



Newsletter 21/3

Autumn 2021

President's Report

Hello all

The Summer season has been good to us; We have had new gardens opening and old ones welcoming back visitors again. Our Afternoon Tea event at the Chateau de Montmagner in the Limousin was immensely enjoyable and we are looking forward to getting out to a few plant fairs this Autumn.

The really exciting news of the year is that following the success of this summer the Committee has, today, as we draw to the end of our financial year, made a provisional allocation of 19000€ to be used for awards to our beneficiaries. The donations we will be able to make this autumn, together with those already made since our foundation in 2014, takes the total amount raised to support our charitable causes to well over 100 000 Euros. That's the result of a great deal of hard work, a lot of beautiful gardens and best of all it has helped a great many youngsters.

Going forward we are planning a range of greetings cards based on our gardens. Further news will be coming up on the website to enable you to book ahead.

Thanks to you all for your help and support
Best wishes,



***Karen Roper
President***

News from around the Regions

Well, I have been having such a fun summer, and it's not over yet!

This year has seen the reopening of several of our gardens across France. Our sincere thanks to those of you that braved our Covid 19 regulations to make this happen. We hope, with the vaccination

programme well underway, that others will feel more comfortable getting involved next year.

I and other members of the conseil have been trying to visit as many of you as possible on your open days, not only to meet you, but also to show our appreciation for your support under more complicated conditions. To those of you who live further away from us, we will try to come and say hello if we are nearby in the future. But, to all garden openers, please know that even if we can't thank you in person, we highly value what you do for the Association.

I am delighted to tell you that this year we have had a record number of applications of people wanting to get involved, either by opening for the first time this year, investigating opening for next year, or offering their help in other ways. I think that after a year of confinement people have been looking at what brings them joy and, as we all know, gardening can play a huge part in that.

Our supporters and garden openers have been busy thinking about other methods to raise money for the Association. They have been inventing Open Gardens/Jardins Ouverts board games for children, creating bee boxes for solitary bees, making windchimes for sale, selling dolls house furniture, holding book sales, running bric-a-brac stands, offering paintings for sale at open days, donating proceeds from house clearances and selling their home-grown plants, seeds and vegetables. I have just sent an emergency "parcel of plant pots" to one of our ladies who was running out of them so that she can keep up her good work! One lady kindly baked me a cake to sell on my own open day and then couldn't find our house. With her tired elderly mother in the car, enough was enough, so they took it home and ate it! Oh well, some we win, some we lose!

Thank you all so much anyway and please keep us informed of your new ideas.

This year people who have recently moved to France, invited me to visit to help with garden design, to enable them to open for us in the future. Wonderful! I had a request from a garden group that I have visited in the past for a talk about a particular aspect of gardening. One of our coordinators has offered to help them and that is superb. I have had the opportunity to meet people with fascinating stories about what inspired them to garden in the first place and why they now wish to share their garden with our visitors. Others have told me how opening their garden has given their retirement a real sense of purpose.

So, what does this tell me? It tells me that our Association is not just about opening our gardens and raising money for very deserving children's charities in France. It has become something much bigger even than that. It is about people's passions, their lifestyles, and their journeys.

Even if you are not able to open your garden, please remember we rely on supporters to help spread the word and tell as many others as possible about our Association. Also, if you know of somewhere that would accept our trifold leaflets, please let us know and we will arrange for some to be sent either to you or directly to them. Remember, we need as much publicity, through posters, word of mouth, magazine articles and radio broadcasts, as we can get! The Autumn is a perfect time to encourage new people to become involved.

***Sue Lambert.
Garden Development
Manager***

email:



Un merveilleux jardin labyrinthique...

LA CORE garden is situated in Saint Pardoux d'Arnet, in a place called La Core between Combrailles and the Plateau de Millvaches at the top of the Puy-de-Dôme, about 25km east of Aubusson and 2 km from Crocq, a mediaeval village of character. The garden is just below 700m with granite soil. Plants grow well here despite a fairly cold climate and regular spring frosts.



Work started here in 1980 on meadow land bordered by century old trees, mainly Oak, which has become richer over the years from many plants that have grown on the three hectares of land. There are over 50 varieties of species, including beech, maples, willow birches. Numerous shrubs and perennials complete the picture. Part of the garden is also devoted to

growing vegetables and fruit.

