



CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

It is hard to believe that in the next few weeks, we will come to the end of the five-year Historic Lottery Funded Project to restore the gardens to their former Victorian glory. This has been achieved in conjunction with the Heritage Monitor, the local Council and ourselves, Worth Park Friends, as a major stakeholder.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank, on your behalf, all the members of the Steering Committee, the Worth Parks Friends Committee and everyone who has been involved in any way during the restoration period; there are far too many to mention individually.

When you see the gardens on a regular basis, it is easy to forget how far we have come on the journey and the transformation that has taken place. This is evident by the fact that this year the grounds were awarded a **'Highly Commended' Sussex Heritage Award**, and for the second year running, a South and South East in Bloom Silver Gilt award. Next year all the work in the gardens will be completed.

To have a visit from the Mayor and his wife to unveil the **'Timeline Totem'** and see all that has been accomplished to date was a very fitting way to draw the project to a close.

Our monthly lectures are well attended and proving to be very popular. Next year's programmes are being worked on and should be published soon: the journey goes on.

Late News: The gardens have just been awarded the prestigious **Landscape Institute Heritage and Conservation Award** for the Pulham Garden at Worth Park. A photo call, to which you will be invited, will take place sometime in January.

On the 12th December in the Montefiore Room from 11.00 to 2.30, **the Miltonian Guild will be launching the book** they have written about their school days at the college and in the grounds from 1920 to 1960.

There will be numerous guests, including our Mayor, a television crew and the press. Please come along if you can, light refreshments will be available. - Kate



MONTHLY MEETINGS

It has been good to see so many familiar faces each month, plus some newcomers.

This year we have been able to offer a truly excellent and varied programme.

In July, Gilly Halcrow treated us to 'Food for Thought', giving us background information on the history of food, drink and table manners.

After our summer break Marilyn Greatorex, a volunteer at Standen, was able to give us first hand information she had gathered over the years from members of the Beale family. Although the majority of those of us present were very familiar with this 'local' NT property, we felt now we could really visualise their daily life.

In October we were left spellbound, watching our member Maureen Williams creating gestural drawings using different techniques with paint and charcoal. Thank you, Maureen, for sharing your skills.

This month we welcomed Stella Berrisford again. Stella, who grew up in this area, passed on her memories as "Postcards of Worth Park" plus old views of Three Bridges were projected on the wall. There was ample time for discussion on each one as we glimpsed the past! - Pam



Official Opening of the "TimelineTotem", From the left: Cllr. Chis Mullins, The Mayor of Crawley: Cllr. Raj Sharma, The Sculptor: chainsaw artist Simon Groves, our Chairman: Kate Oliver. 10/11/2016.

THE GARDENING GROUP and NEW PLANTING

Worth Park Friends have agreed to adopt the Camellia Corridor and be responsible for maintenance when necessary.

The Worth Park Gardening Group is gradually attracting more helpers. We meet every Wednesday morning from 10 a.m. to noon. It has proved to be an enjoyable social time. Under the direction of our Head Gardener, Sam, plus Sorin from the Council, instruction has been passed on re: pruning and propagation.

This month new borders were completed either side of the entrance – these have been designed to give all round seasonal interest. - Pam

DAHLIAS AND THE MONTEFIORES

On our recent trip to Wisley RHS Gardens on 27th October 2016 we have found out some information about dahlias which were bred by Cheals Nurseries, Lowfield Heath, and named after Sir Francis Montefiore and his family.

One was named Lady Montefiore after Sir Francis' new bride Marianne, whom he had married on August 14th 1888. This was a single dahlia with sulphur yellow petals fading to peach colour tips. It won a First Class certificate on September 25th 1888 as announced in the Journal of the RHS Volume X1 1889 pp XX1X. In the Victorian language of flowers, when given as a gift, the dahlia flower expresses sentiments of dignity and elegance. It is also the symbol of commitment and a bond that lasts for ever. So a very poignant gesture to the Montefiore family from the Nurseries. The second dahlia was named after Sir Francis. It was red and may have been either a cactus or pom pom shape. This was not made clear in the Gardeners' Chronicle. The third dahlia named in honour of Sir Francis' mother, Mrs Montefiore, was crimson red in colour and may have been in the form of a pom pom.

There was also an amaryllis which was white and red.

It would be great if we could find these old species dahlias and then have them growing at Worth Park.

The dahlia was introduced into Europe from Mexico in 1804 when Lady Holland sent seeds from Madrid to Britain which were grown successfully in her garden in London.

In the middle of the 19th century 'dahlia mania' reached fever pitch in Britain, similar to 'tulip mania' in the 17th century in Holland. Growers and garden owners were vying with each other to grow the most perfect flowers. Even today some are still striving to produce new innovations such as blue dahlias and ones with perfume. - Isabella



Dahlias at the Kolkata H.S. Show 2015

2016 CROQUET SEASON

The club finished the season, as usual, with a Fun Day. This was on the last Sunday in September. We all brought food to share and had tea on the lawns – a short shower hardly put us off at all.

We finish our season earlier than we would like to so that the staff who maintain the lawns can commence their winter work while the soil is warm and the daylight good. We are hoping that their early work will give us better playing surfaces next year.

We have been offered the opportunity to play on the Astroturf "lawn" at Popes Mead during the winter. This gives us a chance to meet up and enjoy a game or two during the long winter months. We are also looking forward to a Christmas Lunch. The friendships that we make while playing croquet are valued by all of us and we look forward to next spring. - Anne



Arriving at RHS Wisley, 27th Oct 2016

COACH TRIPS AND SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2017

It is quite difficult for a small organisation such as ours to commit to coach hire, so we are very fortunate that our provider can offer us bookings for their smaller 19-seater coach. We were even luckier that the small vehicle was being used elsewhere on two occasions and a full-size coach turned up, giving us plenty of room.

We try to plan our outings in full awareness that the weather might be a bit adverse on the chosen date, so we are looking for venues which offer plenty of indoor interest too. This was the case with Wisley, our late autumn outing. Great Dixter and Sissinghurst were especially requested by several members. Both places are risky weather-wise, but what fantastic sunshine we enjoyed! Even at Wisley, at the end of October, the early fog soon lifted and most of us enjoyed lunch in the sun on the outside terrace of the restaurant. Please let us know which places you would like to visit next year. If we get enough advance bookings, we might hire a full-size coach.

Subscriptions for 2017: As for last year, the amount is £10.00 for single members and £15.00 for couples. The membership year is the same as the calendar year.

We can now also offer **associate membership** for people who are **not** able to come to our monthly meetings. The associate rate is £3.00 for individuals and £5.00 for couples.

All rates include the remainder of 2016 for free if you are joining as a new member now for 2017. - Ingrid