



# THE KENT GARDENS TRUST

# NEWSLETTER

*Working for Kent's Garden Heritage*

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## From the Editor

*Hugh Vaux*

*Frustrating, yes, but also a time to think and plan. The weather has been glorious and despite a lack of rain, the roses have had a bumper year. Wildlife has benefited too with many more butterflies about. So we hope that Paul Lewis' review of the fascinating and thoughtful book by Dave Goulson, *The Garden Jungle* or *Gardening to Save the Planet*, will lead you to discover even more about creatures in your garden of which you may not have been very aware together with the benefits which they bring.*

*The importance of green spaces, especially during lockdown, was emphasised in our June newsletter. This is reinforced by Sarah Morgan who created the new designs of Dalby Gardens in Margate whose transformation can be seen in the accompanying photographs. An important space for which KGT is responsible is the Archbishop's Palace Garden in Maidstone. Tom La Dell brings*

*Continued on page 3*

### *In this edition*

	<i>Page</i>
<i>From the Chairmen</i>	1
<i>John Evelyn gardens</i>	2
<i>Evelyn in Oxford</i>	3
<i>John Evelyn posters</i>	4-7
<i>No Great Dixter this year</i>	8
<i>Planning in Kent (Part 2)</i>	9
<i>Dalby Gardens</i>	9
<i>Archbishop's Palace garden</i>	10
<i>Book review</i>	11
<i>Delos. One year on.</i>	11
<i>Flood prevention at Mote Park</i>	12
<i>Joseph Banks</i>	12

## *A Review of 2020*

# *From the Chairmen*



*The photo shows how the trustees met face to face in July whilst following government guidelines and having a little fun.*

Well.....what can one say about this year that hasn't been said a thousand times already? Every one of our eleven Events cancelled, thus no opportunity to meet our loyal members and share thoughts about gardens old and new.

Very frustrating for all of us but there have at least been some saving graces. For the great majority of us that live in a rural setting and have green space close by, there have always been things to do and see, and walks to be had. And since June controlled garden visiting (NGS, NT, Historic Houses and others) continues to be rewarding for those that book in advance. We have tried to add to your appreciation of several of those gardens by providing a monthly e-newsletter with garden 'vignettes' selected and written by our Trustees.

KGT is mostly a volunteer – based organisation and so we will survive this enduring crisis even if it means one year without any Events. Much of our regular work has continued as normal. We have been able to continue our regular job of reviewing planning applications that impinge upon listed and important gardens, and have been making some progress with our next major Research Project with Swale District Council. Our Secretary and Treasurer have taken the opportunity to 'tidy up' our database of Members, and work has continued unabated on improving our Website.

It is still too early to say what next year will look like. Given half a chance, we would like to arrange visits to most of gardens that we had hoped to see this year, and maybe add some more. We are also hoping to present our Spring Lecture by James Bolton on The Grand Tour as a Zoom or YouTube offering in the winter.

Your membership is more important to us than ever. Please encourage friends to join, and please renew when prompted.

With our best wishes,

*Richard Stileman and Mike O'Brien, Co-Chairmen*

# John Evelyn and gardens

By Tom La Dell

John Evelyn's four hundredth anniversary of his birth in 2020 gives us an opportunity to reflect on the gardens of the 17C, most of which were swept away by the English landscape park from the 1740's onwards. These gardens were all formal and based on the great Italian Renaissance gardens of the 16C such as Villa d'Este and Villa Lante and later French gardens. These were gardens to walk in and have high minded discussions about life, art and politics while the playfulness of the water features entertained you. There were hundreds of these gardens in Britain and they have just had a full coverage in Gardens of Court and Country: English Design 1630-1730 by David Jacques. Plans of the formal gardens in Kent can be seen in the wonderful Andrews, Drury and Herbert map of 1769.

John Evelyn was a Royalist in an increasingly Parliamentary England. He left England in 1643 for France and Italy and travelled for three years. Having toured the gardens of Paris and its environs, he was so impressed by the oval garden of the French nurseryman Pierre Morin that he copied the plan at Sayes Court, his estate in Deptford (now south east London) a few years later. It was, though, the grand formality of the great gardens of Luxembourg and St Germain that most impressed him.

From Paris he travelled to Italy where he spent the next two years and enthused about Villa Aldobrandini at Frascati and, of course, Villa d'Este at Tivoli. He had already visited the Leiden Physic garden in the Netherlands a couple of years earlier and now visited their precursors at Pisa and Padua. These were familiar to him for their influence on the Oxford Physic garden, which was founded in 1621. Useful plants were a lifelong interest for Evelyn, from salads (his book Sallats) to timber trees (his book Sylva). It was in Padua that Evelyn met Thomas Howard, 2nd Earl of Arundel, whose estate at Albury in Surrey was near Evelyn's family home in Wotton. He returned to England to Sayes Court and there laid out his garden, including Pierre Morin's oval garden.

Evelyn came back from the Continent fluent in French, Italian and other languages and with a great knowledge of gardens and Continental culture. Throughout his life he pursued a wide range of interests, with a strong leaning towards scientific investigation (as we would now call it) and improvement. Sylva, 1664, is his most famous example of this and advocated tree planting to replenish the trees felled for agriculture and ship building. He was a founder member of the Royal Society (The Royal Society of London for Improving Natural Knowledge) in 1660 and at the same time enthused about using 'greens' (evergreen shrubs such as yew, holly, bay, laurel, Italian cypress, juniper and phyllyrea) in gardens. He translated many Continental horticultural books, including the definitive words on fruit cultivation of Louis XIV's head gardener at the Jardin

Potager at Versailles, Jean-Baptiste de la Quintinie. Evelyn toured England on horseback in 1656 to see as many of the great gardens as possible. They were recorded in his Diary, which was not published until 1818. In this sense he did better than his friend Samuel Pepys who was not published until 1825.

