of membership applications and renewal. As we increased our membership, it was becoming more evident that we needed an online membership application where members can join, pay online, get acknowledgement of membership – and get automatic renewal reminders of annual fees.

To this end we have incorporated an online portal '**Membermojo**'. This database retains your records in a safe manner, and is accessible to each and every member at any time through the AGT website on this [membership link](#). This enables you to amend the details we hold for you using the link, the database automatically updating and notifying the AGT administrator of the change.

**At renewal** (on 1st July); the database will send you an automatic reminder 30 days beforehand. Following payment, it will send an automatic acknowledgement to you and AGT.

If you pay by Credit Card through 'Stripe' [a card collection service like PayPal] then the process is complete.

If you pay by BACS, the Membership Secretary will check the payment has reached the bank and then you will receive acknowledgment.

### **IMPORTANT— Please note we have changed banks from CAF to Nat West**

CAF were charging us a monthly fee, which NatWest does not.

Therefore, all payments and standing orders to CAF Bank **must be cancelled** and changed to Nat West. The new Bank details are:

Nat West Bank

Account Name- Avon Gardens Trust

Account No. – 90709128    Sort code - 52-10-14

Ref- your Surname, Initial.

**For Standing Orders:** This can be set up online with your bank using the BACS details for AGT as above.

**For Cheques:** Payable to Avon Gardens Trust - send to Peter Hills, 2 Rose Hill, Nore Rd, Portishead. BS20 6JY

**Postal applications** please email - [membership@avongardenstrust.org.uk](mailto:membership@avongardenstrust.org.uk) - or phone for form.

I hope the foregoing will enable you to have a look, amend your membership and pay online as necessary

Any problems please contact me at [membership@avongardenstrust.org.uk](mailto:membership@avongardenstrust.org.uk) or phone 07748507166

**Peter Hills**

## The AGT Library

The offer of Garden History books by member Lyn Jacobs got me thinking of commencing a library for use by members. Garden History books are by their nature expensive, so to have a resource that can be borrowed for use by members undertaking research – or just interested in a topic – was one not to be missed. David Evans added to the collection, so we now have over 100 books available to borrow, housed in our office space at The Create Centre, Smeaton Road, Bristol.

The index is on our [website](#) so one can browse the titles available. A loan sheet for books has been created and all



books are available with immediate effect. The rules for loan of a book are as follows:

- Books are available to any member of Avon Gardens Trust, Somerset Gardens Trust, Gloucester Garden and Landscape Trust and Wiltshire Gardens Trust.
- Pre-notification of a book loan is required via email to [research@avongardenstrust.org.uk](mailto:research@avongardenstrust.org.uk) with both name and contact details of the loanee.
- Following this, arrangements will be made to set the book aside, either to be collected, or posted to the loanee, who must pre-pay postage.
- Books must be returned as above.
- There is a 6-month restriction for a book loan, which can be renewed if required, as long as the book hasn't been requested by another person .

If any member has Garden History Books that they wish to donate we would be pleased to accept them – unless there is multiple duplication of titles. Contact me at the email above if you have donations.

Peter Hills. 7th March 2024

Sample of loan sheet -to be held online

### AGT Library Loan

| Date | Book No | Title | Author | Loaned to |     |       | Returned |
|------|---------|-------|--------|-----------|-----|-------|----------|
|      |         |       |        | Name      | Tel | Email |          |
|      |         |       |        |           |     |       |          |
|      |         |       |        |           |     |       |          |
|      |         |       |        |           |     |       |          |
|      |         |       |        |           |     |       |          |
|      |         |       |        |           |     |       |          |
|      |         |       |        |           |     |       |          |
|      |         |       |        |           |     |       |          |



## Volunteers Garden History Research Day at Swindon & Wiltshire History Centre in April

AGT was delighted to be part of a collaboration with the Garden Trusts of Gloucestershire (GGLT), Somerset (SGT) and Wiltshire (WGT) for a Volunteers Garden History Research Day at Wiltshire's History Centre in Chippenham. Aimed at anyone who is keen to carry out research for Avon Gardens Trust on our historic gardens and landscapes, the day was a resounding success, with around 40 attendees. So much so, we are keen to hold a further one in 6 months time, hopefully with more AGT members coming forward for the day.



Claire de Carle, Chair of Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust, gave us an inspirational presentation about the 10 year project to record a number of their Gardens and Landscapes for the Heritage Environment Record [HER]. She covered research and recording methods, referencing work and copyright issues.

