SUSSEX GARDENS TRUST



Jottings

Edition No. 3 August 2022

Dear Members

As I write, gardens are struggling with this unprecedented weather. We see daily how our own gardens are coping, but how much more worrying for the custodians of the many historic gardens that we have visited and researched in Sussex. However, being of the 'every cloud …' persuasion I am reminded that the devastation following the storm of 1987 has proved to have opened up some unexpected possibilities. When we visited Borde Hill in April, our hosts drew attention to opportunities created in spite of the loss of many trees.

Some of you may be missing the SGT newsletter that arrived periodically in your post. We hope that you will find the Jottings section of our new website equally interesting and entertaining. Reducing the cost of printing and postage was a consideration in the changes that have been made, but we also wanted to draw a new audience to our website and to find out about the work of the Trust. For those of us who relish the experience of the real printed word, the first edition of our new Journal is expected at the end of this year.

The SGT programme of garden visiting has been enjoyed by many of us since our AGM in April. It was a great treat to be welcomed to Twyford House by members Clive and Jenny Whitmore. Another of our members, Clare Davison is kindly opening her garden, Sedgwick Park for us on 8 September. If you are able to take advantage of this last chance to visit such an impressive garden please do book soon, to avoid disappointment.

It has been a pleasure to meet so many members at garden visits, and you will be pleased to know that the Events team is well ahead in preparing another tempting programme for 2023.

In the meantime, please let us know of ways in which your membership of SGT could be enhanced, or of things that might have disappointed you. I am proud of

the way we have managed to offer members worthwhile events over the last couple of challenging years, and delighted that we have attracted several new members this year. However, we must try to meet the expectations of all members, so please feel at liberty to let us know where amendments might help.

With best wishes for the rest of this summer,

Penny Vasey
SGT Chair

Things to do, places to be

Sussex Gardens Trust events this month

SGT Visit to High Beeches, Wednesday 10 August 1.30 – 4.30 pm.

There are just a few remaining places for our members to book for the visit to this very beautiful woodland landscape of twenty-seven acres, which is home to a collection of rare and exotic plants from all corners of the world. We have chosen an August date to see the azure blue Willow Gentians (*Gentiana asclepiadia*) in the only garden in the country where they are naturalised.

You can book here: **https://bookwhen.com/sussexgtevents/e/ev-skto-20220810133000**

High Beeches Lane, Handcross, RH17 6HQ

A selection of SGT Members' Gardens opening with NGS in August

Colwood House, Cuckfield Lane, Warninglid, Sussex, RH17 5SP
Sunday 14 & Wednesday 17 August, 12.30 pm to 4.30 pm, entry £7.00.

Colwood House is a twelve- acre garden created by the owner, Rosy Brenan, with mature and specimen trees from the late 1800s, lawns and woodland edge. There is a formal parterre, rose and herb gardens, a 100ft terrace and herbaceous border overlooking a flower rimmed croquet lawn. Other features include a cut turf labyrinth, a forsythia tunnel, water features, statues and gazebos, a pets' cemetery, a giant chessboard, a lake with an island and a temple.



https://findagarden.ngs.org.uk/garden/14550/colwood-house

Butlers Farmhouse, Butlers Lane, Herstmonceux, BN27 1QH.
Saturday 20 and Sunday 21 August, 2.00 pm to 5.00. pm, entry £6.

A lovely rural setting for this one-acre garden, surrounding a C16 farmhouse with views of the South Downs. Irene Eltringham-Willson has created quite a quirky garden with many surprises round every corner including a rainbow border, small pond, Cornish inspired beach corners, a poison garden and secret jungle garden. Picnics are welcome and you can listen to live jazz in the garden too. Plants for sale.



https://findagarden.ngs.org.uk/garden/16377/butlers-farmhouse

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47 Denmans Lane, Lindfield, Haywards Heath, Sussex, RH16 2JN
Monday 29 August 1.00 pm to 5.00 pm, combined admission with Lindfield Jungle, entry £6.

This beautiful and tranquil one-acre garden was described by *Sussex Life* as a 'Garden Where Plants Star'. Created by the owners, Sue and Jim Stockwell, over the past twenty years, it is planted for interest throughout the year. Spring bulbs are followed by azaleas, rhododendrons, roses and herbaceous perennials. The garden also has ponds, vegetable and fruit gardens.



https://findagarden.ngs.org.uk/garden/34430/47-denmans-lane

Durrance Manor, Smithers Hill Lane, Shipley, Sussex, RH13 8PE
Monday 29 August 12.00 am to 6.00 pm, entry £6.00.

