

AMERSHAM GARDENING ASSOCIATION NOVEMBER 2015 NEWSLETTER



MESSAGE FROM YOUR CHAIRMAN

We have enjoyed an eventful year so far in our Association - trips, an extended holiday, and our very successful monthly meetings which have all been extremely well attended.

As I write this towards the end of October, we have just had a very pleasant evening for the Quiz – nearly 90 members put their heads together and dug deep to rise to the high standard of questions set by our President Tim Hillier and sustained midway by excellent catering from Carol Thurston. Your committee members worked extremely hard to achieve the smooth running of this event, and I extend grateful thanks from all who attended to Tim and Margaret Hillier, Frances and John Billington, Irene Glyn-Jones, Liz Moulton, David Bender, Ken Bodman, Clive Symes and Terry Bell.

On a personal note, some of you may know that I plan to relocate to Cambridgeshire. As I write, these plans are not yet finalised, so you may see me round and about for a while yet.

We have a great Association, with a dedicated and very hard working Committee. We welcome new members to the Committee - new and fresh input is necessary to keep the vibrancy and intent continuing in order to maintain the integrity and purpose of your Association, and to ensure that it continues to thrive.

Please don't hesitate to step forward! No qualifications necessary! Just have a word to any committee member and you will receive a very warm welcome. Thank you.

And now I look forward to our Christmas Social and I hope to see many of you all there.

With best wishes

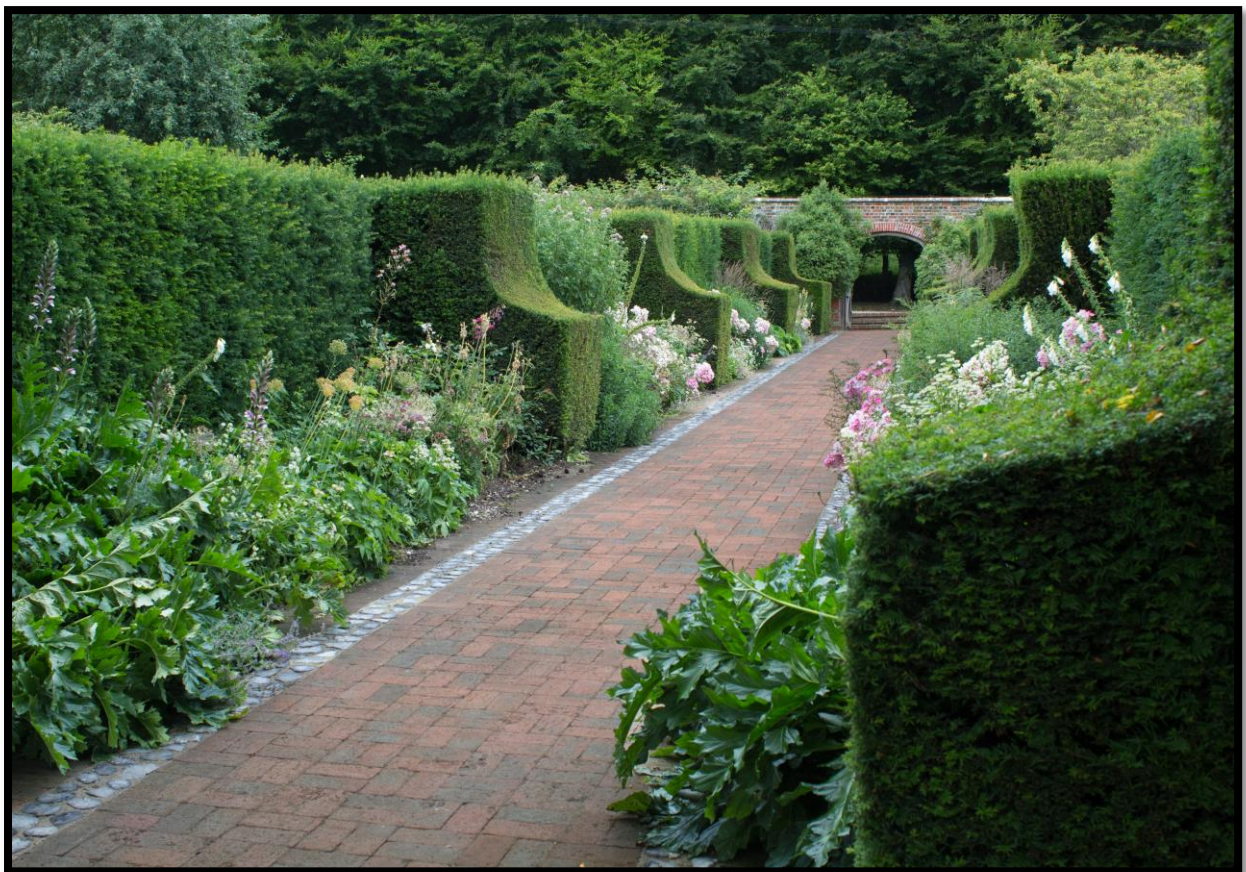
Anna Cherkas

WORMSLEY ESTATE WALLED GARDEN VISIT

On Wednesday, 22nd July, 55 members of the Amersham Gardening Association, braved the drizzle and visited the Wormsley Estate, travelling there by car. After entering the gates, we proceeded up the drive, past the Opera House & scenery, just being dismantled, and the famous Cricket Ground built by Sir Paul Getty, (a huge cricket fan), to the Walled Garden; in total about two miles! The estate still belongs to the Getty family, and their large mansion could be seen in the distance. The Walled Garden itself is quite remote from the house, though entertainment had been built into the area in the form of a small theatre with grass stage, and an indoor swimming pool.