Colin and Jo Johnston, professional archivists with a wealth of experience within Avon, showed us how to access many resources, Jo having selected some wonderful archival documents including maps, garden plans and planting lists amongst others. In the afternoon Dorothy Treasure who runs the Wiltshire Building Trust, showed us some of the WGT records in her care. Throughout the day Tamsin McMillan, from The Gardens Trust, was on hand with advice and further research suggestions.

If you would like to know more about researching Avon's gardens and landscapes, perhaps in your own area, please do contact Gill Clarke [research@avongardenstrust.org.uk](mailto:research@avongardenstrust.org.uk) or Kay Ross [chairman@avongardenstrust.org.uk](mailto:chairman@avongardenstrust.org.uk) to have a chat.

## Garden Visit to South Kelding, Upton Cheyney

At the beginning of April we had our first visit to the wonderful gardens at South Kelding, home of Wendy and Barry Smale. In the early part of this century they purchased a



dilapidated 7-acre property with three large fields, separated by a hedgerows and bordered on the east by Pipeley Brook. Having demolished the house and built their current home on the site, they set

about creating the garden from scratch, planting an orchard, arboretum and much more.



The steep hillside runs down to the brook, which historically separates Gloucestershire from Somerset. Over the past 15 years, they have created an impressive variety of planting: Mediterranean screes at the top, containing grasses and mainly drought-resistant plants lead you to shade-loving woodland and the arboretum.

There Wendy set out each island of trees and shrubs according to

Continents, though Australasia, with its drought-loving eucalyptus trees, had to be abandoned. Asia, for example, is represented by many beautiful Sorbus, several in blossom at the time of our visit' as were the ornamental Malus in Europe. In the Birch copse, later-flowering primrose and Narcissi added to the rich tapestry.

Wending our way down the hillside, we came to the large pond beside the recently created bog garden, with a stream running through it. Here, primroses in profusion, spreading through the wood. Several varieties of Hellebores, candelabra Primulas, Dicentras and Vinca all added to the stunning display, accompanied by the burble of the brook alongside.

Returning to the top of the garden, we enjoyed tea and cake whilst admiring the stunning panoramic countryside views cross the Avon Valley to the Mendips. Everyone agreed it was an exceptionally successful start to our





## News from Avon's Friends Groups

### Friends of Castle Park

Selena Gray and I were delighted to visit Castle Park in Bristol, meeting Russ Leith from the Friends of Castle Park and Alex and Ruby from St Mungo's Charity, who look after the Physic Garden there. I am ashamed to say I have not visited the Physic Garden before, and I

was blown away by the scale and beauty of it. Sponsored until 2 years ago by Jo

Malone, the garden was designed 10 years ago for the St Mungo's Charity by Emma Chambers.

Sheltered in the lee of the ruined St Peter's Church, both volunteers and local members of the homeless community help tend it. Here, students on their 'Putting Down

Roots' gardening programme learn horticultural skills working as

a team, one example of St Mungo's recovery from homelessness services/training programmes. To find out more contact [alexandra.henden@mungos.org](mailto:alexandra.henden@mungos.org).



Russ then took Selena and I on a tour of Castle Park, which was eye opening. We walked through the Seik's Memorial Garden, followed by the wonderful fountain and rill, commissioned by Bristol City Council in 1992, *Beside the Still Waters* by Peter Randall-Page. This was lined by an avenue of pleached lime trees and a hornbeam hedge. In another part of the park is a bronze drinking fountain by Kate Malone from which water had originally spouted from the mouths of the fish —ironically sealed up by the Council for health & safety reasons some time ago! On our tour, we spotted

the once thriving floating Seed Ballast Garden, now overgrown and derelict, such a great pity. The Park itself is awaiting developments at its western end, where derelict post-war brutalist buildings, and the blitzed St Mary Le Port church await a proposed development of offices and shops to revitalise the area. More about Castle Park will feature on our website shortly.



## Friends of William Champion's Garden

William Champion's Garden in Warmley, South Gloucestershire, was created by the 18th-century industrialist and Quaker William Champion. It is designated Grade II on the UK Parks & Gardens Register (at risk) and is a Scheduled Ancient Monument, together with Champion's brass mill, which houses Kingswood Heritage Museum, and his original pin factory, known as the Clock Tower. It is owned by South Gloucestershire Council.