This two-acre garden, which belongs to Gordon Lindsay, surrounds a medieval hall house (not open) and enjoys uninterrupted views over a ha-ha of the South Downs and Chanctonbury Ring. There are Japanese inspired gardens, a large pond, a wildflower meadow and an orchard. There is also a Monet style bridge over a pond with water lilies, colourful long borders and a vegetable garden.



https://findagarden.ngs.org.uk/garden/19175/durrance-manor

Events happening elsewhere

Frogmore House and Garden to reopen for charity days this summer.



For the first time since 2019, Frogmore House and Garden, the charming royal retreat set within Windsor Castle's magnificent Home Park, will open to the public for three days as part of the annual charity garden open days.

The three charities that will benefit from the proceeds of the open days in Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee year are the National Garden Scheme on **30 August**, Mothers' Union on **31 August**, and Guide Dogs on **1 September**.

The 35-acre gardens at Frogmore House have been an enduring attraction for monarchs and their families since the house was first purchased. Laid out for Queen Charlotte in the 1790s, they are based on a model 'picturesque' landscape, with winding lakes, wooded mounds, glades, walks and bridges. visit https://www.ngs.org.uk/frogmore-house-gardens.

Hestercombe Gardens, Somerset. Artists and the Garden: New Perspectives
Monday 26 - Tuesday 27 September 2022

Two of our SGT members will be guest speakers at this international conference in September which will explore the relationship between cultural production and the garden, across creative disciplines and media, from the eighteenth century until the present day.

Key conference themes consider the garden as a mirror of society, the garden as playground for artistic endeavours, and curating and creativity at Hestercombe - past and present.

Caroline Ikin will be speaking on 'Ruskin's Gardening: The Ideas that Shaped Brantwood' and Judy Tarling's lecture is 'The Weapons of Rhetoric: a Garden Magazine'.
https://www.hestercombe.com/whats-on/artists-and-the-garden-conference

The Gardens Trust Annual Conference and AGM
Friday 2 – Sunday 4 September 2022, Richmond, Yorkshire.
This is a great opportunity to meet members from The Gardens Trusts and CGTs, with visits to Millgate House and Temple Grounds in Richmond; Aske Hall, Constable Burton, Bolton Castle and Bolton Hall. For full details see https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/annual-conference-of-the-gardens-trust-2022-tickets-146795807211

Garden News from around the county

Borde Hill Garden awarded Heritage Funding

Borde Hill Garden located near Haywards Heath in West Sussex has just been awarded a £231,000 grant by The National Lottery Heritage Fund to develop the proposals for its 'Reinventing Borde Hill' project.



The Rose Garden at Borde Hill. © Nicky Flint

SGT members have always enjoyed their visits over the years to Borde Hill Garden – most recently we were invited into their house for our AGM in March

when Andrewjohn Stephenson Clarke gave us an illustrated talk about the history of the garden and his family's involvement. We are very pleased to hear that their bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund to develop and celebrate the heritage of this Grade II* garden with new facilities and educational and community programmes has been successful. Andrewjohn and Eleni have been helped in their bid by their daughter, Jay Goddard, and they have expressed their appreciation to SGT for their letters of support for the NLHF project.

Some key parts of the project include a cycle/pedestrian route creating car-free access to Borde Hill from Haywards Heath train station and an all-year-round Eco Lodge on the edge of the tranquil Robertsmere Lake serving as a visitor and community centre with learning and wellbeing spaces.

National Lottery Heritage Fund grant applications over £250,000 are assessed in two rounds. Borde Hill has initially been granted round one development funding of £231,000 by The National Lottery Heritage Fund, allowing it to progress with its plans. Detailed proposals are then considered by The National Lottery Heritage Fund at second round, where a final decision is made on the full funding award of £1,727,000. www.bordehill.co.uk

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Alexandra Park Greenhouse receives a boost



A project to restore a historic greenhouse in Hastings has been given another boost by a local superstore. Volunteers from the Group were presented with a £1,500 cheque in June, by Wendy Border from Asda's store in St Leonards, to lay a new path along the side of the 1930s structure.

