

# AMERSHAM GARDENING ASSOCIATION

## JULY 2014 NEWSLETTER



### FROM THE SECRETARY

I hope you have all received and enjoyed the May Newsletter. The committee would welcome any feedback, including contributions to future Newsletters.

You will have read Susan's report on the Spring Show and the request for more people to enter the shows. One member entered in trepidation saying, "I'm no gardener but would have a go", and went on to receive the prize for most points overall. I entered for the first time and won a first prize. If we can do it, you all can do it. So please try at the next show.

The committee have some interesting talks, trips and a quiz organised for you which we hope you will enjoy in the next few months.

Jean Bowling

### ESSEX GARDENS VISIT SEPTEMBER 11<sup>th</sup>

Our outing is to ULTING WICK in Maldon and to MARKS HALL in Coggleshall.

Ulting Wick was featured in Country Life in 2012. Philippa Burrough moved there in 1996 and has created 4 acres of garden and 3 acres of woodland, which she opens under the N.G.S. She decided to concentrate on two major displays, one in Spring and one in late summer. Here we will enjoy coffee/tea and cake (included).

We will then travel to the lovely Marks Hall where we can picnic or have a light lunch in the restored Essex Barn. Marks Hall gardens and Arboretum have wonderful woodland walks, lakes, an 18<sup>th</sup> century walled garden, amazing plants from around the world and the longest double border in East Anglia. All in all, it covers 200 acres so you can explore as little or as much as you would like to. I have booked a free buggy which can take five people (two places already booked) for those who would like to take advantage of this facility.

The price for the whole day is £24. As a booking form is not included with this newsletter, please telephone me – Irene Glyn-Jones – on 01494 727203 if you would like to join us.

### GARDENERS' WORLD VISIT JUNE 12 NEC

25 members set off on a sunny day to the vast venue of the NEC in keen anticipation to see what was on offer in this year's Gardeners' World Live Show. We were not disappointed. There was so much to experience, from the hugely impressive Floral Marquee to the suppliers stalls to the Show Gardens, to the RHS Plant Village, to the Beautiful Borders, to the Edible Patches and much more.

The RHS Floral marquee was stunning. The scent almost overpowering at first. I particularly liked Hardy's Cottage Garden's display, Eversley Nursery's ornamental grasses gently swaying and moving in the display, and Ainsworth Displays whose speciality is outdoor varieties of palms.

The commemoration of WW1 was evident throughout the show. Birmingham City Council's floral display was thought-provoking and beautifully presented. The Show Garden 'We Will Remember Them' by Halcyon Days Garden Design continued this theme, incorporating reflection and peace into their design. 'Down the Garden' was a design which combined the traditional garden style with a contemporary approach. I really liked the summerhouse at the bottom of the garden. Gardening for Wildlife was featured and represented by various organisations: the British Beekeeper's Association, Wildlife Trust, Bat Conservation Trust.

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Others in the Wildlife Zone included specialist Societies, such as The Carnivorous Society, the British Cactus & Succulent Society and The Maple Society.



We were also invited to sample and taste the offerings in the Good Food Show which was running in the next Arena. The Jazz apples were most welcome! Overall it was a great day out. We all saw and experienced different exhibits, and it certainly fired up the enthusiasm and ability to see my own patch in a new light.  
Anna Cherkas

## SUFFOLK VISIT JUNE 17-20

As a regular visitor to Suffolk, even I was surprised to find such a variety of outstanding gardens.



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Our first visit on Day 1 was to Place for Plants, a nursery and garden at East Bergholt, in the beautiful Stour valley on the Suffolk-Essex border. The guided tour was very informative and members managed to find time for plant buying. In the afternoon we visited Green Island Gardens near Colchester. They have a huge range of unusual trees, shrubs, perennials, and bulbs and we found it a very relaxing place.

The next day we visited two halls. The first was the house and garden at Otley Hall which is steeped in history. We had some very friendly guides, who invited us to sit on the chairs and beds. The hall is still used as a family home. Next was the very majestic Helmingham Hall. The house isn't open to the public but the spectacular Grade 1 listed gardens are. The long herbaceous borders filled with roses and clematis were at their best as well as many other perennials. Arbours of sweet peas and amusing topiaries were a joy.