A Friends group was established in 2020 with Kay Ross as Chairman, and Selena Gray as Treasurer, which aims to improve the site and secure the long-term future of the garden. Over the past four years the Friends Group (FoWCG for short) has obtained funding for new benches, bulb planting, a new orchard of heritage fruit trees and general maintenance of the Garden, including a Bee Bold Grant from the West of England Combined Authority (WECA).

The gardens are open all year round but the Grottoes in the garden are only open on selected dates on Sunday and Monday on the late May and August Bank Holidays and over Heritage Open Weekend September 14th & 15th. FoWCG are always keen to have additional members to join them at their regular monthly work parties on the second Sunday of the month. A new website for the garden has just been launched.

<https://www.williamchampionsgarden.org.uk/>





## Friends of Blaise & Blaise Community Garden

The Friends of Blaise formed around forty years ago when Blaise Castle was in danger of being demolished and the park lost. They promote and support the conservation and improvement of the Blaise



Castle Estate. They now act as the de facto caretakers of various areas of the Blaise Estate, which includes the Castle, Dairy and Kitchen Gardens as well as the Rose Garden through their sister charity Blaise Community Garden, which has a 25-year lease on the 2-acre site. Hidden away to the side of the museum, within the walls of the former kitchen garden, it contains greenhouses for growing fruit, vegetables and flowers. There is also a pond, beehive and orchard. The Garden is open every Wednesday and Saturday throughout the year 10am to 2pm. The Friends of Blaise meet every Wednesday 10.30am at the Café by the main carpark where one or both of the Park Rangers lead on a wide variety of tasks, suitable for all ages and levels of fitness. Their activities include woodland clearance and coppicing, seeding and bedding in native plants and protecting the riverbanks and pond edges. They have recently been in touch, inviting us on a visit, currently being arranged—so watch this space! <https://friendsofblaise.co.uk/about-the-friends/>

We are looking forward to featuring many more Friends groups in future newsletters and on our website. If you are a member of one or have a local group, please do send us details.



## Tulipmania at Dyrham & Return of the Deer

Tulipmania celebrates Dyrham's links to the Netherlands in the 17th century, especially the import of tulip bulbs. The site has become synonymous with tulips and this year's fabulous



display is accompa-

nied by talks, plant sales and crafts. As well as the orchard and borders, huge pots of a brand new variety of pale yellow tulips grace the Sphynx Court, recently established with parterres. The Courtyard too has large ceramic pots with stunning groups of tulips highlighting the different types of tulip, whilst the orchard is a jewelled spectacle. Here multiple tulips of all colours share the orchard with blue



Camassia and yellow cowslips. Tulips should be blooming into early

May, so for more details, see their website.



A new herd of 26 deer has been introduced to the ancient parkland at Dyrham, after a cull of the entire herd in 2021 following the discovery of high levels of bovine TB in the deer. The name 'Dyrham' is derived from the Saxon 'valley of the deer', and it

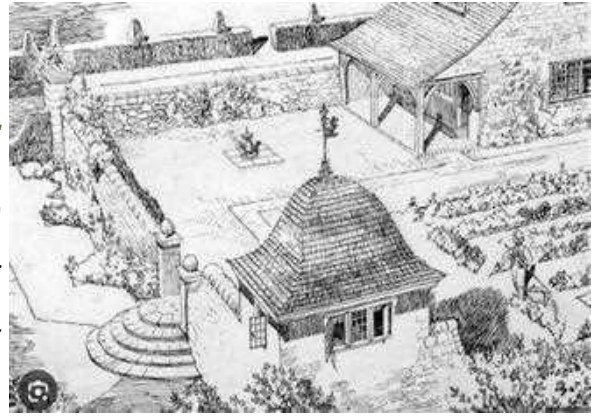
has been a deer park for centuries. The deer sanctuary, separated by new fencing from the cattle, also planned to be introduced, includes more space sheltered by trees, deer grids and the installation of specialised water troughs too high for badgers, who have all been vaccinated under a new vaccination project. A full-time deer park manager will oversee the herd and the ongoing good health and welfare of the animals.



## Winter Lecture Series

### Wendy Bishop's Lecture - *Inigo Triggs (1876-1923)*

Wendy Bishop gave us an excellent lecture on Inigo Triggs, looking at his comparatively brief life and career as an architect and garden designer. He lived near Liphook, Hampshire, in the early twentieth century and



practised mainly in the East Hampshire and West Sussex area, although he also undertook commissions in Switzerland and Sicily. Triggs designed several formal gardens as well as a few country houses. His speciality was in the Arts and Crafts style, carrying out historical research and re-creating the garden designs for his clients. He also wrote several books on the subject. In 1910 he purchased Fry's Farm, in Liphook, which he renamed Little Boarhunt, re-designing the farmhouse and gardens in the Arts and Crafts style. He died of TB on 9 April 1923 in Taormina, Sicily, a country he had a special affiliation with.