On arrival, we were warmly welcomed by the Head Gardener and her team, who stayed around the whole time, and happily answered questions. The Head Gardener gave us an introductory talk while we stood sheltering under umbrellas. She also invited us to the Glasshouse for Pimms and nibbles. Fortunately, at that point, the rain stopped and the weather improved.

AMERSHAM GARDENING ASSOCIATION NOVEMBER 2015 NEWSLETTER



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The Walled Garden itself was split into four sections, each divided by yew hedges and separated by brick paths. Each corner revealed something new, but for many of us, the highlight of the visit was the wild flower meadow, with stunning blue cornflowers interspersed with poppies of every hue. Elsewhere, there was a cottage garden effect, with plants spilling on to paths and roses climbing over arches. The vegetable patch was very prolific and we were astounded to hear that every bit of it went up to the house, and, even if the family were away, a wonderful housekeeper bottled and froze the produce for the winter. (Shades of Downton Abbey?)

At the end of our two hour visit, I think everyone agreed that we had had an excellent visit.

Liz Moulton



MEADOW FARM & COUGHTON COURT



AMERSHAM GARDENING ASSOCIATION NOVEMBER 2015 NEWSLETTER



We left Amersham on a cool, wet and misty morning on 14th August en route to Meadow Farm and Coughton Court and the rain steadily increased as we sped along the M40! However, when we reached Meadow Farm we were given a warm welcome and ushered into the barn where coffee and delicious homemade cakes awaited us. Rob and Diane Cole produced a slide show showing what Meadow Farm looked like when they purchased it and how much hard work had gone into making the well run nursery and lovely garden which is there today. The variety of plants and stunning combinations were a delight to behold. Fortunately the rain had stopped and we were able to fully enjoy this wonderful garden and of course purchase plenty of plants!



AMERSHAM GARDENING ASSOCIATION NOVEMBER 2015 NEWSLETTER



We then moved on to Coughton Court where lunch awaited together with a tour of the house with its history of the Gunpowder Plot.



AMERSHAM GARDENING ASSOCIATION NOVEMBER 2015 NEWSLETTER



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The interesting gardens with the riverside walk and walled garden were well paved so the heavy rain of the morning was not a problem under foot. After more tea and cakes in the restaurant we set off for home only for the coach to break down 15 minutes up the road! Fortunately we had broken down outside a service station with a shop and we were able to make full use of the facilities there. It was probably the largest number of customers they had ever had in an evening! Two and a half hours later a replacement coach arrived and we finally made our weary way home, tired but happy.

Margaret Hillier

MONTHLY TALKS

2015

Andrew Halstead is recently retired from his position as RHS Principal Entomologist. He is well qualified to introduce us to some of the newer alien pests that have become established in this country in his lecture on **'Pests new to Britain in recent years'**. He visits us on **26 November**.

2016

The Landscape Institute is planning a nationwide festival during 2016 to mark the 300th birthday of the great landscape architect, Lancelot 'Capability' Brown. It will celebrate his life and work and his great contribution to our rich heritage of country estates, parks and gardens. There are said to be over 250 sites attributed or connected to Brown.

It is therefore appropriate to start the new year with a speaker on this subject. The title for Russell Bowes talk on **28 January** is **'The Capable Mr Brown'**. Russell is a freelance garden historian. He holds a Diploma in Garden History awarded by the University of London and lectures all around the country, including Blenheim Palace, the Imperial War Museum and many National Trust properties.

On **28 February** our speaker is **Dr Henry Oakeley** who is Garden Fellow at The Royal College of Physicians in Regents Park. Formerly he was Consultant Physician in psychological medicine at St Thomas' Hospital. He became fascinated in gardening in the 1950's and has a special interest in orchids. He has been President of the Orchid Society of Great Britain and a member of the council of the RHS.

He has travelled widely and written books, all the while using photography as a means to record, be it orchids in the wild, medical pathology or more recently, the plants in his Medicinal Garden at the College. The title of his talk is **'Poisonous Plants make the best medicines'**.

Anne Webb

AMERSHAM GARDENING ASSOCIATION NOVEMBER 2015 NEWSLETTER



FORTHCOMING EVENTS

2015

Nov 26 Pests Recently New to Britain - Andrew Halstead talk

2016

Jan 28 The Capable Mr Brown – Russell Bowes talk

Feb 26 Poisonous Plants make the Best Medicines – Henry Oakeley talk

Mar 24 AGM, Flowers of the Western Cape – Richard Jones talk

Apr 28 Guerrilla Gardening – Richard Reynolds talk

May 26 Role of Estates Manager – Mark Towsey talk

Jun 10-13 Dorset Gardens Trip

Jun 23 Plants of the Season – Paul Green talk

Jul 28 The Modern Lawn – Paul Hedges-Gower talk

Sep 22 Dahlias – Val Bourne talk

Oct 27 Quiz

Nov 24 Self Seeders – Love them or Hate them – Gill Regan talk

Dec 22 Social

COMMITTEE & CONTACT DETAILS

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