



CSGGA Newsletter

July 2021



RHS Affiliated Membership Number: 10570237

Inside this Issue

- July Meeting Report
- Next Month's Talk – Showing Fruit, Flowers and Vegetables
- CSGGA Holiday to Essex & Suffolk – June 21
- M's Monthly Action Diary
- Green Gardening Tip of the Month

The Royal Tree Canopy – Mark Lane

Mark Lane, Queen's Gardener to the Royal Palaces, gave us a fascinating view of Buckingham Palace's 39 acre gardens. As well as being the Queen's private gardens, they have a major role in garden parties and functions, and are now open to the public.

Trees are a major feature of the gardens, with the dominant species being the Plane trees, with about 100 specimens. The design of the garden today goes back to 1825 when George IV changed Buckingham House into Buckingham Palace, and required a suitably impressive garden. William Townsend Aiton, in charge of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew, was charged with the remodelling and remained the

Royal Gardener for 20 years.

He introduced a more naturalistic planting to the roughly triangular shaped garden, with trees being a major feature to introduce an element of privacy from surrounding buildings to enable the Royal Family to exercise freely. His major change was the creation of lake and The Mound, a high bank on the south side to screen the Place from the Royal Mews. Later plans from 1894 show miniature forests and glades with both broad leaved and pine trees. The original Elm plantations were lost to disease, but now a replanting with Elms which are disease resistant from Holland is showing promise.

Prince Albert kept the Royal Kennels in the gardens both for hunting and domestic dogs, and also an aviary and dovecote. There was very little in the way of floral gardens, with a rather small area with flower beds enclosed by railings. 1880 drawings show a very 'manicured' garden, with sharply defined walks and edges to the lake. Many trees had circular benches around them for rest, of which three remain. King George V and Queen Mary altered the gardens, especially as the Queen hated ivy and had it removed from the Royal Mews walls.

Royal Boatmen were available should any of the Family wish to take to the lake, which was ringed with weeping willows and large cedars. This garden, together with Green Park and St James' Park, provide a green corridor in the part of London.

The many plane trees are trained to fan out above a bare trunk and are under planted with shade loving plants. The lake, a mile around, now has mixed planting to provide natural edges encouraging wildlife.



George VI and the Queen Mother cleared many of the dense Victorian shrubberies and introduced decorative flowering trees and scented shrubs. The King's mention that he liked cherry trees resulted in numerous donations and plantings. Recent additions round the lake are Taxodium cedars which produce raised 'knees' above the water, excellent for birdlife and providing good autumn colour.

With so many trees, leaf fall is a problem and gardeners spend four months leaf clearing. The winter tree shapes proved interest and are a good indicator of particular genus. If a tree has been planted as a memorial then there is a plaque with details attached to it, in the 'palace' style. Under planting round the lake is for Spring bulbs, especially snake's head fritillaries and daffodils.

In the centre of the garden are mixed trees, with planes and magnolias in a dell to show different blossom types and colours. 'Black Tulip' is a dark New Zealand hybrid presented to the garden. Magnolia 'Elizabeth' was given to the Queen to mark her 55th birthday and has lovely pale cream blossoms.

Maples are valued for their interesting flowers as well as their leaves. Norway Maple (*Acer platanoides*) provides winter colour and has interesting flowers but needs careful management as it can be invasive. Davidia involucrata (handkerchief tree) and the Judas tree (*Cercis siliquastrum*) are valued for their blossoms.



An avenue of Indian Chestnuts flowers later than horse chestnuts and are more resistant to the dreaded moth damage. Other species include Catalpa and a wide variety of Oaks, including the Black Jack oak from Maryland and Wollemi pine from New Zealand. A rare tree is the Sassafras Tzumu from China, which has the brightest red leaves in Autumn. Trees for Autumn colour are part of the planting plan, and are placed so that their colours contrast and enhance their beauty. Later colour is from Liquidambar and Acers, with Koeleria paniculata with its pink and green leaves and its unusual seed husks contain a single seed and is prolific. Snake bark maples are interesting for their bark.