### April Lecture by Christopher Pound – *The Legacy of Spa Gardens – Bath Spa Gardens*

Our final Winter 2024 lecture was a re-sounding success, bringing to a close a small but fascinating series of lectures covering a diverse range of gardens and landscapes. Architect and town planner, with 40 years experience of the World Heritage Site, took us through the emergence of the spa City, from the elite Georgian promenades to the Victorian 'Peoples' park'. Christopher wove the



story of the emergence of Bath's parks with examples from European spa cities. He demonstrated how the emerging spa gardens ultimately led to the development of the 18th-century crescents and terraces. From Orange Grove, with walks between avenues of trees beside Bath Abbey, via Harrison's walks along the riverside to the Pleasure Gardens of Bathwick Villa, Spring Gardens and the last Vauxhall in England, Sydney Gardens.



A much needed diversion from treatments at the mineral springs and baths, 'promenading' in formal walks and gardens provided exercise, entertainment and pleasure, as well as somewhere to conduct business amongst the wealthier merchants. Bath's spa gardens evolved to encapsulate the 18th-century idea of the picturesque, with green spaces, views out to the hills beyond and an increasingly informal garden style, emulated by several Continental spa towns. They provided both leisure and exercise, recommended by physicians for the treatment of such



diseases as gout and diabetes, primarily brought on by excessive eating and drinking. Many were repeat patients, failing to keep up their healthy regime on their return home!

Christopher showed us the many spa facilities within and around the City, combining

cold water bathing and 'taking the waters' with enjoying the landscape. He described the lost pleasure gardens of Lyncombe Spaw, now a school but with a more resuscitated fountain, Wickstead's Machine and King James' Garden. There are also those that survive in some form: Sydney Gardens, Parade Gardens and the bucolic pasture below Lansdown Terrace, still occasionally home to a small flock of sheep.

Today, all Bath's gardens, together with other green spaces and woodlands, the fabric of the city and pleasant surrounding countryside are held to be a 'therapeutic landscape', an essential attribute for one of the eleven spa towns in the recent UNESCO inscription of 'The Great Spa Towns of Europe World Heritage Site'. Chris concluded by generously distributing his book, which informed the lecture, to all attendees (there is a copy in the AGT library for members to borrow). A tremendous conclusion to our Winter series of lectures and we can't wait to announce the next series, beginning in October with our AGM.

**Kay Ross**

## Garden News from around Avon

### The Kingsweston Iron Bridge Restored

The Kingsweston Iron Bridge, which links the Blaise Castle estate and Kingsweston Fields in Bristol, was craned back into

place on 30th May following extensive repairs and restoration.



The Grade II-listed cast iron footbridge was taken away for repair after Bristol City Council closed the 'unsafe and unstable' bridge in 2015. It had sustained damage to its underside after twice being hit by vehicles. The bridge has been raised 1 metre higher and steps installed at either end. The £1.1m restoration project was funded by

BCC's Highway Infrastructure Bridge Investments fund. [Save The Iron Bridge - Kingsweston](#)

### Opening of the Guangzhou Garden at Bristol Botanic Garden

The Guangzhou Garden, Best in Show garden from Chelsea in 2021, was officially opened by Evelyn Welch, Vice Chancellor of the University of Bristol. Designed by Chin Chen and Peter Chmiel of Grant Associates, it has been rebuilt at the Botanic Garden.

The Garden showcases the need for cities of the future to be considered as landscape cities. The garden was gifted by Guangzhou in China to Bristol, which has been twinned with Guangzhou since 2001.





## NGS Open Gardens for May

Valley Spring, Southstoke Road, Bath, BA2 5SP

10 & 12 May 2024

4 Haytor Park, Bristol, BS9 2LR

19 May & 9 Jun 2024

1 Sunnyside, Stoke Bishop, Bristol, BS9 1BQ

19 May 2024

The Yews, Harry Stoke Road, Stoke Gifford, Bristol, BS34 8QH

19 May 2024

The Hayes, Newton St Loe, Bath, BA2 9BU

25 –26 May 2024

Mellowstones, Staples Hill, Freshford, Bath BA2

26 May & 30 June 2024

For more details <https://findagarden.ngs.org.uk/>

## AGT's collaboration with the National Garden Scheme

AGT are thrilled to be appearing at some of the NGS open gardens in Avon this summer. Following our presentation to Avon NGS members we have been invited to have a stall at the

Penny Brohn Centre (16th June) and Hanham Court (8th-9th June). We will be promoting AGT and hopefully recruiting new members. Please do come along and if you would like to help man a stall for an hour or two, please do let us know [events@avongardenstrust.org.uk](mailto:events@avongardenstrust.org.uk) .