Evelyn admired the 'circle with a star of walks radiating from it' at Eastwell (now a hotel) and found it 'exceeding pleasant'. This was part of the revival of interest in medieval deer parks, many of which had been sold or enclosed in the upheavals of the Commonwealth. The design would have been based on Italian or French hunting woods with straight rides and circular assembly points for the hunt. Similarly, he admired Ham House, Richmond-upon-Thames and its gardens, which will soon be restored by the National Trust.



Luxembourg Gardens

Evelyn's advice on laying out gardens seems to have been mainly informal but his plan for his own Sayes Court still survives. He advised at his family seat at Wotton in Surrey and his etching of 1653 gives a good idea of the formal gardens and kitchen garden. Nearby at Albury he remembered the Italian terraces of his Continental tour and showed his knowledge of trees by planting avenues of sweet chestnuts which were perfectly suited to the well-drained, gravelly soils. Sweet chestnut avenues were also planted on the gravelly soils at Knole.

Evelyn's old friend Philip Packer had built his new house at Groombridge, Tunbridge Wells, on the site of the old one within the moat, against Evelyn's advice. He must have forgiven him as he laid out the formal gardens around it for Packer. Much of his design remains as formal terraces.

Evelyn can be a hard man to pin down due to his many and varied interests and that a lot of his work was not published in his lifetime. His fellow greats included Christopher Wren, Isaac Newton and Robert Boyle in architecture, mathematics and chemistry. Evelyn's practical interest in the natural world is maybe just as important.

# Evelyn in Oxford

By Stephen Harris

John Evelyn joined his elder brother George in Oxford in 1637. John's intelligence, and his father's wealth, made the 16-year-old boy an attractive student. Oxford University in the 1630s was a traditional educational establishment with a formal curriculum dominated by the study of divinity and the study of ancient philosophers. Approaches to study that questioned ancient authorities or embraced the new sciences emerging on the continent were largely disregarded. John was denied the opportunity of studying a broader range of subjects, including natural sciences, by the prejudices of his brother. The mathematician George Bathurst from Trinity College was ignored as a tutor because of these scientific interests; George took seriously a view that scientific interests would debar John from the world of politics. John formally became part of the Balliol College as a Fellow Commoner on 19 May 1637 with George Bradshaw as his tutor. John was disappointed by his tutor. However, he learnt to argue in public and to distil his readings and thoughts into commonplace books, which complemented the habit he had acquired as a child of keeping a diary.

Among his diaries and writing, John left little record of his time at Oxford University, despite many of the men with whom he would forge the future of English natural philosophy being Oxford educated. We know for example that his father did not approve of John having lessons in dancing or drawing, but was happy for John to take music lessons. John was an attentive and studious student. He did not lead the stereotypical life of seventeenth-century, privileged Oxford students. That is, time in study was minimised, in order to maximise the time for drinking, gambling and womanising; any time in the library was spent studying one's ancestors. John's most serious mishap appears to have been injuring himself after falling off a table watching a play; it distracted him from study for a few weeks. In April 1640, John left Oxford. He did not take his degree, which was common for many of his rank.

*'From the Editors' continued from page 1*

*us up to date with the work which continues there to provide an authentic herb garden and a popular place for newly married couples to be photographed.*

*Requests for planning permission never stop and Mike O'Brien follows up his initial article on this subject from last year. This is an important part of Kent Gardens Trust's conservation work in which we can help the Gardens Trust to influence local authorities to come to decisions which benefit the whole community.*



John Evelyn by Godfrey Kneller (c.1687) courtesy The Royal Society.

*We have decided to devote a large part of the newsletter to John Evelyn whose 400th birthday it is on 31st October. If, perhaps, all you know of him is that he left a diary and wrote a book on trees, we hope that you will be enjoy finding out more about him and his young wife, Mary, who was a talented mathematician.*

*John Evelyn created the garden at Sayes Court in Deptford, a tiny remnant of which remains, based on his continental travels and experiences in which he made his own*

In summer 1654, less than a year after Oliver Cromwell had been installed a lord protector, John returned to Oxford for the first time since he was a student. It was much changed. The rituals remained but one of the most powerful people in the university was a natural philosopher, John Wilkins, at Wadham College, the future brother-in-law of Cromwell. Moreover, the Physic Garden, which was little more than a wall surrounding waste ground during his time as a student, had begun to flourish under the attention of Jacob Bobart, and his son, also called Jacob. Indeed, the Bobarts, in 1660, were signatories to a letter that urged Evelyn to finish the Elysium Britannicum – a work that was never completed.

The new approaches to understanding the world were represented by The Royal Society, created in 1660. John was one of the Society's most influential members. Within the University such new ways of thinking were not always appreciated. Robert South, a future canon of Christ Church College, ridiculed the Society at official opening of the Sheldonian Theatre. John, who was in the audience together with Elias Ashmole and Christopher Wren, was to write in his diary: 'it [South's sermon] was very long, & not without some malicious & undecent reflections on the Royal Society as underminers of the University, which was very foolish and untrue'.

**Professor Stephen Harris** is Druce Curator of the Oxford University Herbaria and University Research Lecturer at the Department of Plant Sciences and a specialist in the flora of Brazil. He is the author of many books including *What Have Plants Ever Done For Us? (60 food and other useful plants)*, *Planting Paradise*, *Sunflowers and The Magnificent Flora Graeca: How the Mediterranean came to the English Garden (The travels of John Sibthorp and his illustrator Ferdinand Bauer in early 19th century Greece)*.