Greenhouse group secretary, Charlotte Ramage, said the charity was very grateful for the donation which will make the path safer for visitors, including wheelchair users and others with mobility problems. The money will pay for

paving stones and shingle for the path around the long border side of the greenhouse.

Work is also progressing on fitting the 1930s greenhouse with reinforced glass. Master joiner, Jason Wright from Westfield, is cleaning the existing teak structure and replacing any rotten pieces with a sustainable wood.

The project will see the greenhouse turned into a community hub for growing and selling plants, gardening talks, focus groups, workshops and classes. One half of the greenhouse is currently open every Saturday from 10.30 am to 1.00 pm for the sale and donation of plants. For more details about the greenhouse project visit www.our-greenhouse.org

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Congratulations to all the winners and highly commended projects at the 2022 Sussex Heritage Trust Awards.

The **Landscape and Gardens Award** is given to a reclamation or improvement scheme in an urban or rural environment, which restores an original feature or creates a new one in a public or private area.

The Winners!

Sedlescombe School Sensory Garden. This drought tolerant gravel garden has been designed for free by Kristina Clode and built almost entirely by volunteers to use by the school for break time, outdoor learning and reading groups.

The Shell House, Pitshill. A rare Grade II* listed garden building, dating from the early nineteenth century. The interior is lined with a magnificent array of shells, accentuated by stained glass and convex mirrors.

Gardens at Manor Farmhouse, South Heighton. The garden restoration included a wildflower meadow and orchard to help biodiversity.

Hilltop Hideaway, Brighton. A new design for a steep slope behind a family house created with decking platforms and raised planting beds.

One Garden Brighton, Stanmer Park. A walled garden and 20 hectares of the park were regenerated in conjunction with Plumpton College and Brighton & Hove City Council.

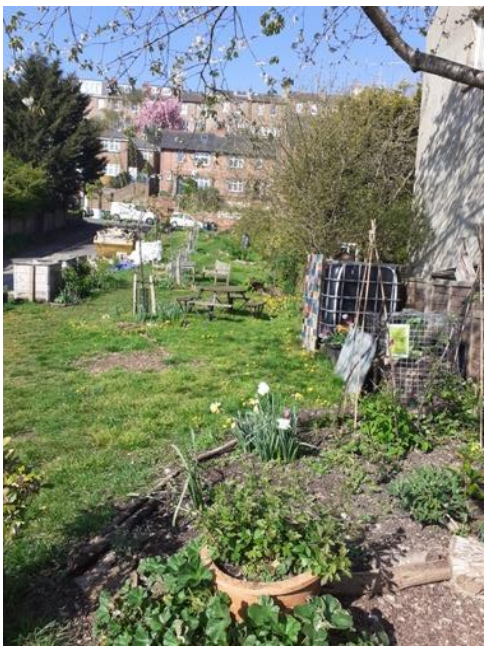
For a full list of Award winners and highly commended projects please visit the Sussex Heritage Trust Awards **website**.

SGT Small Grants: Stanmer Street Community Garden

There are over seventy community gardens in Brighton and recently Sussex Gardens Trust were pleased to support a new project – the Stanmer Street Community Garden - with a donation from our Small Grants Fund. **Kate Bloor** describes how this once neglected patch of ground is flourishing as space for growing plants and bringing people together. Cultivating green spaces in urban areas has become especially important since the pandemic and community gardening is bringing benefits to the health and well-being of many neighbourhoods.

Stanmer Street Community Garden (The Old Green) began a few months before March 2020, following the installation of a local composting project and six fruit trees in a barren space. The area lies in an urban district of Brighton, close to a council housing estate.





The Old Green, Stanmer Street, before the community development of the garden began.

A new group of neighbours formed together to develop the area, initially to provide a space for growing flowers, vegetables and herbs. However, we were lucky enough to have the input from Polly Charlton of the Permaculture Trust to begin over a six-month period, a permaculture plan for the space. We are also now working more closely with the local community development networks and

another community project called Growing Hollingdean, which supports the development of community gardening locally.

Our objectives for the garden have slowly developed since then. We aim to provide a space for local people to use for their own purposes, such as community events. Our main purpose was to provide a space for growing medicinal and edible plants, herbs, and flowers, and bushes, but also educating people in the use of these plants and their cultivation. We have planted more than eighty varieties of edible plants, and there is a focus on plants that are good for promoting the natural flora and fauna, such as bees. We have a small pond for frogs and flowers for insects and we intend to build an insect hotel.

