

CSGGA Newsletter

June 2022



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Our Summer Outing to

Stokes Poges Memorial Gardens

After hearing from Franzi Cheesman via zoom about the history and beauty of the Stoke Poges Memorial Gardens, the Committee decided that it would be a fitting venue for our traditional June outing.

After the chill of the previous week, the weather was perfect and Franzi made us very welcome. Tables and chairs were laid out for us to enjoy the traditional fare of strawberry tarts from Strattons Bakery and chilled prosecco. Many thanks to Sam who organised the

event, and her trusty helper, Raj.

We enjoyed a guided tour from Franzi to help us explore the garden and she reminded us about the origins of the garden. The gardens are immediately next to church that had inspired Thomas Gray's to write his famous poem '[Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard](#)' in 1751. Concerned that the land would be swallowed up by developers, Noel Mobbs, who had bought Stoke Park in 1928, purchased the land for the gardens to "protect the White, a leading commissioner by Mobbs memorial to the dead to note that the land was reason as Lord Wakefield Cottage. If only he had

Although this was not the first visit the Gardens Association had made to the Gardens, many members had not been there before and were surprised to find such an unexpected gem so close to home. The gardens, still faithful to White's plan, are laid out to feature different styles from informal meadows to the formality of the Colonnade Garden, with stone rills and water features. The roses in the circular rose garden

were at their peak and path by the rock and water garden provide the best view of Stoke Park and Lake.



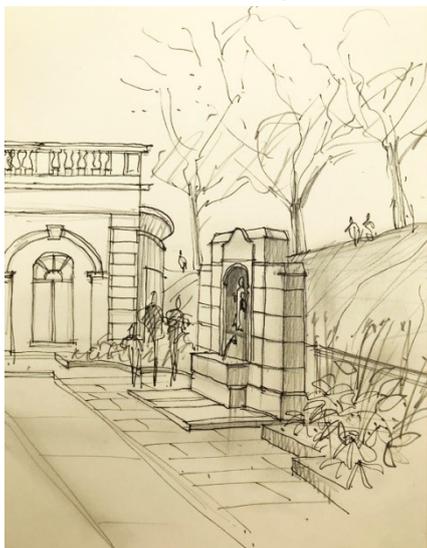
All in all, it was a very enjoyable and memorable evening. For those unable to join us on this outing, it should be added to your bucket list and many of those who did visit, will doubtless return again.

Holiday to the Peak District

On the first Sunday of "flaming June", we left a rainy Chalfont St Giles, to find we were dragging the rain clouds with us to the [Dorothy Clive Garden](#). Located on a hillside in glorious countryside on the North Staffordshire, Shropshire and Cheshire borders, the garden is both formal and informal and has some stunning views. Not many other visitors braved the weather to visit this beautiful garden - it was fortunate that there were plenty of areas to shelter! The rain having abated, our next stop was National Trust's [Biddulph Grange](#). This amazing Victorian garden was created by James Bateman for his collection of plants from around the world. Among its features is an Italianate garden, a Chinese inspired garden complete with temple and pool. It also contains some impressive topiary, a stumpery, an orchard and vegetable garden.

Our base for 4 nights was the [Lee Wood Hotel](#) in Buxton. While I knew the location was good, the hotel proved to be a great choice, and in every way exceeded my highest expectations - the staff were all very friendly and efficient and the quality of the food, at every meal, was exceptional. I know that all those on the trip would echo my praise.

The weather had improved for our second day, when we were joined by our blue badge guide, Sam,



shared his knowledge of the topography, history and heritage of the Peak District. In the morning we visited, [Thornbridge Hall](#) a privately owned, 12 acre garden designed at the end of the 19th century to create a '1000 shades of green' as viewed from the house. Areas of the garden include the Italian Garden, Scented Terrace, Water Garden, Koi Pond, Kitchen Garden and Orangery, amongst others. The afternoon visit was to the spectacular [Chatsworth House](#), long considered one of the finest gardens in the UK. After a tour of the house we certainly discovered why it has that reputation. There were so many areas to visit including a sensory garden, rose garden, trout streams, cascade and fountains, ravines, a maze and rock garden.

Day three started with a guided walking tour of [Buxton](#) led by Sam who showed us the Crescent, one of the first purpose built hotels in the country, St Anne's Well, which provides the people of Buxton with a supply of its famous thermal waters, as well as the house where, in 1573, the captive Mary Queen of Scots stayed in the Tudor 'Talbot Tower' to take the water cure. We then ventured out of the Peak District to Macclesfield to visit [Jodrell Bank](#), host to the world's oldest existing radio astronomy observatory. We were amongst the first to visit the newly opened First Light Pavilion, a dome-shaped building mirroring the shape and scale of the all-seeing-eye telescope, which celebrates the history of Jodrell Bank.

Our fourth day brought the disturbing news that covid had reared its ugly head and one member of the group was unable to join us on our visit to [Renishaw Hall](#), home to the Sitwell family for 400 years. The Italianate gardens were laid out in the last 19th century and are divided into areas featuring clipped yew hedges, sculpture, ornamental ponds and classical statues and host a superb collection of plants. Perhaps one of the most popular gardens of our trip was the small, but perfectly formed, gardens at [Park Hall](#), near Chesterfield, runner-up in Daily Telegraph Great British Gardens Competition 2018. This garden created by the current owner featured arbours, pergolas, pleached hedge, topiary, statuary, roses, and several water features.