On the third day we visited two very different gardens. First off was Henstead Exotic Garden which boasts over 100 large palms and 200 bamboo's. We were all amazed at what can be done with the enthusiasm of one man. In the afternoon the group visited Priors Oak Open Gardens at Aldeburgh. It has 10 acres of wildlife and butterfly gardens and was a delight. In the vegetable garden the sweet peas were magnificent and we even managed to sample the fruit. Unfortunately there wasn't enough sun for the expected butterflies but we left with the feeling that this was a garden completely sympathetic with nature.



On the morning of our final day we visited Woodward's at Coddanham. These gardens are known for having year round colour and interest, lots of island beds which are stocked with 1000s of bulbs, shrubs and perennials. A very labour-intensive garden but a very relaxing

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one. We also enjoyed the best lunch of the trip and the plants for sale went in no time. The coach was almost filled to capacity with plants! Our last visit of the trip was to Lucy Redman's garden near Bury St Edmunds. She is a very enthusiastic gardener and designer, whose plant knowledge and vision had to be admired. She believes gardens should be fun, relaxing, quirky and original spaces.



Overall we had a very successful trip. We visited eight different gardens, ate cake at nearly every one and were very satisfied with good accommodation and food at the friendly Best Western Hotel in Bury St Edmunds. We were amazed how few gardeners were involved in creating such lovely gardens. As one said, "there are three gardeners, me, myself and I". We were very fortunate to once again have Brian as our coach driver. He was very kind and helpful and, as always, a superb driver.

I must also say a big thank you to all who came and made it such a very friendly enjoyable trip. Finally, where should we go next year? I am currently considering the Malvern Spring Show. I know many of you will be familiar with the area so if you can recommend any gardens please let me know.  
Joan Clark

## VILLANDRY GARDENS, LOIRE VALLEY VISIT JULY 15

As part of our walking holiday in the Loire we visited Villandry, 10 km south-west of Tours, off the Loire south bank, and one of two in France among Monty Don's 80 World Gardens.

Villandry is the last of the great Renaissance chateaux constructed in the Loire valley. Built in 1532-6 by Jean le Breton, finance minister to Francois I, on the site of a 12<sup>th</sup> century fortress, prominent at the time Henry II Plantagenet succeeded to Aquitaine (stretching from the Loire to the Pyrenees), with his marriage to Eleanor.

It stayed in le Breton's family until 1754, and then passed through various hands until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, by which time the Renaissance formal gardens in their terraces were all replaced by an English-style landscape park.

In 1906 the chateau was bought by Spanish scientist Dr. Joachim Carvallo and his heiress wife Ann Coleman. Carvallo gave up a brilliant scientific career working with Professor Richet who won the Nobel Prize for medicine in 1913, to devote the rest of his life to Villandry. He and his wife restored the chateau and gardens to their Renaissance glory, with the notable addition of the potager (vegetable garden), based on evidence from 16<sup>th</sup> century

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architect J. Androuet du Cerceau, who described how gardens were laid out in France at that time.



The 12 acre garden is divided into several areas. The Water Garden is centred on a lake sized pond in the form of a Louis XV mirror, surrounded by sculpted grass banks and flanked by lime trees. The pond cascades into canal which runs the length of the garden down to the side of the chateau.

The Garden of Love is interwoven with box parterres and yew finials, with planting in shapes of hearts, crosses and fans. Down a terrace we came to the Music Garden of box and lavender representing lyres, musical notes and chandeliers lighting up the musical scores. Within the Sun Garden, the cloud room is planted with blue and white, the sun room with oranges and yellows, all interspersed with romantic sculptures.

Of Christian inspiration, the hornbeam Maze symbolises man's path on earth, and unlike the Greek labyrinth, it has no dead ends. The visitor's aim is to raise himself humanly and spiritually towards the beautiful hut in the centre. The Herb Garden of the Middle Ages is

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devoted to aromatic, cooking and medicinal herbs. Between the Maze and Herb Garden is a lime tree bordered tennis court.