The garden is primarily used by local people who pass by on a regular basis: young people, women with their children, dog-walkers, and residents who know the garden well. We often see people with bicycles resting, visiting the garden on their way to the shops from the council estate. Those who stop in the garden tend to take time out to talk to each other and so it facilitates community connection and tackles isolation, together with other benefits to the neighbourhood. Many of the people we speak to about the garden are very pleased and enjoy it immensely. An increasing number of young men are using the space to sit and talk to each other, and occasionally sing or rap together!

The garden has been particularly useful during Covid, as it is located in an area where there are flats with no gardens, and provided a space for people trapped inside for longer periods of time – the garden is used for groups of people to socialise safely. We have had community events such as carol singing, Halloween games, Pagan celebrations, tree maintenance training classes, and we wish to develop the use of the space by an increasing number of local people. Specifically, our objectives are to encourage people to learn about nature, particularly natural sustainable forms of food production, but also the medicinal benefits of readily available plants. We aim to work with local schools to connect with any project work they are doing. We tap into local networks to such an extent that our work also blends into, and facilitates, other local activities along the street, such as the advent calendar windows, and a sunflower growing competition for children.

From our beginning as a small group, we now have a committee, work groups each month, and we focus our efforts on practical achievements and priorities such as water capture systems, weeding and maintenance. The grant from Sussex Garden Trust, which will be used to replace garden items or to provide outreach and educational materials, is a very welcome contribution towards these projects and developments.

Kate Bloor is Treasurer of the Stanmer Street Community Garden

The Floral Retreat - The Lost Garden of Westham

Alan Starr



Postcard view of the Tea Gardens at the Floral Retreat, undated.

Stepping out of Pevensey and Westham Station, you walk into Westham, the village to the west of Pevensey Castle. Locally it is pronounced West Ham, and there is a fine old village street and a Norman church. Next to the station the environment is far more recent: a car repair garage, a Southern Water pumping station and modern houses in orange brick – lots of modern houses.

From the 1880s to the 1920s, the land in front of the station was the site of the Pevensey Pleasure Grounds and the Floral Retreat. This consisted of a large square house (now a restaurant and excellent fish-and-chip shop) and two acres of land: a large lawn plus an ornamental lake, all surrounded by greenhouses. A 1931 aerial photograph shows the garden.



The Floral Retreat, with its ornamental lake, in 1931. The railway station is bottom right.

© Britain from Above.

When the railway station was built in 1846 it was situated in open fields, a quarter of a mile from the village of Westham. Many of these fields, from the village to the station, were owned by Jesse Dann, a local brickmaker and market gardener. Much of the site was shown in the 1875 OS map as 'brick fields' and there were two ponds. The ponds were a consequence of brick-making. Digging out brick-earth leaves large hollows in the ground, and they fill up with water. To counter this, Mr Dann acquired a wooden windpump. The pump survived, astonishingly, and is now at the Weald and Downlands Museum in Singleton.

By the 1880s, Jesse Dann was describing himself as a builder: quite rightly, as he had built a fair part of Westham's new High Street. His sturdy Victorian houses were built just yards away from the brickfields.



The Floral Retreat (rightmost) and some of Mr Dann's other houses. Photo © Alan Starr

The first house on the High Street, closest to the station, was the home of the Pleasure Ground. It was a family home which also offered teas and was the centre of a market gardening business. There were extensive greenhouses and the Dann family would exhibit ferns, grapes and other fruits locally. Most importantly, it had a lake. Many Sussex gardens owe their lakes to the iron industry, and a brick pond is another instance of a garden designer's opportunism.

A newspaper of 1888 reports:

> The neighbourhood of the station has been much improved within the last three or four years by the conversion of what was a used brickfield into a pleasure resort, named the Floral Retreat, and this is no misnomer for the grounds are well laid out, both, with conservatories and also for open-air display, the principal hollow being utilized as an artificial lake, said to be stocked with fish.

The same newspaper suggests that a trip out to Pevensey and Westham offered a relief from the 'painfully stiff' social world of an Eastbourne holiday.