Having checked out of the hotel, our journey home took us to [Cascade Gardens](#). Inspired by Japanese gardens, this garden has been created by the owner over the last 26 years within a landscape of rocks, cliffs and woodland, and features an abundance of interesting plants, shrubs and trees. Our final garden visit,

and perhaps my favourite, was [Felley Priory](#). Situated just ½ mile from junction 27 of the M1, it is a hidden gem, with a very good tearoom and an excellent nursery, well worth a minor detour for those who travel the M1 regularly. The gardens are beautifully kept and despite its proximity to the M1, it is a relaxing, peaceful and perfectly charming garden with archways of old-fashioned roses, a lily pond, topiary and wide and inspiring herbaceous borders.

Despite the very unfortunate issue of covid, I believe everyone really enjoyed the holiday and the variety of gardens we visited, as well as the “friendly and warm company”. I've received some lovely feedback and I look forward to leading another trip next year – Torquay, at the end of May, is currently on the cards!

Gill and Pat's Open Garden



You missed a real treat if you didn't visit to Gill and Pat Aikens' garden this month. They were the first members to open their garden to other members under our new open gardens initiative.

Created by Gill and Pat, on south facing slope which overlooks Silsdens Meadow, much of their garden is laid to lawn surrounded by beds containing a wonderful mix of colourful and, often unusual, perennials, roses and shrubs. Their terrace overlooks a

tranquil lily pond, and provides a view of the garden and the fields beyond. Gill is constantly adding beds and plants to their garden and has recently planted some new David Austin roses and, at the bottom of the garden, a new shade bed containing ferns and hostas.



I hope we can persuade Gill to open it again for us and also perhaps, as part of the biennial Open Gardens scheme in aid of the Memorial Hall. It is certainly worth the visit.

Community Orchard



It was wonderful to welcome everyone who came to learn about the proposal to create a community orchard for Chalfont St Giles. We were really encouraged to hear the enthusiasm for the project. My thanks to those who helped or baked a cake, to the Parish Church for the loan of the Reading Room, which enabled us to hold an orchard themed tea room, and to Milton's Cottage for hosting the event in the morning.

One of the activities we included was the mapping of existing orchard trees in the village. Apple and cherry trees can be found in the most surprising places in the village, there's even one in the middle of Silsden Meadow. If you have a fruit tree in

your garden, let us know and we'll put it on the map!

M's Action Diary for June

- After flowering, cut back the stems of kerria, weigela, philadelphus and deutzia.
- Deadhead rhododendrons and azelia and give an appropriate feed.
- Cut euphorbias and oriental poppies down to soil level after flowering. Fresh leaves will grow and some poppies will flower again.

- Some early flowering perennials, such as geraniums and aquilegia require cutting back, unless you wish them to seed.
- Deadhead delphiniums and lupins to encourage a second flush of flowers.
- Regularly deadhead roses except those that are grown for their hips, and scatter rose food around the base of the plant.
- Trim hedges and feed with general fertilizer.

Green Gardening Tip – Mulch, mulch, mulch!

If you have not already done so, add a mulch on any bare, moist soil. Organic mulches keep soil moist, and deter weed growth (remove weeds before mulching). Mulches provide a safe habitat for all sorts of beneficial creatures, such as centipedes and beetles that devour slugs and other pests. And the compost provides a constant source of nutrients. Garden Organic

Not only do biodegradable mulches help keep the moisture in, they break down and release nutrients into the soil. The best materials to use are of course, garden compost, leaf mould, well-rotted manure and grass clippings. Mulching with grass clippings, either on the lawn or in the garden bed, is a time-honored method but some caution is needed – don't use those from a newly treated lawn and when using fresh clippings as mulch, lay only a thin layer. This will allow the grass to start to break down before it begins to smell or rot. Thicker layers have a tendency to remain too wet and can invite mould but dried clippings can go on thicker.

Jubilee Plants in the Churchyard

The Jubilee plants initiative supported by Rowan Garden Centre and Yaldens looked splendid lining the pathways and in the entrance to the church for the Jubilee weekend.



Next Meeting - 14th July

Naturalistic Planting - Amber Hine

Naturalistic Planting takes a look at the rising popularity of looking to nature to design our natural spaces. Examples from contemporary Garden and Landscape Designers employing this process and the gardens or spaces that demonstrate it. Hear about the wonder of perennials, meadows and woodland edges. **Don't forget to bring any spare plants you might have to sell at the meeting.**

Your Committee

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New Committee members are always welcome. We are a friendly bunch! Please contact a committee member to find out more if you're interested in joining us.

Dates for the Diary

14th July Our monthly meeting

Naturalistic Planting - 7.30 for 8.00 Memorial Hall

Saturday, 30th July

We have arranged a visit to the National Arboretum, near, Burton on Trent, and Hill Close Gardens in Warwick, for **Saturday, 30th July**. Cost £30 member, £35 for guests. If you wish to join us, please contact Eleanor for the details. Guests welcome.