The NGS will also have a show garden at the 2024 RHS Chelsea Flower Show in May. Designed by eight times RHS gold medal winner, Tom Stuart-Smith, and sponsored by Project Giving Back, the garden will exemplify the joy and associated health and wellbeing benefits of garden visiting that have been at the heart of the National Garden Scheme since 1927.



## **Badminton to become an RHS Show in 2026**

One of Avon's most esteemed landscapes has been chosen for the RHS Show site in 2026. Big and exciting changes are being made to RHS Flower Shows, which will take the world-class Shows to different new locations around the country, and work with more communities and schools. In the



future, the Shows will visit more new locations, promoting gardening to as many people as possible. Watch this space for more news or go to Badminton's website <https://www.badmintonestate.com/>

## **Urgent Appeal for new Committee members and Volunteers**

Whilst we now have six Trustees, we still need more, and in particular, we need members to join the AGT Committee. We desperately need a Secretary to organise the admin, a Marketing person to help us with social media and advertising our events and vitally, someone to join the Planning Sub-Committee. We deal with planning applications for four separate authorities, so if you have experience or would like to receive training, please contact us.

At the moment we are sharing jobs between us to keep everything running smoothly, but we do need more volunteers for all areas of our work. We would love to visit more of the primary schools and community gardens that we have given grants to, as well as the many Friends groups in Avon, but there is only so much we are able to do. We are a friendly group and have around 5-6 meetings a year, so please, if you feel you would like to get involved or would like to know more, contact us at [chairman@avongardenstrust.org.uk](mailto:chairman@avongardenstrust.org.uk).

We are also planning one or two Committee & Volunteer special outings during 2024, visiting historic gardens and meeting the gardeners who look after them.



Registered Charity No. 900377

CREATE Centre,

Smeaton Road,

Bristol BS1 6XN

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

**Newsletter :** Kay Ross

[News@AvonGardensTrust.org.uk](mailto:News@AvonGardensTrust.org.uk)

**Editors:** Barbara Hardy & Timothy Mowl

[editor@avongardenstrust.org.uk](mailto:editor@avongardenstrust.org.uk)

**Layout:** Kay Ross

## **COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

**Chair:** Kay Ross

[chairman@avongardenstrust.org.uk](mailto:chairman@avongardenstrust.org.uk)

**Treasurer:** Selena Gray

[treasurer@avongardenstrust.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@avongardenstrust.org.uk)

**Membership:** Peter Hills

[membership@avongardenstrust.org.uk](mailto:membership@avongardenstrust.org.uk)

**Conservation & Planning:** Anne Hills & David Evans

[planning@avongardenstrust.org.uk](mailto:planning@avongardenstrust.org.uk)

**Research:** Gill Clarke

[research@avongardenstrust.org.uk](mailto:research@avongardenstrust.org.uk)

**Events:** Kay Ross & Peter Hills

[events@avongardenstrust.org.uk](mailto:events@avongardenstrust.org.uk)

**School Grants :** Kay Ross & Selena Gray

[education@avongardenstrust.org.uk](mailto:education@avongardenstrust.org.uk)

**Community Garden Grants:** Kay Ross & Selena Gray

[communities@avongardenstrust.org.uk](mailto:communities@avongardenstrust.org.uk)

## **Upcoming AGT Events— Spring 2024**

**Tuesday, 14 May 2024** - A private visit to the gardens at **Parsonage Farm, Publow** 2-4 pm



**Wednesday 12 June** – a private visit to the gardens at **Belcombe Court**, Bradford on Avon led by Garden Historian Professor Timothy Mowl at 2 pm



**Wednesday 3 July 2024** – a private visit to the gardens of **Bradley Court**, Wotton under Edge led by the owner, Helene Gammack, with Professor Timothy Mowl at 2 pm



**Wednesday 24 July 2024** – a private visit to two gardens in Wells: **Stoberry Park** – morning visit with coffee, cake and light lunch & **Milton Lodge** – afternoon visit with tea, cake and guided tour. From 10.30 am to 4 pm