In 1886 the Pleasure Garden, run by Jesse's son Frederick, could boast 'Croquet and Tennis Lawns, an Angling Lake, Grapes, Fruits and Other Flowers'. It had an excellent train service. The train companies had positioned the Pevensey and Westham station with an eye to the tourist business. Visitors from Eastbourne or Hastings could walk to the Castle and have tea at the Garden while they waited for the train home. The visitors could buy grapes, peaches, tomatoes and cucumbers, as well as bouquets cut to order. The house also had furnished apartments to be rented.

A decade or two later, in 1901, it was advertised as 'The Floral Retreat – Pevensey Pleasure and Tea Gardens' providing Vineries and Greenhouses, Tennis Lawn, Bowling Green and Angling. It offered 'good accommodation for Young Ladies' Schools and Cyclists'. The main event of a summer afternoon was a 'strawberry tea', given by the young Mr. and Mrs. Dann.

Jesse Dann was an important figure locally. In the election of 1886, the local Conservative leader Captain Taylor, had used a gang of rowdies to disrupt a Liberal meeting at the Royal Oak in Pevensey. Jesse Dann invited the Liberals to use the Floral Retreat, where the ornamental lake proved its worth. The Conservatives began to cause trouble, but after it was made evident that 'no nonsense would be tolerated, and an intimation given that the pond would be brought into requisition, excellent order prevailed.' In 1894 the Retreat also welcomed the Eastbourne Women's Liberal Association, whose members enjoyed the beautiful weather while the gardens were looking at their best. They were able to discuss the provision of police matrons and the success of female voting in New Zealand.

The Retreat was a commercial venture, and any possibility was explored (except on Sundays). In the winter, the lake was advertised as a safe skating rink; in the January evenings of 1901 the lake was illuminated at night with Chinese lanterns, lamps and torches.

The main evening entertainments were, of course, in the summer. The Chinese lanterns would be brought out, and on some balmy evenings there was a full moon. Music was provided: sometimes there might be simply a piano, or possibly a string quartet or a small military band. On 5 June 1901, members of the Eastbourne Cycling Club gathered at the Floral Retreat at 5.00 p.m. They were joined by cyclists from Hastings, Lewes and Bexhill, a total of 180 people. 'Couples strolled round the little bye-paths which intersect the grounds. And as twilight gently spread its wings, the graceful movement of the swans swimming

on the lake were greatly admired'. There was dancing until 11.00 p.m. In summer the garden would have a series of evening 'lawn dances'.



Postcard view of the Gondola Lake, undated.

The Great War ended most of this. Post-war, the Floral Retreat became known as The Gondola, with boating on the lake. A garage – known at one point as the Gondola garage – was opened next to the garden, as was a small sewage pumping station.

The last reported season of lawn dances seems to have been in 1914. On 24 June 1914 – just as Archduke Ferdinand was heading towards Sarajevo – this advert appeared.

LAWN DANCES

Are being held at the FLORAL RETREAT, WESTHAM, PEVENSEY

NEXT DANCE WEDNESDAY June 24, and every fortnight, weather permitting.

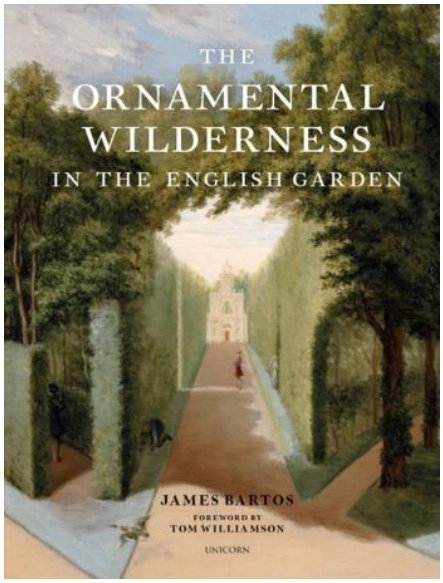
Dancing 7.30 to 11 o'clock Admission 6d

The garden has gone and only the house remains; it holds one mysterious vestige of the past. On its upper eastern wall, the traces of an old painted name are still visible at certain times of day: AMANZI NURSERIES. The nurseries we know about, but Amanzi? It is, according to the internet, the Zulu word for water. Which, if anything, makes the mystery deeper.



Photo © Alan Starr.