Being both a gardener and a sculptor in glass and enamel mosaic my animal sculptures are in the garden. These have been made with reinforced mortar supports which give a true representation of the different animals and the ways in which they stand. The animals, with their colourful and bright appearance are a particular attraction throughout the year. My other sculptures are more imaginative – unicorn, phoenix, dragon...



It was through Antoni Gaudi, a famous architect from Barcelona, that I started to work in mosaic – I was seduced by the Park Guell and his many mosaics in the open environment. On my return to France, I sought out the materials that I could work on in the hard Creuse winters and teach myself – I started to model animals in mosaic. My first mosaic in tribute to Gaudi, whose distant paternal relatives came from the Auvergne, was a dragon from the volcanoes of the Auvergne. This sculpture, which adorns my house, required about 1000 hours of work!!

My works have been displayed in many exhibitions in France, notably three years in succession at the prestigious Salon National Des Artistes Animaliers de Bry-sur-Marne (reference l'Art Animalier). I decided to put my most valuable sculptures in my garden which is a beautiful setting for them. One of my sculptures can also be seen at the Château de Boussac. This is a reproduction of the unicorn from a tapestry 'La Dame à la Licorne in the large lounge.

Another feature of the garden is the large



maze of 1500 yews planted more than 20 years ago. This is framed by a small woodland overlooking a large orchard below. You can get an overview if you go up the small granite tower built in granite which dominates. In the centre of the maze sits a throne "Puy de Dôme and a Puy du Pariou" pruned with yews of different shades. Children love to lose themselves in the maze before finding the small footpath at the top of the "Puy -de-Dôme"

A large greenhouse (10 metres long) is another feature of the garden. I built this over 5 years after finding some rusty pieces in the brambles of a friend's garden. Lifted out, rewelded I realised it was a lean-to greenhouse. So I built it against an

outside wall which now has a decorative quartz stone tree against a background of hundreds of cut stones, cut one by one. A green enamel parrot perches on part of the wall. There is a large interior fresco with a detached driftwood tree which completes the artwork. There are many little driftwood creations along the proposed route through the garden.



At the bottom of the garden is a lake filled by rainwater and several springs which gives the garden a wilder side. You can see many birds and animals there as it is quiet and serene – herons and mallards, badger and occasionally otters. Here also many species of plants are found – bamboos, whitebeam, willow and maples.

All these achievements have been done over a period of time (40years!) with the help of my farmer friends when mechanical help was needed, and thanks to the wise advice of friends who have supported me during the long moments of



creation. I am infinitely grateful to them.

Currently I have help for the maintenance of the garden for a few hours each week and this helps a lot. The result is a unique garden with the juxtaposition of sculptures, unique and original in France, and a body of plants which have now reached a certain

maturity. Together this cannot leave anyone indifferent, and it encourages visitors to find their own creativity in the peacefulness of nature so diverse and generous.

This garden in my life's work but, beyond the work that isn't really work, remains the passion which has always enlivened me, and a permanent aesthetic search. It is a great joy to now share with my friends who largely understand the joy and the little disappointments that the centuries old art of gardening provides.

Alain Gribet, Creuse

https://www.opengardens.eu/garden-detail/gard_random=PLQTBjyWG6p9QDs&lang=en-GB

This garden will be opening 3rd October. More details can be found on the Open Gardens/Jardins Ouverts website www.opengardens.eu

'Beside the river, beneath the trees'



This garden is opening for the first time in 2021.

Our garden lies on a piece of land of about an acre where a local abattoir was once situated but ceased all activity in the 1970s. The site comprises three separate buildings in an enclosed courtyard: the former keeper's house has become a gîte, the former abattoir has been turned into a workshop and the stables, now our accommodation, onto which was added a chambre d'hôte in 2017. The various areas of the garden cover 3000 square meters between these buildings and the river. When we first moved in, the whole of our land was just a field used as an addition to the local sports grounds for non-sporting outdoor activities.

The river's edge was planted with alders, elms, willows, elders and a row of Italian poplars. A magnificent walnut tree, an oak tree with a double trunk and the stump of a linden tree which was the result of drastic pruning in the 80s ; similarly barbarous treatment had been given to three apple trees next to the keeper's house.



