

PRESS RELEASE | LONDON  
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# Renishaw Hall & Gardens

DERBYSHIRE

## WINS THE 2015 GARDEN OF THE YEAR AWARD

AWARDED BY THE HISTORIC HOUSES ASSOCIATION AND SPONSORED BY CHRISTIE'S



**London** – Set in Derbyshire, on the edge of the Peak District National Park, is the beautiful Renishaw Hall and Gardens, winner of the 2015 Garden of the Year Award, awarded by the Historic Houses Association and sponsored by Christie's. Now in its thirty-first year this prestigious national award is designed to recognise the importance of some of the country's most spectacular gardens with outstanding horticultural and public appeal, either in their own right or as the setting for a historic house.

**Charles Cator, Deputy Chairman Christie's International** commented: *"The Garden of the Year Award, presented by the HHA and sponsored by Christie's is a wonderful opportunity to recognise some of the country's finest gardens. It is with great pleasure that we honour Renishaw Hall Gardens which are a true testament to the dedication of the Sitwell family who, over the centuries, have carefully and dynamically nurtured this extraordinary landscape. We hope this award will encourage even more visitors to discover the magnificence of Renishaw and congratulate Alexandra Hayward and all those involved in the care and conservation of these impressive gardens."*

**Richard Compton, President of the Historic Houses Association** commented: *"I am delighted that the beautiful and historic gardens at Renishaw Hall are the 2015 winners of our prestigious Garden of the Year Award. The Sitwell family are famous*

*and distinguished gardeners and the gardens here were created by Sir George Sitwell, great grandfather of the present owner, in the 19th century. Today they continue to thrive in the care of Alexandra Hayward and her very knowledgeable Head Gardener, David Kesteven. These wonderful gardens at Renishaw are enjoyed each year by many thousands of visitors who may also visit the house on special tours. It is a great pleasure to see this Award go to such a very special place."*

## HISTORY

Home to the Sitwell family for nearly 400 years, Renishaw Hall and Gardens is predominantly an Italianate garden set in traditional English countryside. The house and formal grounds date from the 1620s, but it was the passion and commitment of Sir George Sitwell, 4th Bt., and his admiration for the classical Italian gardens, that forms the landscape of Renishaw Hall and Gardens still enjoyed by visitors today. Created between the years of 1886 to 1936, Sir George's legacy has since been preserved by his grandson, the late Sir Reresby and his wife Lady Sitwell and their daughter and current owner Alexandra, all who have devoted their time to nurturing and developing the stunning gardens.

**Alexandra Hayward of Renishaw Hall & Gardens** commented: *"When my mother and father took on Renishaw Hall and its grounds they worked tirelessly on the restoration and redesign of the gardens to bring them back to their original glory. It's wonderful to think that in the forty plus years since my parents first came to Renishaw, the gardens have today been recognised as winners of a prestigious national award like this. It's testament to their hard work and the continuous hard work of our gardening team here at Renishaw Hall and Gardens".*

## THE TOP LAWN

As visitors enter the gardens, they enjoy a succession of flowers; from pink daffodils and blue poppies in the spring, to the hooded cobra lilies in June and July and an impressive collection of hydrangeas for the end of summer. Above the creamy heads of Hydrangea 'Annabelle' and other varieties of Hydrangea paniculata, towers the Waterloo Oak which was planted by a Mr Frank Elliot, a long serving gardener, in 1815 to commemorate the battle of Waterloo. This area of the gardens also features the Gothic temple, built by Sitwell Sitwell in 1808 as a conservatory for exotic plants, and the statue titled *The Angel of Fame*. Discovered during Rhododendron ponticum clearance work on the top lawn, the statue was re-sited to take advantage of a gap in the Lime Avenue left by a departing elm and gilded by Lady Sitwell in 2002.

## THE SOUTH FRONT

The two yew trees on the west end of this terrace were planted by Sir George when laying out the garden to deliberately interrupt the very symmetry of the garden that he had so painstakingly created. The West wing shelters climbers and the wall shrubs from four continents: the Bull Bay, *Magnolia grandiflora*, from North America has the Chilean potato vine, *Solanum crispum* 'Glasnevin', growing through. Its neighbour, the pineapple tree, *Cytisus battandieri*, hails from Morocco and, making up the quartet, is the fig tree. The walls are clothed with wisteria, *Rosa banksiae* 'Lutea', *Trachelospermum jasminoides*, *Chimonanthus praecox* and the rare stately *Magnolia delavayi* whose huge parchment coloured blooms last for just one night. After the bay window of the library, with its sundial framed with pink roses, visitors find a second *Magnolia grandiflora*, a diminutive flowering quince and an old vine of unknown cultivar. Along the borders at the foot of the wall, *Abutilon vitifolium* gives a breath-taking display in late May and early June.

