



Trustees' Annual Report for 2018/19

Chairman's Report 2018/19

2019 marks the Tenth Anniversary of the formal launch of the Berkshire Gardens Trust. The Trustees decided to mark this by an event in the Summer of 2019 and therefore outside the period covered by this report which is the year ending 31st March 2019. However, a great deal of planning fell into the year under review. The event was held on the 16th July 2019, before this report was finalised, and it seems right that I should refer to it now.

The event took place at Englefield House in the Long Gallery and gardens, as had the launch. We had a tea party with a speech from the President about the foundation of the Trust and one from me looking to the future. We viewed the garden, and photographs were taken to record the event. About 70 members and guests attended, including the Lord Lieutenant and the High Sheriff of the Royal County of Berkshire, and Mrs Gilly Drummond, a Vice President of the Gardens Trust, who was instrumental in persuading Christina Hill Williams, Fiona Hope, Ben Viljoen and Liz Ware to establish a Gardens Trust in Berkshire. We were also joined by Lady Benyon, an original supporter who had kindly allowed us to use the Long Gallery and gardens for our celebrations.

This was the culmination of many months' planning. Fiona had produced an original timeline and searched her archives for photographs and original material. But the main task fell to Bettina Kirkham, Alison Mihail, who are both Trustees, and to BGT member Helen Parvin. We are grateful to all of them and to everyone else who helped to organise the party and to produce the lovely brochure of our past activities.

For 2018, we continued our pattern of lectures in the Spring and Autumn and garden visits mainly in the Summer. Our Summer visits were to Rooksnest in West Berkshire and to Buscot Park in Oxfordshire. Although I was unable to visit either due to health issues, they were both successful with interesting guided tours and tea available. The weather was kind to us on both occasions. They are very different as Rooksnest is a modern garden with

herbaceous planting and Buscot Park is a 200 year old park with layers of history and some more modern planting in the walled garden.

After our AGM our Autumn Lecture featured a garden which was different again. We were fortunate to have Simon Goodenough the Estate Manager of Folly Farm to show us how that garden has developed. The garden was originally designed by Lutyens who also designed additions to the House and Gertrude Jekyll who designed some of the planting schemes. More recently a make-over by Dan Pearson has added new interest to the garden which continues to develop.

We were also pleased to welcome the High Sheriff of the Royal County of Berkshire, Graham Barker, and the Chairman of the West Berkshire District Council, Carol Jackson-Doerge (one of our members) to the AGM. This was the first opportunity to welcome as President, one of our founders and first Chairman of the BGT, Christina Hill Williams. She has succeeded Lady Wroughton, our first President, who retired after 9 years' service.

Our Spring Lecture 2019 was given by David Marsh who introduced his audience to the world of 'make believe' in the pleasure gardens of 17th Century created by a master of the art of deception, John Evelyn. This proved to be both entertaining and informative, a fascinating insight into the minds of our forebears, the things that could amuse and delight their senses.

Both our Lectures were at Purley Barn, although we have had to revert to a Friday evening as it is the only night casual bookings can be made.

We surveyed our members last Autumn with a written form being available at the AGM and then available online. This confirmed that members welcomed the pattern of indoor meetings during the Spring and Autumn and garden visits in the Summer. Building on this feedback, we expanded our programme for the current year by including four garden visits, including the Englefield celebration. We will report on these next year, but one of them was to Folly Farm following on from the Lecture last Autumn.

As well as surveying members, we also had a meeting last September to test a presentation compiled by Janet Fuller, our Vice Chairman, and Fiona Hope. The purpose is to enable Trustees to use this to show to other organisations which may have an interest in our work. It is part of a strategy to work with others on two main strands of our activities, planning and research. Those who attended this demonstration at Upper Basildon were divided into groups to comment on the presentation. Much useful comment came out of that evening and the finished result is now ready and has been used.

We continue to play our part in the Gardens Trust and Fiona was our delegate at the AGM in Birmingham. Janet also attended a Spring Meeting in London of representatives of County Gardens Trusts.

We produced a Newsletter in the Autumn. We thought that may be the last traditional newsletter in the light of the revamped website, but in the Survey members expressed support for it to continue, so we are working on another edition. The revamping of the website was a major task and we are grateful to John Salmon, Janet's husband, for giving us his professional time and experience. It takes advantage of features not available on our old website and has been warmly welcomed.

Another change to our administration has been the opportunity to book for events on the Eventbrite website. This is linked to our website, so access is gained through that. It simplifies the booking process for our Membership Secretary and members.

From all this it may be rightly deduced that the past year has been one of change behind the scenes and planning for the future. We have continued to comment on all planning applications we are aware of affecting parks and gardens in Berkshire. Local Authorities seem to welcome our input and generally we have not seen destruction of our historic heritage.

Whilst research is an area we need and plan to develop, we have continued to run on a tight financial rein under the guidance of our Treasurer, Hugh Simon. He will give you the good news in a moment, but we have spent some money since the end of the financial year on our 10th Anniversary celebrations, as well as the sail banners you may have seen tonight. They were needed to help members and guests to find us at Englefield, and will be useful for future events. Other expenditure arose out of a feeling that we should not load the cost of our celebration onto those who attended, so the price was heavily subsidised.