The garden has a National Collection of Mulberries. Their flowers are small and green and all the trees are being checked by experts this year to ensure they have been correctly identified. Mulberries from Pakistan has the longest fruits up to 4 inches long. Mulberry macrophylla has a stable virus that causes knarled tips to the leaves giving interesting effects. Mulberry 'Nuclear Blast' looks very unusual with knotted leaves. Casuarina equisetifolia, or Australian Whistling Pine, had feathery leaves that has been planted to disguise the tennis courts.

A big issue for the managers is the white staining and damage caused by the Oak Processionary Moth, which is now spreading. Caterpillars are hoovered up with a Henry and sent for disposal as their hairs are intensely irritating. A fungal disease affects plane trees and causes their branches to drop off without warning, so they have to be regularly inspected. All trees in the garden are individually coded and kept on a data base to record remedial work.

The Queen has given permission for a circle of Lime trees to be planted to replicate an original planting. Old apple trees are being removed and replacement and regeneration is a constant factor in managing the garden. Mark was privileged to be present when the Queen met David Attenborough and they announced the Commonwealth Canopy project, but all people ask Mark about is 'Have you moved that sundial yet?' Such is the price of fame. Mark's talk was very illuminating and may inspire you to visit the gardens, but you will be very lucky to find tickets available for this year. **Jan Still**

Editor's note – Many thanks to Jan for stepping in at the last minute to record the meeting for us.

Next Month's Talk – 12th August

Alan Clark Showing Fruits, Flowers and Vegetables

As the winner of many a horticultural cup at the Village Show, our own Alan Clark will share his wealth of practical knowledge to explain the key steps to achieving show standard exhibits.

CSGGA Holiday to Essex and Suffolk – June 2021

Our holiday started with a change from our planned itinerary as we visited the secret gardens of [Easton Lodge](#). Roadworks had rendered the route to Gibberd Gardens inaccessible to coaches, but it was certainly a good alternative. The gardens have a very interesting history, having been owned and redesigned by Daisy Greville, Countess of Warwick, mistress of Edward VII. The gardens are managed by volunteers and their dedication and enthusiasm was clear to see. Our next stop was [Marks Hall Gardens and Arboretum](#). The Marks Hall collection is planted on a geographical theme with plants from the temperate regions of the world grouped together. There are areas representing Europe, Asia, North America and the Southern Hemisphere, set in more than 200 acres. It is a very tranquil place with a beautiful and inspiring walled garden, planted with a modern theme.

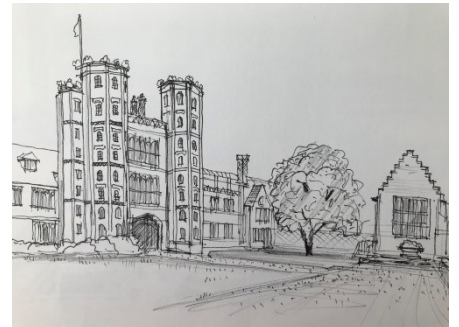
The [Stoke by Nayland Hotel](#), our base for 4 nights, proved to be an excellent choice. We all enjoyed well-appointed spacious bedrooms and a delicious dinner each evening with plenty of choice. The hotel is located in the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural and is surrounded by two championship golf courses, so there were wonderful views from the public areas. Sadly, the cold weather deterred us from enjoying drinks on the terraces, soaking up the last rays of the day, that I had envisaged!



Our second day dawned grey and chilly as we headed to Southwold, but we enjoyed the commentary of our blue badge guide, Ian, as we drove through stunning countryside and attractive villages. At Southwold, some of us visited Adnams Brewery for a guided tour and either a gin or beer tasting session, while the more sober amongst us had a stroll around the town and seafront. Next on the itinerary was a guided walking tour of Ipswich starting at Christchurch Mansion and visiting iconic buildings such as the Ancient House, which dates

back to the mid-16th century and features detailed parquetry and wood carving. Sadly, our trip to Ipswich also featured a visit to the hospital as one of our party developed appendicitis which curtailed her holiday.