## THE FIRST CANDLE

Descending from the Top Lawn you enter the First Candle – this area, and the one opposite the Middle Lawn, are named after the central fountains of marble from a quarry near Verona. There are over a hundred roses here.

## THE MIDDLE LAWN

In Sir George's vision, the garden was seen as a foreground to the view of nature beyond, which is why the statues look outwards. The borders, replanted in 1998, have flowers chosen from a limited colour palette of pinks, blues and mauves. At the southern edge of the lawn, in the centre of Sir George's garden layout are two statues by Caligari; Diana and Neptune. The powder blue obelisks were added on the advice of Anthony Noel in 2010 and are clothed with Rosa 'New Dawn'.



## THE SECOND CANDLE

The long border of this white garden is backed with the highly scented mock orange *Philadelphus 'Avalanche'* and P. 'Sybille' feature, along with white wisteria and the white roses 'Iceberg' and 'White Flower Carpet' and later still, white lace-cap hydrangeas and Phlox 'White Admiral'. Behind the box-edged herbaceous beds at the back of this garden the scarlet flowered Scottish flame flower *Tropaeolum speciosum* grows up the yew hedges.

## THE STONE TANK GARDEN

This area was added to the garden by Lady Sitwell in 1991. The stone tank forming the centrepiece of this garden was rescued from a field on this estate and is filled with the calla lily, *Zantedeschia aethiopia*. The giant *Gunnera manicata*, the rhubarb-like plant with enormous leaves, sits at the centre. Two *Rheum palmatum*s flank the border, slightly smaller but strangely more dramatic when their serrated purple leaves expand at twice the rate of the *Gunneras* in spring.

## THE BOTTOM TERRACE

130 yards long, ten feet wide, backed by a six foot six inch high south facing stone wall, The Bottom Terrace is Renishaw's longest, hottest and driest border. Bisecting the garden, yet invisible from the Hall, the Bottom Terrace is where planting, formal and restrained near the Hall, becomes wild and colourful. At the west end of the terrace, planted with fuchsias, is a lead tank, rescued from the old sunken garden and marked with the initials "SS" for Sir Sitwell Sitwell. This border goes through three phases during the growing season; a spring fanfare of double daffodils, and tulips over a carpet of forget-me-knots is succeeded by blooms of peonies and oriental poppies in mid-summer. After flowering, these are immediately cut to ground level and a jungle is transplanted, where the



huge leaves of bananas, cannas and *Tetrapanax* 'Rex' are inter-planted with dahlias, gazanias and a host of other flame coloured annuals, extending the season of interest right through September.

### THE BUTTRESS BORDER

The Buttress Border has the longest flowering season of any in the garden. *Garrya elliptica* flowers from Christmas to March, when *Corylopsis paucifolia* covers its bare branches with yellow scented flowers. *Magnolia* 'Leonard Messel' is usually the first magnolia in flower in the garden, followed by *Exochorda macrantha* 'The Bride', and at the north end of the border, is a *Magnolia wilsonii*, 20 feet high and wide. This border peaks in June, when a selection of delphiniums reaches up their mixed blue and white spires to twelve feet in front of the first flowering flush of roses behind. The plume poppy, *Maclayea microcarpa*, with silvery scalloped dinner-plate leaves is another of the taller plants. Clematis such as 'Star of India' and 'William Kennet' flower throughout August along with the rugosa roses until September when *Helianthus* 'Lemon Queen' bursts into thousands of yellow sunflowers, and visitors enjoy the blue flowers of *Lilipe muscari*.

### SWIMMING POOL

This garden area was redesigned in 2014, with the addition of yew buttresses and steel obelisks to give structure to the borders. Many new varieties of hybrid tea and floribunda roses, modern shrub and heritage varieties, in a palette of white, pink and red, combine to maximum effect with lilies and clematis. At the centre of the pool, is Sir Reresby's first garden innovation; a large fountain.

### THE FISH POND

This was the last area of the garden to be altered by Sir George Sitwell. It was on a summer visit from his Italian home, the castle of Montegufoni, in the 1930s, when Sir Osbert was long in residence at Renishaw, that his father, Sir George imposed his grand design. From the swimming pool area, steep grass borders take us over a short causeway onto the island, in reality a peninsula, where, within the enclosing Yew ramparts, is a statue of Amarylís Flemming by Fiore de Henriquez.