*'grand tour', 100 years before they became a required rite. He was a hardworking and talented polymath whose anniversary deserves celebrating.*



John Evelyn Esq.

# John Evelyn, 1620-1706



John Evelyn was the second son of Richard Evelyn of Wotton near Dorking in Surrey. He spent most of his childhood with his grandparents in Lewes where he had been sent at the age of five due to severe outbreaks of plague in London. He was at school there and, in 1637, admitted into the Middle Temple and from there to Balliol College, Oxford. His father died in 1641 and Evelyn, as the second son, seized the opportunity to travel in the Low Countries.

Evelyn was a Royalist supporter all his life and rather than place his brother's estates at risk of sequestration, he left England in 1643 at the start of the Civil Wars and did not return for 4 years. During that time he travelled in France and Italy. His travels completed his education and his experiences contributed to his life long curiosity.

On his return to Paris he married Mary, the daughter of Sir Richard Browne, resident English ambassador to the court of France at Paris.



'The place of my birth was Wotton in the County of Surrey.... The house is large and antient, suitable to those hospitable times ....& almost entirely of Brick and so sweetly environ'd with those delicious streams and venerable Woods'.

- 1620
- 1637
- 1641
- 1643
- 1647
- 1649
- 1652
- 1655
- 1658
- 1660
- 1661
- 1664
- 1665
- 1666
- 1672
- 1685
- 1689
- 1691
- 1699
- 1701
- 1706

**Born at Wotton**  
 Sent to Lewes to avoid the plague  
 Admitted into the Middle Temple  
 Balliol College, Oxford  
 Travelled to Holland following his father's death  
 Spent time at Wotton altering the gardens  
 Permission given to leave England first to Paris and then to Italy where he met Lord Arundel  
 Marriage to Mary Browne on return to Paris  
 Visited Sayes Court occupied by Mary's uncle  
 Execution of Charles I  
 Evelyn returned to England. Compounded with the 'Souldiers' to obtain a lease of Sayes Court  
 Planted the orchard at Sayes Court  
 Visit to Wadham College, Oxford  
 Full possession of Sayes Court  
 Planted groves and 'elaboratory' constructed  
 Death of Cromwell  
 Had begun Elysium Britannicum  
 Sought collective opinion of Oxford on Elysium  
 Restoration of Charles II  
 Began Kalendarium  
 Royal Society founded. Evelyn nominated by the king  
 Fumifugium published  
 Discourse Concerning Forest Trees given to Royal Society and published the next year as Sylva  
 Kalendar Hortense published  
 Dutch War  
 Evelyn appointed Commissioner for Care of Sick and Wounded and Prisoners of War  
 Great Plague  
 Family sent to Wotton but Evelyn remained in London  
 The Great Fire  
 Discussed plan for rebuilding London with the king  
 Oxford, honorary doctorate  
 Secretary of the Royal Society  
 Accession of James II  
 Commissioner of the Privy Seal  
 Accession of William and Mary  
 Sat for picture by Kneller  
 Heir to Wotton  
 Evelyn's remaining son died. Grandson Jack now heir  
 His brother George died and Evelyn took over Wotton  
 Acetaria (a small part of Elysium) published  
 Treasurer of Royal Naval Hospital, Greenwich  
 Accession of Anne  
 John Evelyn died at Dover Street, London

27 June 1647 Paris  
 'Doctor Earles Married us in Sir Richard Browne My Wifes fathers Chapell, twixt the houres of 11 & 12; some few select friends being present: And this being Corpus Christi feast, solemnly observed in these Countries, the streets were sumptuously hung with Tapissry, & strew'd with flowers'.



Mary Evelyn, Paris 1651  
 She survived Evelyn by three years.



Evelyn introduced Grinling Gibbons to Charles II

18 January 1671.  
 'This day I first acquainted his Maty with that incomparable young man Gibbon whom I had lately met with in an obscure place by meere accident as I was walking neere a poore solitary thatched house, in a field in our parish, neere' Says Court'.

8 July 1689  
 'I sat for my Picture to Mr Kneller, for Mr Pepys late Secretary of the Admiralty, holding my Sylva in my right hand: It was upon his long and earnest request; and is plac'd in his Library: nor did Kneller ever paint better & more masterly work'.



Courtesy of Wellcome Collection  
 John Evelyn  
 1663-1706



14 September 1661  
 'I presented my Fumifugium dedicated to his Majestie who was pleased I should publish it by his special Com-mand; being much pleased with it'.

# Three Kent Landscapes and Gardens Associated with John Evelyn

John Evelyn first visited Groombridge in 1652 when he found it a pretty melancholy place though well wooded and watered. On his next recorded visit, 20 years later, when the house had been rebuilt, it was a very different story.



## GROOMBRIDGE PLACE



On the right is the remaining one of two Scots Pines possibly planted by Evelyn



6 August 1674 Second visit  
 'I went to Groombridge, to see my old friend, Mr. Packer; the house built within a moat, in a woody valley. The old house..... now demolished, and a new one built in its place, though a far better situation had been on the south of the wood, on a graceful ascent'.



The Secret Garden

'His son, Philip (Packer), rebuilt the Waller house some time between John Evelyn's two visits in 1652 and 1674. His new brick house has with the passing of time become one of the loveliest and mellowest in the southern counties, standing within a square moat a good deal too large for it.....since then, by some miracle, no alteration, except sashing of the windows, has ever been made'.

John Newman.

Philip Packer (1618-1686) was a pupil at the Middle Temple at the same time as John Evelyn. He became a barrister, a courtier to Charles II and a friend of Pepys and Wren. He was an original fellow of the Royal Society.