Summer Reading: a new book on the design of the true wilderness



***The Ornamental Wilderness in the English Garden*. Unicorn, 2022. James Bartos. 296pp, hard-back, coloured illustrations throughout. RRP £30.**

Reviewed by Judy Tarling

This book opens with the story of trees, their uses and meaning in history. In their timelessness they seem to represent the past, which is where Bartos starts, establishing meaning and myth from classical and biblical understandings of groves. The ancients' respect for trees and their spirits meant they were used for both private contemplation and collective worship in 'verdant cathedrals'. Nearer our own time Bartos reminds us of John Evelyn's 'wooden walls', trees used for naval defence purposes as they were in ancient Greece, before arriving at his focus, the eighteenth century, where the arrangement of trees in a wilderness became part of the designed pleasure garden. He concludes that the term was most used in the period 1700-1731 when the wilderness was at the height of its popularity (examples at Wilton, Ham and Sayes Court), and then again when looking back in the later eighteenth century as the idea of formal designs using trees was already disappearing in favour of the more 'natural' landscape. An example which Defoe considered beautiful in 1724 had already become outgrown by 1742 and was thought to disagree with 'modern taste'.

During the short period of its popularity we learn that the wilderness had very definite characteristics: the extent of the true wilderness was clearly defined, and as you walked into it from the surrounding garden its delights were immediately obvious and to be enjoyed; it was part of the inner garden, never in the park; it was for walking, not riding, and the site was flat; it was to be found

near the house, and planted not for timber with its profit motive, but for shade and social pleasure, possibly accompanied by 'wine and collations'. The planting structure used paths lined by hedges restricted in height, punctuated by trees allowed to grow out loosely. Flowering shrubs should be planted in the 'quarters', and the paths lined with small decorative flowers. While the wilderness had a degree of regularity, the St. Andrew's cross being the most common outline, irregular curves had an important function within, offering the stroller new events at every turn and surprising features such as a sculpture or fountain where several paths met, either in the centre or perhaps in an enclosed cabinet. These diversions were considered 'trifling if not ridiculous' later in the century. The height of the hedges which lined the paths was debated. The issue at stake was whether you could see others approaching along a different path, and so whether such an encounter with another stroller would be a surprise (pleasant or otherwise).

Bartos examines the origins of the form, and shows evidence of design with trees as far back as the Medici villas and other early French and Dutch designs, causing him to make a plea for the avoidance of labelling gardens such as Dyrham as 'Dutch' or 'Franco-Dutch', reasoning that contemporary garden visitor descriptions reveal a much broader use of the term wilderness than is generally found today. However, he stresses throughout that the wilderness was an important and special feature of the English garden in the early eighteenth century.

Maintaining the wilderness was an intensive and ongoing problem, described by Switzer as 'a prodigious deal of clipping' which could simply be achieved by a scythe on a pole. At Hampton Court the wilderness (now called the maze) had its own garden staff of twenty-five. Indeed, the conflation of the forms of maze with its more geometric design and the similar but distinct wilderness accompanies descriptions of the feature through the seventeenth and eighteenth century and is here well illustrated by contemporary prints and plans. Bartos also compares available ground views with the more familiar bird's-eye view of properties and their wildernesses (and mazes) to good effect, the ground views being able to show the experience of the garden for the visitor, with entrances and exits to the wilderness, and the effect of the various heights of hedges, as opposed to the exhibitionist aspirations of the owner found in the more general bird's-eye view.

The aftermath of the wilderness is scrutinized and some misconceptions concerning the legacy of the wilderness are dismissed, the principal one being that the wilderness somehow morphed into the shrubbery by neglect. These, he maintains, are two quite distinct features with their own characteristics, ruling out the possibility that wildernesses were somehow converted into or became

shrubberies. He warns us against reconstructions of wildernesses which had been felled as yew is often substituted for hornbeam, but a few survive as valuable cultural references, such as at Bramham.

Bartos has turned his thesis into a thoroughly enjoyable, readable and informative book. Hard-back and beautifully produced using thick, quality paper, it is liberally illustrated in colour throughout. The copious illustrations illuminate the text, an effect which is enhanced by the easy to read lay-out. End notes, an extensive bibliography with primary sources arranged by topic and a comprehensive index complete a delightful and useful study of this intriguing, but until now little understood, feature of the English garden.

www.judytarling.com



Woman Reading in a Garden. Mary Cassatt. Art Institute of Chicago.
Image: public domain.