When we launched the gîte, the idea was to divide up the available land to distinguish between the various areas and to be able to enjoy the different styles inherent to each area. Various types of hedging were planted, with hornbeams pruned to form waves, laurels in the form of fans, a strictly square box hedge, a hedge of variegated privet, sausage-shaped yews, and a

freely growing hedge of diverse shrubs. In this way, each of the areas bordered by the hedges took on a different style depending on my taste.

The garden round the gîte is an ornamental garden with two shady terraces. The first terrace is above ground level and adjoins the house. It is covered with a wooden arbor over and along which grows a purple wisteria. The other terrace is situated under the three apple trees that have been pruned to form a parasol effect.

A magnolia grandiflora, a Himalayan cedar, and a blue pine, all planted between 2000 and 2002 in this part of the grounds. A privet hedge and another of varied shrubs separate this area from the vegetable garden. In the background, the visitors in the gîte enjoy a curtain of trees which goes from the west to the north part of the grounds.



In front of and on one side of our house, we have fitted in three small gardens separated by a stone wall and a concrete grid wall: a Japanese-style area with its two terraces surrounded with densely planted, carefully pruned vegetation, a small space to welcome visitors to the chambre d'hôte with its three catalpas and the terrace where viburnums, camellias, hydrangeas, and

Japanese spirea grow. Near this there is an old piece of equipment from the old slaughterhouse.

The remaining part of the garden has been divided by hornbeam hedges which follow the curve of the river. On the south-west side, the hedge

separates the fishermen's path with its elms, poplars, beeches from the small orchard. This is composed of cherry, plum, peach and apple trees and a path of fruit bushes where gooseberry, red and blackcurrant bushes mingle with herbs and wall-trained apple and pear espaliers. To the north-western side, hedging separates the tree-lined bank of the river from the path leading to the kitchen garden.



Where our garden is, the river is divided in two by a small dam one metre high. On the other side of the river is a former water mill in ruins. With time and the successive floods, quantities of various materials have been carried here by the river water and formed two islands where vegetation has grown. The floods left a large tangle of dead trees.

A general clean-up of the area was carried out and now mown paths enhance the surrounding vegetation and the remaining trees, among which is a superb smooth elm which towers over the whole surrounding area. The islands have thus become an integral part of the garden.

The opening out onto the Aumance gives us a view of a stretch of water and the field on the other side of the river towards the west. The banks of the river afford a welcome coolness during the summer period, while the sound of the flowing water offers a serene atmosphere that lends itself to daydreaming and relaxation.

Rudy Holierloek, Allier

This garden will be opening 31st October. More details can be found on the Open Gardens/Jardins Ouverts website www.opengardens.eu

https://www.opengardens.eu/garden-detail/?gard_random=RbHwVekF66ZiVFu&lang=en-GB

News from our 2020 Beneficiaries

We have contacted the 7 associations who had received money from Open Gardens in 2020 to renew our contact with them and to request information as to how they have used the money Open Gardens sent them and how they would use any donations from Open Gardens in 2021. The short reports below are from three of our beneficiaries - ***Reseau Bulle 23, À Chacun son Everest and Quelque chose en plus.***



Reseau Bulle 23 thanked Open Gardens/Jardins Ouverts for their solidarity. Activities run by this branch of Reseau Bulle during the last year to which the Open Gardens/Jardins Ouverts donation of 500€ has made a contribution have included cookery courses, a workshop on the use of drones, autism awareness sessions with a psychologist specialising in Asperger's Syndrome, literature workshops and other workshops using outsourced workers.

À Chacun son Everest is touched by the faithful support of Open Gardens/Jardins Ouverts throughout the years. The 800€ donation made by Open Gardens/Jardins Ouverts in 2020 has financed three days of climbing supervised by professional guides for their 'champions'. This summer 84 children affected by cancer and leukaemia have been welcomed for a week at Chamonix, after which they rediscovered self-confidence in themselves and their abilities.



Quelque chose en plus are pleased to tell us that the 500€ donation made by Open Gardens/Jardins Ouverts in 2020 has been used for the garden of La Maison en Plus medical home. Photos are provided which show volunteers working on the garden and residents enjoying the setting.



Richard Ogier

Treasurer

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