## SQUERRIES COURT



Squerrys Court Thos. Badeslade 1719

3 August 1658  
 'We went to Squirries to visit my Cousin Leech, daughter to Sir John: a pretty, finely wooded, well water'd seat, the stables good, the houses old but convenient'.

The house was rebuilt in 1681-6 for Sir Nicholas Crisp of Hammer-smith and the estate sold the Earl of Jersey in 1701. It seems very unlikely that John Evelyn never visited the new house as it was only c.20 miles from Wotton.



Squerrys Court

27 March 1672 Following a visit to Margate  
 'I came back through a Country the best cultivated of any that in my life I had any where seene, every field lying as even as a bowling greene, & the fences, the plantations, & husbandrie in such admirable order, as infinitely delighted me'.

17 October 1665  
 'Thence to Maidstone, in order to march the 500 Prisoners to Leeds Castle which I had hired off my Lord Culpepper ..... To spare the town from quartering my sick flock'.



## LEEDS CASTLE

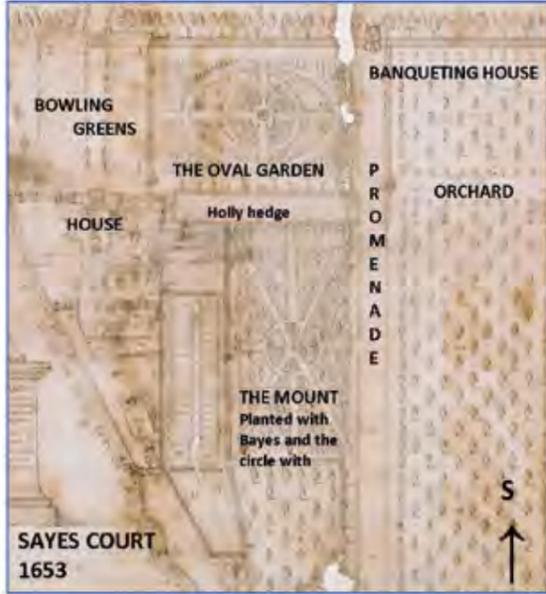
11th April 1666  
 'The next morning, to Leeds Castle, once a famous hold, now hired by me of my Lord Culpeper for a prison. Here I flowed the dry moat, made a new drawbridge, brought Spring Water into the Court of the Castle to an old fountaine, and took order for the repairs'.



Leeds Castle

# Sayes Court in Deptford

Evelyn was inspired by the ideology of paradise



**January 17th 1653**  
 'I began to set out the Oval Garden at Says Court which is before a rude Orchard, and all the rest one intire fild of 100 Akers, without any hedge: excepting the hither holly-hedge joining to the bank of the mount walk: and this was the beginning of all the succeeding Gardens, Walkes, Enclosures and Plantations'.

During his foreign travels, Evelyn had been attracted while in Amsterdam, by straight streets shaded by lime trees; in Paris, it was the elms and hornbeam hedges of the Luxembourg Palace. Here he visited Monsieur Morin's garden. 'His garden is of an exact oval figure planted with Cypress, cutt flat & sett as even as a wall could have form'd it'. It was on this design that Evelyn based his Oval Garden at Sayes Court.



In Italy, he visited Rome and was presented to the Pope. While in Naples he climbed Mount Vesuvius and made a drawing of the crater. Venice was celebrating Ascension week and on reaching Padua, he attended anatomy lectures, and visited both the Physic Garden and the Garden of Simples.

In 1694 John Evelyn inherited Wotton, his birthplace, from his elder brother and moved back there. Sayes Court was leased to, among others, Tsar Peter the Great. In 1723 it was partially demolished and became a workhouse. Later it became an emigration depot and a pensioner's office. Finally becoming almshouses, it was pulled down c.1930. In 1884, his descendant, W. J. Evelyn approached Octavia Hill with the suggestion that the garden should become a publicly owned park. Octavia Hill proposed that this could be done by a company to be called "the Commons and Gardens Trust", but it was not for another 10 years that the name, "National Trust", was adopted. By that time, it was too late. The park is adjacent to Convoys Wharf development site of the former Royal Dockyard, now owned by Hutchison Whampoa Ltd who have applied for planning permission to develop this.

and the ideal of everlasting spring and therefore sought the evergreen plants by which this state could be created on earth. These he collected in his own garden at Sayes Court in southern London, acquiring simultaneously all the newest publications of husbandry and the natural sciences to assist in the cultivation of evergreens. He also built a laboratory for experimentation. Evelyn claimed to be the first to recommend the yew for topiary, and his hedges at Sayes Court were renowned.

Therese O'Malley

## Extracts from John Evelyn's KALENDARIUM HORTENSE (1664)

**March**  
 Sow also Parsly, Sorrel, Bugloss, Borage, Chervil, Sellery.

**May**  
 Observe the Mulberry-tree, when it brings forth and open the leaves, bring your Oranges boldly out of the Conservatory.

**August**  
 Clip roses now done bearing.

**October**  
 Gather Winter-fruit that remains.



John Evelyn bought Sayes Court from his father-in-law, Sir Richard Browne, for £3500 in 1653. The house was in poor condition but he decided to rebuild and enlarge.



## DIRECTIONS TO THE GARDINER AT SAYES COURT Transplanting:

Plant when the wind is in the south or west. Plant very little deeper than it grew before. You cannot plant too early in the autumn, all such trees as lose their leaves in Winter. But plant not Ever-greens 'til the beginning of April when you perceive them begin to shoot.