All of this work has involved the Trustees and I am very grateful to them for all their support through the year. This time last year we elected Ellen Crumly as one of our Trustees. Sadly, she had to resign in the Winter to fight local elections in May. She was a great support and we are sorry to lose her. Bruce McKenzie-Boyle and Alison Mihail, who were co-opted, have also been very busy and I will be delighted to support their election when that item is reached.

I reported last year that Richard Griffith-Jones had resigned as a Trustee due to ill health and that he died in June. Formally that forms part of this year's Report and I want to repeat how sorry we were to lose him as a Trustee.

Apart from those I have already mentioned the support of our President, Secretary and Treasurer has been much appreciated. Janet as our Membership Secretary and now also Vice Chairman has been a tower of strength in both roles, and Bettina as well as looking after the 10th Anniversary celebrations has also continued to play the leading role in planning matters. Peter Thorn, although no longer a Trustee, has continued in the role of Minutes Secretary and his experience is of great benefit to all of us.

As I said in July, the work of the Trustees is like an iceberg. You see 10% above the surface, but there is another 90% you do not see. Thank you to them all and to you our members for your support of the Berkshire Gardens Trust.

Charles Elly DL

Chairman of the Berkshire Gardens Trust

BERKSHIRE GARDENS TRUST COMMITTEE

Current Committee members / Trustees are:

Charles Elly (Chairman)	*Bruce McKenzie-Boyle
Janet Fuller (Vice-Chairman and Membership Secretary)	*Alison Mihail
Fiona Hope (Executive Secretary)	Hugh Simon (Treasurer)
Bettina Kirkham (Deputy Chairman)	†Indra Townsend

** standing for election, having been co-opted by the Trustees' committee in October 2018*

† resigning with effect from 2019 AGM

In accordance with the provisions of the Articles, the following officers have been re-elected by the Trustees for the forthcoming year, to take effect at the conclusion of the AGM:

Charles Elly, Chairman
Janet Fuller, Vice-Chairman
Hugh Simon, Treasurer

TREASURER'S REPORT 2018-19

FINANCIAL SUMMARY (financial year ending 31st March)

	£ 2019	£ 2018
INCOME & EXPENDITURE		
Incoming Resources	3,513.14	3,079.78
/ess Resources Expended	1,945.69	1,643.38
Interest received	42.34	-
Net incoming resources for year	<u>1,609.79</u>	<u>1,436.40</u>
NET ASSETS as at 31st March		
Fixed Assets (display stands)	-	-
Cash at bank	8,727.85	6,987.36
Deposit account	10,000.00	10,000.00
Other current assets	577.80	654.50
Total Current Assets	19,305.65	17,641.86
/ess Creditors	264.00	210.00
Net Assets	<u>19,041.65</u>	<u>17,431.86</u>

The Trust's net assets, which are predominantly held as cash and bank deposits, increased by £1,609.79 over the year. Subscription income and donations of £1,962.14 for the year (including Gift Aid £231.55), a surplus of £620.25 on events, and £42.34 deposit interest received, were offset by operating costs of £1,014.94.

There were 88 paid-up members in the subscription year ended 31st March 2019, an increase of 2 members compared with the previous year.

My thanks to Brian Tubman ACMA, who has examined the accounts for 2018-19. The income and expenditure account and balance sheet are set out in the following pages.

Hugh Simon ACMA, Treasurer

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (see note 1 below)**INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT**

	£ 2019	£ 2018
Incoming Resources		
Donations and Gift Aid	926.14	687.78
Membership subscriptions	1,036.00	992.00
Events	1,551.00	1,400.00
	<u>3,513.14</u>	<u>3,079.78</u>
Resources Expended		
Promotions and website	545.44	119.48
Insurance and memberships	456.50	442.75
Administration and travel	13.00	134.93
Events	930.75	946.22
	<u>1,945.69</u>	<u>1,643.38</u>
Interest received	42.34	0.00
Net incoming resources for the year	1,609.79	1,436.40

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31st MARCH

	£ 2019	£ 2018
CURRENT ASSETS		
Debtors	426.53	180.00
Stock	46.27	0.00
Accrued income	105.00	36.00
Prepaid expenditure	0.00	438.50
Deposit account	10,000.00	10,000.00
Cash at bank	8,727.85	6,987.36
	<u>19,305.65</u>	<u>17,641.86</u>
LIABILITIES		
Deferred income	264.00	210.00
	<u>264.00</u>	<u>210.00</u>
NET ASSETS	19,041.65	17,431.86
FUNDS		
At start of year	17,431.86	15,995.46
Net incoming resources for the year	1,609.79	1,436.40
At end of year	<u>19,041.65</u>	<u>17,431.86</u>

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

- 1. The full Directors' Report and Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2019 may be found on the Trust's website: www.berkshiregardenstrust.org**
2. In accordance with the provisions of the Trust's articles of association, the Trustees have elected for the financial statements for the year ended 31st March 2019 to be examined in lieu of a full audit. Mr Brian Tubman ACMA, the Trust's independent examiner, has certified that in his opinion the financial statements for the year ended 31st March 2019 and the balance sheet as at that date show a true and fair view of the Trust's affairs.