### THE LAKES

The two main lakes at Renishaw were excavated in 1892, the year Sir Osbert Sitwell was born. The lakes performed many functions, the chief of which was to fulfil Sir George's wish of a focal point to the main axis of the garden beyond its borders. As he wrote in *On the Making of Gardens*, 'The garden must be considered not as a thing by itself, but as a gallery of foregrounds designed to set off the soft hues of the distance, it is nature which should call the tune, and the melody is to be found in the prospect of blue hill or shimmering lake.'

### THE YUCCARY

In 1999, the orangery on the south side of the Bothy Wall was restored from a state of dereliction and was chosen to house The National Collection of Yuccas, held by Mr Trevor Key. Here are most species of the Yucca genus that originate in the western United States and thrive in a hot arid atmosphere. Over thirty species are represented, mostly with collected seed grown by Trevor, making this a very complete and botanically important collection.

### THE VINEYARD

One of the most unique features of Renishaw is undoubtedly the fruitful vineyard which, when planted in 1972, held the record for over a decade for being the most northerly vineyard in the world. After much effort and extensive experimentation the Seyval Blanc, Madeline Angevine and Rondo have proven to be the most successful grape varieties, which today produce award-winning wines.

### **MEDIA OPPORTUNITY**

**Presentation of the award to Renishaw Hall & Gardens and informal Garden Tour:**

**On:** Tuesday, 5 May 2015

**At:** 11am

**RSVP:** Lauren Clarke - Christie's Press Office

Tel: 020 7389 2391

Email: [LaurenClarke@christies.com](mailto:LaurenClarke@christies.com)

### **RENISHAW HALL & GARDENS**

**Renishaw Hall,  
Nr. Sheffield,  
S21 3WB**

**Historic Garden  
Opening Information  
SPRING – SUMMER**

27 March - 27 September 2015

Wednesday to Sunday and Bank holiday Mondays 10.30am till 4.30pm

Email: [enquiries@renishaw-hall.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@renishaw-hall.co.uk)

Website: [www.renishaw-hall.co.uk](http://www.renishaw-hall.co.uk)

Telephone: 01246 432310

### **PRESS CONTACTS**

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#### **About Christie's**

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had global auction and private sales in 2014 that totalled £5.1 billion / \$8.4 billion, making it the highest annual total in Christie's history. Christie's is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service and expertise, as well as international glamour. Founded in 1766 by James Christie, Christie's has since conducted the greatest and most celebrated auctions through the centuries providing a popular showcase for the unique and the beautiful. Christie's offers around 450 auctions annually in over 80 categories, including all areas of fine and decorative arts, jewellery, photographs, collectibles, wine, and more. Prices range from \$200 to over \$100 million. Christie's also has a long and successful history conducting private sales for its clients in all categories, with emphasis on Post-War & Contemporary, Impressionist & Modern, Old Masters and Jewellery. Private sales totalled £916.1 million (\$1.5 billion) in 2014, an increase of 20% on the previous year.

Christie's has a global presence with 54 offices in 32 countries and 12 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Dubai, Zürich, Hong Kong and the latest additions Shanghai and Mumbai. More recently, Christie's has led the market with expanded initiatives in growth markets such as Russia, China, India and the United Arab Emirates, with successful sales and exhibitions in Beijing, Mumbai and Dubai.

#### **The Historic Houses Association**

The Historic Houses Association (HHA) represents the interests of Britain's historic houses, castles and gardens that remain in private ownership. These owners make a very substantial contribution to the preservation of Britain's heritage and to rural economies through tourism and other commercial activities. Currently representing over 1600 members, the HHA is an association of these owners which exists to assist the people who own important properties with the special range of challenges and problems they face. The 'Garden of the Year' award is designed to reflect public enjoyment of gardens rather than specialised historical or botanical interest.

### **Friends of The Historic Houses Association**

The winner of the 'Garden of the Year' award is decided through the votes of the HHA's 39,000 Friends. The Friends scheme gives free access to around 300 HHA houses, castles and gardens which open on a regular basis. For a single subscription of £47 Friends also receive the HHA's quarterly magazine and can join organised outings in the UK and overseas, often to houses which are not open to the public.

### **Renishaw Hall & Gardens**

Renishaw is rightly celebrated for the fabulous Italianate gardens. The formal garden was laid out in 1895 by Sir George Sitwell (1860-1943) in the classical Italianate style. Renishaw Hall is still very much a family home which adds to its unique atmosphere. During the open season, the hall can be visited on a pre-booked tour or on Fridays. Advance booking strongly recommended. Group tours of the hall and gardens can be arranged throughout the year via the Estate Office. Renishaw Hall & Gardens is located in north Derbyshire, just 5 minutes by car off the M1 at Junction 30 and 20 minutes by car from Sheffield city centre. [www.renishaw-hall.co.uk](http://www.renishaw-hall.co.uk)