**April 30th 1663**  
 'Came his Majestie (Charles II) to honor my poore Villa, with his preence, viewing the Gardens & every room of the house: and was then pleased to take a small refreshment.'

**June 9th 1688**  
 'I went to Deptford to see how miserably the Tzar of Muscovy had left my house after 3 moneths making it his Court, having gotten Sir Cr: Wren to go down and make an estimate of the repairs... for which they allowed £150'.



Mulberry Tree



Site of manor house ↓

SAYES COURT TODAY

# Oxford University and the Royal Society

**30 November 1673**  
 I was chosen Secretary to the Royall Society.

**29 April 1675**  
 I had my first discourse 'Of Earth and Vegatation' before ye Royall Society as a lecture.



**13 July 1654**  
 We had all din'd, at that most obliging and universally Curious Dr Wilkin's, at Waddum, who was first shew'd me the Transparent Apiaries ..... To present me one of these Hives, which he had empty, & which I had afterwards in my Garden at Sayes Court, many Yeares after.



Samuel Pepys was intrigued because 'being hived in glass, you may see the bees making their honey and combs.'

**26 May 1703**  
 This day died Mr Sam: Pepys, a very worthy, Industrious & curious person, none in England exceeding him in the Knowledge of the Navy ..... Mr Pepys had ben for neere 40 years, so my particular Friend.

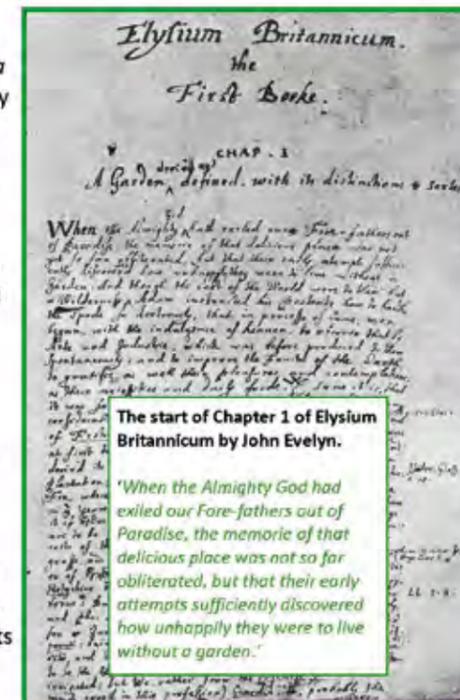
**Elysium Britannicum** or 'The Plan for a Royal Garden in Three Books' was originally 1000 pages long but, of these, only a third survive and are now in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. It consists of manuscripts with letters and other inclusions.

Parts of the Britannicum were published in Evelyn's discussion on salads, 'Acetaria', in 1699, and part of it was used in 'Kalendarium Hortense' which first appeared as an appendix to 'Sylva: or a Discourse on Forest Trees' in 1664.

Evelyn worked on the project for over 50 years. The book was to be based on his travels and visits to the Continent, his design of gardens and his gradual acquisition of horticultural knowledge. By covering every aspect of horticulture in its widest sense, he could include all other arts and sciences in his wish to demonstrate God's infinite wisdom.

**25 August 1664 (Oxford)**  
 I went to visit Mr Boyle now here, whom I found with Dr Wallis and Dr Chr: Wren in the Tower at the Scholes, with an inverted Tube or Telescope observing the Discus of the Sunn for the passing of Mercury that day ..... So we went to see the rarities in the Library, where the Library keepers, shewed me my name, among the benefactors ..... Thence to the new Theater ..... The foundation being newly laied & the whole, Designed, by that incomparable genius, & my worthy friend Dr Chr: Wren, who shewed me the Model, not disdaining my advice in some particulars ..... Next to Waddam, & the Physik Garden where were two large Locust Trees, & as many Platana, & some rare Plants under the culture of old Bobart.

**11 July 1675**  
 I had early in the morning heard Dr Morison, Botanic Professor, read on divers plants in the Physic Garden; and saw the rare collection of Dr Plot's, of Magdalen Hall, author of the 'Natural History of Oxfordshire', and extraordinary it is in one County there should be found such a variety.



The start of Chapter 1 of Elysium Britannicum by John Evelyn.

'When the Almighty God had exiled our Fore-fathers out of Paradise, the memorie of that delicious place was not so far obliterated, but that their early attempts sufficiently discovered how unhappily they were to live without a garden.'

Despite an undistinguished career as an undergraduate at Balliol, John Evelyn later formed strong associations with members of Oxford University who, with Evelyn, went on to become founder members of the Royal Society in London in 1660. Their object was to stimulate scientific research, discussion, and publication.



Courtesy of Wellcome Collection  
 Dr Robert Boyle became Evelyn's mentor.



Courtesy of Wellcome Collection

**13 July 1654**  
 That prodigious young scholar Mr Chr: Wren who presented me with a piece of white marble

**27 June 1674**  
 Mr Dryden the famous Poet, & now Laureat came to give me a Visite



Courtesy of Wellcome Collection



Courtesy of Wellcome Collection

**10 September 1676**  
 Din'd with me Mr Flamsted, the learned astrologer and mathematician whom his Majesty had established in the new Observatorie in Greenwich Park, furnished with the choicest instruments. A sincere and honest man.

Apart from his diary, John Evelyn is perhaps best known for *Sylva*, which was the first book published by the Royal Society.



'Sylva is a compilation of practical estate management, gardening, and philosophy. It was inspired by concern for the loss of tree cover in Britain and the shortage of timber and fuel. It has been said that 'no other work on arboriculture exerted greater influence on forestry in England.' It enjoyed great success, a fact attested to by its four editions during Evelyn's own lifetime. Michael Hunter has written that it led to the planting of millions of timber trees.'