What are your favourite garden books for summer reading? Fiction or fact? Classic or contemporary? Send your suggestions to: https://www.sussexgardenstrust.org.uk/jottings-contact-us/

Calling all cyclists!



Loyal Johnson and Sam Brewster. © RHS Lindley Library

In 1928, two young landscape architecture students, Loyal Johnson and Sam Brewster, came from America on a tour of gardens in the UK, travelling to around 70 unforgettable gardens and covering 1500 miles on bicycles. Over the course of two days in mid-August they visited eight magnificent gardens in Sussex, from Warnham Court near Horsham to Great Dixter in Northiam, cycling some 49 miles on the first day and 50 miles on the second. Loyal Johnson kept a detailed diary of the tour, describing the gardens, the people they met and conversations with head gardeners.

Why not retrace their history and cycle to one of the Sussex gardens they visited? We would love to hear about your journey and see some photos.

https://www.sussexgardenstrust.org.uk/jottings-contact-us/

An online exhibition of **The Bicycle Boys** has been organised by the RHS and the Gardens Trust which you can see here: https://www.rhs.org.uk/digital-collections/the-bicycle-boys

We are delighted to be taking part in this exciting project in collaboration with The Gardens Trust and the RHS. The next edition of Jottings will feature more from the diaries and highlight some of the gardens Loyal Johnson visited.

On the 14 August 1928 Loyal Johnson arrived at Sedgwick Place near Horsham and took this photo of the Water Garden and Mansion. The view has changed very little!



© RHS Lindley Library


The White Sea, July 2022. © Sally Ingram

SGT members and their guests have a wonderful opportunity to visit Sedgwick.

Sedgwick Park has been the home of SGT member Clare Davison for the last twenty years. She has kindly invited members and their guests for a special afternoon, on **Thursday 8 September**, to bring a picnic, and have a tour of the garden with Kevin Toms, the head gardener. Clare will tell her story of how she and her late husband, John, moved to the country house that was Sedgwick in 2001 and took on the challenge of the house, the grounds and the gardens.

https://bookwhen.com/sussexgtevents/e/ev-skto-20220810133000

Gallery: the Bicycle Boys in Sussex

Eight Gardens in Two Days and 100 Miles on Two Bicycles

The first day: Warnham Court – Horsham – Sedgwick Place – Cuckfield – Haywards Heath – Old Place, Lindfield – Gravetye Manor – Homestall Place – Brockhurst Place – Brockhurst - Forest Row.



14 August. Warnham Court.

This morning it rained 3 times, each rain alternating with at least a few minutes of bright sunshine, before breakfast. This is the first example of what I had been led to believe was typical English weather that I have seen.



14 August. Gravetye Manor.

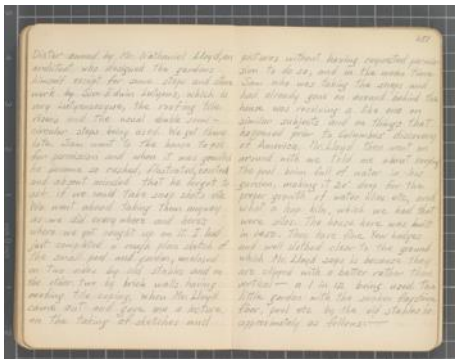
We had a bit of trouble locating our next place Gravetye Manor, owned by Wm Robinson Esq. the author of a number of English books on gardening. We rode right over the chains in one place where the road was closed and after considerable inquiry, climbing and coasting we found the place, before getting into East Grinstead.



14 August. Old Place, Lindfield.

This place owned by Sir Rupert Clarke was originally an old farm house built in 1590 but has been added to and now makes a very quaint old brick dwelling.

The second day: Forest Row – Withyham – Burrs Wood (Kent) – Penshurst (Kent) – Great Dixter – Rolvenden (Kent).





All images © RHS Lindley Library

15 August. Great Dixter.

They have fine Yew hedges and well clothed clear to the ground which Mr. Lloyd says is because they are clipped with a batter rather than vertical – a 1 in 12 being used.

We went on to Rolvenden where we got a good supper and bed at the Rolvenden Tea Rooms run by Mrs Jones a widow woman … This was another fine day with big white clouds to increase the beauty.