One of the highlights of the trip was the visit to the privately owned [Layer Marney Tower](#) where the owner, Sheila, treated us not only to delicious cake but a wealth of delightful and engaging stories and observations about the 500 year history of England's tallest Tudor gatehouse which was visited by Henry VIII. Next up, lunch in the beautiful city of Colchester, followed by a visit to [Green Island Gardens](#), more cake and an opportunity to buy some unusual plants.



On the penultimate day of our holiday we visited two spectacular but vastly different gardens. [Fuller Mill Gardens](#) owned by Perennial, the gardeners' benevolent charity, is another tranquil and enchanting garden situated on the banks of the River Lark. It is a Suffolk gem, with beautiful vistas at every turn. [Helmingham Hall](#) is, as it sounds, extensive and grand! Privately owned by the same family, the Tollmaches, for 500 years, Helmingham Hall has a moat complete with drawbridge! Xa Tollemache, the present owner, is a talented and celebrated garden designer who many of us observed tending to the knot garden which she created in 1982.



Having checked out of the hotel, we travelled to Bury St Edmunds and another spectacular house and garden, [Ickworth](#), now owned by the National Trust. The Italianate gardens were designed by the 1st Marquess as pleasure grounds for his family and guests to enjoy. Our final garden was [Wyken Hall Gardens](#) which though small, contains many different gardens, including a well-stocked vegetable

"allotment" and a maze.

After a wonderful holiday, we arrived back at CSG, we'd enjoyed each other's company and seen some beautiful gardens that were definitely worth visiting, many only just over an hour's drive away. I've added links and [published photos](#) on our website, in the hope that those who stayed behind might be inspired to go and see for yourself! **Briony Sketches by Clive**

Note: I've started planning next year's holiday to the Peak District in June – I hope you'll join us!

M's Action Diary for July

- Trim rock roses to remove dead flowers, but do not cut into old wood, some may flower again.
- Summer prune apple trees, taking new growth back by two thirds.
- Shape evergreen topiary plants to maintain desired shape. Remove any suckers growing from lower down the stem.
- Border plants may be in need of a boost by mid-summer so give them some general fertiliser, such as Growmore.
- Prune wisteria by shortening long side shoots to two or three buds from old wood.
- Some varieties of penstemon are not fully hardy so take softwood cuttings.
- Plant autumn flowering bulbs such as colchicums, sternbergias and hardy cyclamen.
- Top up ponds and keep weed free.
- Keep feeding wild birds and give them fresh water to drink and bathe in.

Green Gardening Tip – Wildflower Action!

Did you know that the first Saturday in July is National Meadows Day? We often think of meadows as fields full of wild flowers, but you can create a meadow in a space as small as one square-metre in a garden. According to [Plant Life](#) there are lots of reasons why meadows matter:

- over 700 species of plants put down their roots in grassy meadows, pastures and fields
- flower-rich grasslands and meadows can store 500% more carbon than fields of pure grass
- looking at a flower like oxeye daisy for just six seconds has been shown to lower your blood pressure
- the plants in a typical meadow can support nearly 1,400 species of invertebrates, that's an army of bugs, beetles, flies, spiders, grasshoppers, crickets, butterflies and moths.

Plantlife's new [Meadows' Hub](#) brings together all our meadow making experiences, with everything you ever wanted to know about making and caring for meadows. It's a one-stop-shop for meadow advice, tips and inspiration.

Your CSGGA Committee

Chairman and Membership Secretary:

Briony Wickenden Mulberry House, 54 Milton Fields, Chalfont St Giles, HP8 4EP 01494 870482 brionywickendke@hotmail.com

Secretary: Jan Bradley, 23 The Lagger, Chalfont St Giles, HP8 4DH 01494 874704 janbradley4@btinternet.com

Treasurer: Margaret Dykes, 4 Roughwood Fields, Roughwood Lane, Chalfont St Giles, HP8 4AA 01494 874511 margaretrdykes@btinternet.com

Committee Members:

Caroline Jackson	01494 876685
Eleanor O'Connor	01494 875646
Sam Patel	01494 875319