Therese O'Malley

## Great Dixter by Paul Lewis

For the last forty five years I have visited Great Dixter at least twice each year and I imagine that virtually everyone who reads this piece will also have visited the garden, possibly many times.

I first started gardening in 1971 and one of the first books I read on the subject was *The Well Tempered Garden* by Christopher Lloyd which remains the most inspiring book any gardener can read. When I first went to Dixter there was Christopher Lloyd on his knees weeding. In subsequent visits he was quite often in the garden or the nursery. He looked fierce and alarming and I always felt that I would feel stupid and naive if I did ask him any question. However if one did make any enquiry he would be charming and helpful. It was always difficult to reconcile this figure with the picture painted by the house guide of him sitting down in the evening for embroidery with his mother Daisy who had died in 1972.



*The Exotic Garden, Great Dixter*

The core of Great Dixter is a 15C house but it was substantially enlarged and altered at the beginning of the last century by Sir Edwin Lutyens who repurposed and restored all the farm outbuildings as well as setting all the hard landscaping of the garden. Even without the garden the buildings comprise a most picturesque example of local domestic architecture. However it is the garden which is what makes Great Dixter such a national glory.

I used to find the Long Border the most exciting part of the garden. Christopher Lloyd always rejoiced



*The Main Border, Great Dixter*

in the fact that he had a 'high maintenance' garden and the border always had at least one gardener working on it. The sheer size and complexity of it excited me. It seemed so much bolder and colourful than the desperately good taste of, say, Sissinghurst. I also loved the way that unlike other grand gardens, I had visited, none of the exotic plants were identified with labels so one had to work out what on earth they might be. Needless to say my own pathetic attempts to model it in miniature in my own garden were disappointing (not a good enough eye and too much hard work). I moved on to enjoy more the greater less careful maintenance of the Sunk Garden and the frequent apparent chaos of the High Garden.

Over the years the most controversial Lloyd innovation was the scrapping of the rose garden and its replacement with the exotics: dahlias, cannas, bananas and many much more unusual plants. It looks bleak when covered in sacking earlier in the year but then so are the sticks of recently pruned rose bushes. By August it has become the most exciting area in the garden.

Since Fergus Garrett arrived as head gardener he has been responsible first for the formation of the Exotic Garden and also for the transformation of the meadow gardens which are so beautiful early in the spring.

Daisy Lloyd had always been keen on developing the front meadow and raised from seed hundreds of orchids, fritillaries and quamash which she planted in the Front Meadow to either side of the entrance path. Christopher became increasingly interested in meadow gardening in his later years and published his

book entitled *Meadows* in 2004 two years before his death. Since then Fergus Garrett and the Great Dixter Trust have been shining examples of sustainable gardening with minimal use of chemicals. One can see the enormous compost heaps on the track between the car park and the nursery. Last year the trust published an impressively comprehensive biodiversity audit detailing the range of wildlife on the estate. The auditors identified a total of 2029 species including a very great range of pollinating insects. Weights Wood and Four Acre Shaw are not usually accessible to visitors but I would urge those, who are able, to take the right of way to the southeast down to the Sussex Border path and loop round to get back to Northiam. It is the most beautiful of short walks.

In conclusion to this appreciation of what is, I hope, only a temporarily lost domain I must eulogise the nursery. It has always been delightfully old fashioned even if the stock is constantly changing. In my early years as an amateur gardener I used to devour the plant catalogue whose printed format seems not to have changed over the years even if it is now more convenient to use it online. Two of my favourite plants were bought at Great Dixter many years ago. *Melianthus major* is now an enormous monster which has to be hacked each year and the early *Paeonia mlokosewitschii* is such a wonderful short blooming but reliable spring delight.

How I long to get to Great Dixter again.

*This article was written during lockdown and both the garden and nursery at Great Dixter are now open. Please visit [www.greatdixter.co.uk](http://www.greatdixter.co.uk).*

## Planning in Kent (Part 2)

*By Mike O'Brien*

Since I last wrote in the 2019 Newsletter, we have received a variety of planning applications from the Gardens Trust (GT) for comment.

One particular application involved the KGT planning team in a fair amount of research, site visit and correspondence. We had originally objected to a proposal for the demolition of a redundant bungalow and the building of a two storey dwelling in the grounds of a Registered Park and Garden (RPG). Unusually, following submission of our comments to the planning department, we were approached by the applicant to meet on site for him to explain the reason for the proposal. It transpired that the charity, which ran the property and grounds, were struggling to survive and were seeking to realise funds by the sale of the plot. The applicant was using Enabling Development to support his application, a phrase that we were unfamiliar with. Historic England states that 'Enabling Development is development that would be unacceptable in planning terms but for the fact it would bring public benefits sufficiently to justify it being carried out, and which could not otherwise be achieved. The key public benefit to significant places is usually the securing of their long-term future'. With this additional information and minor changes to the screening of the property KGT and GT withdrew their objection and the applicant was subsequently successful.

We also received an enquiry from a KGT member asking if county and local authorities can give themselves planning permission. It took a little research to discover that they have follow the same procedures as any other applicant. If planning permission is granted where it is a joint application with a developer then the developer is not able to sell on the site to another developer and thus make a profit.

Sometimes we are contacted by the planning officer to clarify our comments or to point out where we have incorrectly interpreted planning laws. Often the interpretation of the planning laws is subjective, especially if you are considering where the proposal is affecting the setting of the site.

We are slowly being recognized by various organisations in the county who approach us for comment. These include a new water main through Knole Park and input to the Gravesend Cemetery Conservation Plan.

