

GARDEN PARTY

With this Newsletter comes an invitation to a Garden Party on **Wednesday 29th June at 6 p.m.**

We are so very grateful to Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth McAlpine for so kindly allowing us to use their beautiful garden and so generously sponsoring the event by providing a marquee and much, much more. So rain or shine we shall be able to enjoy wine and canapés and the company of other garden lovers. I do hope that as many of you as possible will come and bring your friends and family.

The garden at the Priory is very special. The attractive tile hung house itself is very old, part dating from the C16, and it has been added to in Georgian and Victorian times. The McAlpines moved there in 1957 and although there were some interesting trees and rhododendrons the present garden is almost entirely their creation. The garden lies in a small valley and brilliant use is made of the different levels. Winding paths along the upper slopes give glimpses of the more formal parts of the garden below. Two garden houses one made of wood and the other formed from clipped yew provide a light-hearted touch. A formal lawn leads to immaculately clipped yew hedges crowned with topiary behind which lie formal compartments with seasonal plantings. A large walled garden still fulfils its traditional use as a kitchen and picking garden.

This will be a very special evening not to be missed.

Elizabeth Cairns



AGAPANTHUS 'HOLE PARK BLUE'

Visitors to Hole Park in Rolvenden may have noticed a bold, late flowering and particularly deep blue agapanthus in the garden. This plant has recently been identified as a form which is unique to Hole Park where it has been grown for about 100 years. A picture belonging to the present owner, Edward Barham, shows his great uncle standing beside the agapanthus holding a toy car which dates back to 1912. Plant Heritage (formerly known as the National Council for the Conservation of Plants and Gardens – NCCPG) has

carried out research into the plant which suggests that it may indeed be unique. It has been named 'Hole Park Blue' and is being propagated for sale later this year.

The gardens at Hole Park were designed and planted by Col. Arthur Barham who bought the property in 1911 and were developed by his grandson David Barham who took over the estate in 1959. It is now owned by his son, Edward, who continues to add to and enhance the plantings.

Kent Gardens Trust will be visiting Hole Park on 23rd May when Dr. Barbara Simms will talk about the prevailing fashions in garden design in the early 20th century when Hole Park was laid out and Edward Barham will tell us about the history of the garden. We shall also be able to see the extensive archives which illustrate the creation and development of the garden.



Hole Park with agapanthus

Kent Gardens Trust

LANDSCAPES AT RISK

protecting the historic parks and gardens of Kent

In November Charlotte McLean, the South East Regional Landscape Officer at English Heritage gave an extremely interesting and stimulating talk for our annual autumn event. The system of listing gardens, private and public parks, burial grounds and public squares began in the 1980s and is still evolving. The reason behind the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest is to raise public awareness of the value of these landscapes which reflect the social and cultural history of this country and encourage owners to protect their special character.



Somerhill

Parks and gardens are particularly vulnerable to neglect and inappropriate management because they can deteriorate so quickly and of course there is constant pressure for development particularly in the south east. Listing does not provide any statutory protection though there is a presumption in favour of conservation of a registered site. Owners cannot be forced to preserve the historic characteristics of their garden but local authorities are required to consult English Heritage on proposals affecting any Grade I or II* listed site and have regard to their views. The Garden History Society must also be consulted but in practice is only able to comment on Grade I and II* sites.

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