The potager is made up of 9 squares of different geometric patterns, and planted with vegetables of alternating colours, blue leeks, red cabbages and beetroots, green carrot tops, to create the illusion of a chessboard. In the Middle Ages abbey monks laid their vegetables in cross shapes. Fountains, arbours and square beds show Italian influence. 16<sup>th</sup> century architect de Cerceau combined monastic and Italian features to create the decorative kitchen garden needed for the roses and vegetables, newly arrived from the Americas, and was the inspiration for Carvallo's 20<sup>th</sup> century restoration.



Ann & Neil Watson

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## QUIZ & MONTHLY TALKS

### Quiz Evening 23 October

The application form for our annual quiz evening is enclosed with this newsletter.

The quiz master was new to us last year and well received. This year he will again include a round on gardening topics. The committee wanted ticket and catering costs to be held at last years prices. As a result meal choice is reduced but anyone with a special diet will be catered for. To ensure the evening does not run at a loss we need at least 70 people to attend, so please get friends and family to come along.

### Monthly Talks

On **25 September** Anne Godfrey from Daisy Roots nursery in Hertford will tell us how to keep the colour coming in our gardens through into autumn. Her nursery specialises in unusual perennials and has featured on Gardeners World and in garden magazines. She is a member of the Hardy Plant Society Hertfordshire branch.

On **27 November** Steve James will enlighten us about orchids. Not only is Steve a specialist in orchids but he is also a judge of horticultural shows including our own.

Anne Webb

## VOLUNTEERS FOR LINDENGATE THERAPEUTIC GARDENING CHARITY

Lindengate is a registered charity that has signed a lease to operate on a large site that used to be allotments next to the Worlds End Garden centre outside Wendover. We are dedicated to providing gardening/horticulture-based programmes to help those dealing with mental health issues on their road to recovery. We will do this by creating an environment that encourages a structured process of recovery where our activities support people in becoming more self-confident and able to take those 'first steps' towards recovery. Whether growing food, herbs or other plants or taking part in other market gardening activities, the relaxed and structured environment, where the medical diagnosis is 'left at the door', will make a big impact on all who come to us.

Volunteers are needed to help this new charity prepare the site ready to open in the autumn. The first major activity is to clear the site, which will involve cutting back & digging up weeds, clearing rubbish, moving anything useful including the sheds and greenhouses, potting up plants and general tidying, and we need your help to get this started. There will be something for everyone to do.



For the schedule of site clearing dates look at the website - [www.lindengate.org.uk](http://www.lindengate.org.uk)

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Some gardening equipment is available, but it would be great if volunteers could bring their own digging fork and/or hand fork, digging spade, wheelbarrow, gardening gloves. Wear suitable footwear & long trousers (lots of nettles).

Food & refreshments will be provided on all the sessions, with food available for the last hour of the session. In the event of bad weather, the sessions may need to be rescheduled. So, please check the [Lindengate Facebook](#) and [website](#) pages for any updates.

As a community project we are keen to involve as many people as possible. We also have many different opportunities for volunteers that don't necessarily have green fingers to be a part of the Lindengate team. Whether you are able to offer specific specialist skills or just enthusiasm, as a one off or on a regular basis, anyone will be able to contribute and help us out. Founders of the charity: Charlie Powell & Sian Chattle

Emails: [volunteers@lindengate.org.uk](mailto:volunteers@lindengate.org.uk) or [info@lindengate.org.uk](mailto:info@lindengate.org.uk)

### FORTHCOMING EVENTS

July 28-Aug 29	Ashridge House Garden Tours 16.00hrs Tue & Thur 01442 843491
Sept 11	Ulting Wick, Maldon & Marks Hall, Coggeshall, Essex Visit IGJ
13	AGA Late Summer Show, Drake Hall 09.00-13.30
26	Autumn Fireworks – Extending the Season with a Bang - Anne Godfrey Monthly Talk
Oct 23	Annual Quiz Drake Hall
Nov 27	Orchids for Everyone – Steve James Monthly Talk

### COMMITTEE 2014

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### NON-COMMITTEE

Plant Stall	Debbie Clogg	
Visits	Margaret Hillier	
Raffle	Christine Prizeman & Laura Bennett	
Newsletter	Neil Watson	<a href="mailto:etal.watson@gmail.com">etal.watson@gmail.com</a>