Recently we have been asked to comment on applications for sport facilities which are being upgraded either by the clubs themselves or by schools wishing improve their facilities and attract revenue by out of hours use. It does tend to be a question of 'learning on the hoof' to know the preferred colour the floodlighting masts and how powerful the lighting should be in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or in an RPG.

The Gardens Trust has recently issued a series of documents which takes you through the planning system. If you would like to learn more about this process in relation to parks and gardens, then please contact us via the website and we can forward the information to you.

8 August 2020

## Dalby Gardens, Margate

*By Sarah Morgan*

*In the newsletter for June, Richard Stileman wrote about the importance of access to green spaces especially during the lockdown. Here another of our trustees, Sarah Morgan, who was involved with the planning, layout and planting of the restoration scheme at Dalby Square in Margate, shows just how important this has been.*

The value of public green space has never been so appreciated by so many during the recent lockdown. Green sanctuaries to exercise and cope with the physical and mental challenges of Covid 19 were particularly essential for families with no garden. In 2013 the Kent Gardens

Trust produced an in depth report for the then dilapidated gardens at Dalby Square, Margate, which is surrounded by beautiful Victorian properties converted into flats occupied by tenants. The diligent report by the KGT research team was an essential part of the successful Townscape Heritage Fund bid by Kent County Council to restore the gardens and to revert the North end car park back to green space.

*The full report on Dalby Gardens which was carried out by the KGT research group volunteers can be found on the website under Thanet.*



*Before restoration, looking north to the sea - courtesy Sarah Morgan*



*After restoration with planting over the car park area - courtesy Sarah Morgan*

# Archbishop's Palace Garden by Tom La Dell

Kent Gardens Trust manages this historic garden in the middle of Maidstone and next to the River Medway for the owner, Maidstone Borough Council. It is next to the main surviving buildings of the palace which was one of several for the medieval Archbishops of Canterbury en route between London and Canterbury. It is now the Registry Office. It is enclosed by the medieval walls and has the old jail on one side. The other surviving building is the old tithe barn which now houses the famous carriage collection

The garden has been planted and looked after by Kent Gardens Trust for many years. It is used by the Kent County Council Registry Office, so the garden is popular for wedding photographs!

In 2015, with help of a Landfill Tax grant, KGT refurbished and replanted the garden with Entrust funding. We have used only plants described in John Parkinson's *Paradisus Terrestris*, published in 1629, or earlier. In this wonderful compilation of the plants grown by Parkinson in his garden on London's Longacre there are flowers, bulbs, shrubs, roses, herbs, vegetables and fruit trees. Many are illustrated in

fine woodcuts. Originally planted as a medieval apothecary's garden but we have updated it to a more ornamental garden. The herbs and medicinal plants are still there but roses, lilies and fruit trees were also grown in those times. The new planting provides colour and interest throughout the year for visitors and as a backdrop to those wedding photographs.



Roses from Parkinson's Paradisus

There are now chunky, new oak edging boards, like the ones in the illustration. This is from an early Herbal by

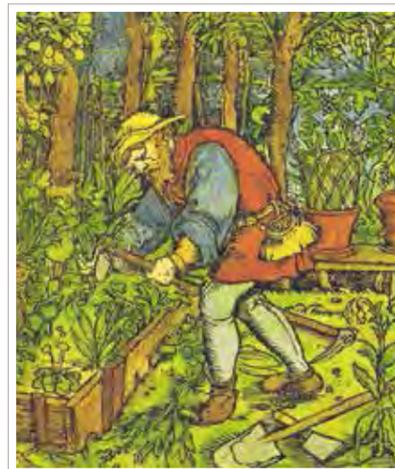


Illustration from Adam Lonicer's (1557) *Krauterbuch*

Lonicer, dated 1557. It is reassuringly untidy, in marked contrast to the illustration of Breughel's 'Spring' which is in the News page of the KGT website. The honeysuckle genus, *Lonicera*, is named after him and honeysuckle was a popular garden plant. The new honeysuckles in the garden come from a local hedgerow.

The planting plan is available by request from me as a pdf on [tom@tomladell.co.uk](mailto:tom@tomladell.co.uk).

The garden is usually open from 9am to 5pm Monday to Saturday.



The Archbishop's Palace Garden 2020



## Book Review

**The Garden Jungle or Gardening to Save the Planet. By Dave Goulson.**

Published by Vintage Publishing .  
List Price £9.99



If you were to see Dave Goulson's book on a table in a book shop you might be first struck by its beautiful cover but on reading the subtitle you might be tempted to think 'do I need to read this, surely I know the message it is likely to push'. As the author says on his penultimate page summarising his central themes: 'look after the soil; grow a diversity of crops; encourage pollinators and natural enemies; minimise or eliminate pesticides and fertilisers; compost and recycle. All just common sense to a good gardener'. I would urge you to ignore your initial doubts and buy and read the book. Goulson is a witty writer and immensely informative about a whole range of topics. He describes a different approach to gardening which values an increased richness and diversity of fauna and plants over a perfect formal design of carefully controlled and titivated specimen plants. The central chapters concern a range of small creatures to find in your garden from earwigs to worms. Typical is the chapter about ants where every page told me several fascinating things I never knew. There are approximately 100 trillion ants in the world and they make up one quarter of the total biomass of all land based animals. They intensively farm aphids, of which there are 600 different species in the UK, for their sugary excreta and ferociously defend their herds against those who try to eat them. Our most common ants, the black variety *Lassius niger* are likely to have at least one

nest in every square metre of your garden which makes it very unlikely that you will ever be able to get rid of them. The defence of aphids makes the ant a mixed blessing to the gardener but they do deplete many other small insect pests such as moth caterpillars on your vegetables and fruit trees. Our own ants also have a much less painful sting than some of the other ants Goulson describes. The chapter on garden invaders contains a very balanced and informative account of the problems we have with rats, mice, rabbits, grey squirrels, harlequin ladybirds, nettles, sycamores, rhododendron ponticum, Japanese knotweed and others all of which we reluctantly have to live with. Spending time and money on a range of toxic chemicals to try to destroy them is largely pointless and often more harmful than doing nothing. Occasionally we can grow to love the invader but more often intermittent onslaughts may be necessary until a new balance is achieved. Each chapter starts with a recipe some of which sound interesting. Yacon and Stilton Waldorf salad seems a possibility although I can pass on the squirrel pie. There are also several very informative appendices suggesting top plants for pollinators, the best berries for birds, how to build a wormery, and what wildlife organisations to join. I enjoyed his extensive description of the horrors of the modern garden centre which incorporate so many of the things he dislikes about much modern gardening. This book is unlikely to be popular with those whose main effort is to achieve a really tidy garden but his generally relaxed attitude is to me far preferable and I look forward to incorporating many of his suggestions into my own garden.

By Paul Lewis

## Delos. One year on.

By Hugh Vaux

Last year we published a photograph of the new garden which is being created at Sissinghurst by garden designer Dan Pearson for the National Trust. In view of the difficulties with visiting gardens this summer, we thought that you would like to see the changes which have taken place over the past year.

We would be interested to know what you think of this development, please write to me at [hughvaux@btinternet.com](mailto:hughvaux@btinternet.com).



August 2019



July 2020

# Flood Prevention at Mote Park.

Work is in progress at Mote Park in Maidstone to update the sluices and slipways which were built in the 1830s. This is necessary to prevent catastrophic flooding as a result of climate warming which could overwhelm the centre of the town. Initial preparation work has been carried out and the construction of the wave wall to protect Turkey Mill is well under way, as can be seen in the photograph.

300 trees have had to be removed for the changes to the landscape to be carried out but many of the important trees have been able to be retained. 100 new trees have been planted and a further 200 are due to be planted in this coming winter.



*The new wave wall to the northwest of the lake*

# Sir Joseph Banks (1743 – 1820)

*By Richard Stileman*

Sir Joseph Banks, the 200th anniversary of whose death we mark this year, was, arguably, the most important and influential of all British plant hunters. Born to a prosperous Lincolnshire family, educated at Eton and Oxford, and inheriting vast wealth in 1764 when his father died young, he nonetheless used his riches to good effect having become inspired by local plant life as a boy.



*Sir Joseph Banks, President of the Royal Society for 41 years - courtesy The Royal Society*

Rather than follow the customary Grand Tour agenda in Europe, he decided that 'my Grand Tour shall be one around the globe'. In 1766 he joined the Fisheries Protection vessel HMS NIGER as naturalist and set off on a 7 month tour of the Labrador and Newfoundland coastline. The plants he collected on this trip formed the basis of his herbarium.

But the major event of his early life was to follow shortly after when he joined Thomas Cook aboard ENDEAVOUR for that historic trip (1768 – 1771) around the world that embraced Rio de Janeiro, Tierra del Fuego, Tahiti, then the 'discovery' of New Zealand and Australia. Banks is reputed to have paid £10000 to join this voyage with his team of 9 men including botanical draughtsman Sydney Parkinson, and, perhaps most importantly, Dr Thomas Solander, a Swedish naturalist trained by Linnaeus. This meant that the plants were collected, recorded and stored in as systematic way as possible. They came back with over 1300 new species in 110 new genera, including Banksia, Hibiscus, Gaultheria, Helichrysum and Grevillea.

The return of the Endeavour was a major national event, with both Cook and Banks given enormous recognition.

Banks' reputation quickly led to meetings with King George III, who had inherited a keen interest in gardens and plants from his mother Augusta who lived at Kew. When Augusta died in 1772, the King took an even greater interest in Kew. He appointed Banks to be Scientific Adviser on Plant Life of the Dependencies, a role that gave him the influence to transform Kew from a royal pleasure ground to the research oriented botanic garden that it remains to this day.

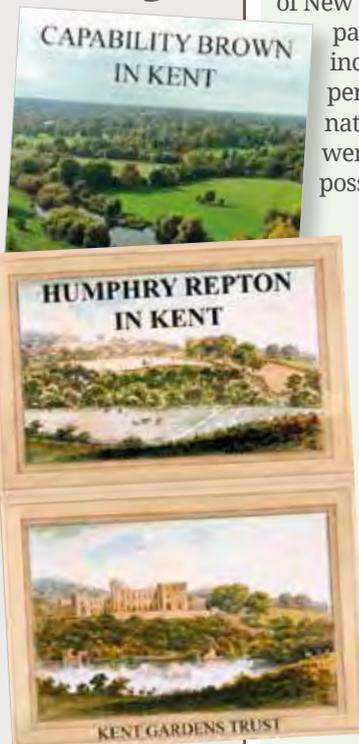
A great man, and, from most accounts, a nice man!

## Don't forget Humphry Repton and Capability Brown in Kent.

**Humphry Repton in Kent** is the companion volume to **Capability Brown in Kent**. Both books will interest not only garden historians but anyone keen to know more about the social history of the county and the lives of the leading figures of the time.

### Obtaining your copies:

Our books can be obtained directly from Kent Gardens Trust by e-mailing [richstileman@btinternet.com](mailto:richstileman@btinternet.com). Each book is available to members for just £8, inclusive of members' discount and postage. The books are also available via most bookshops, as well as Amazon and Waterstones online.



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