**Forum 2023 – The Speakers**

Trevor Nicholson – Head Gardener, Harewood House

Trevor has been Head Gardener at Harewood for 28 years, since July 1995, when he was promoted from his role of Senior Gardener begun in October 1994. His horticultural career started in1980 at Houghall College, in Durham, where he trained in Horticulture and Arboriculture. In 1985 Trevor was appointed to the college staff, working in the glasshouses, tree nursery and arboretum, before leaving in 1990 to take up posts as Sole Gardener and Head Gardener at private estates in Northumberland and Hampshire.

At Harewood, Trevor worked closely with John Sales VMH (former senior advisor to the National Trust) who advised at Harewood between 1998 and 2004.Trevor has worked continuously on the revival, conservation, and development of the gardens, overseeing bold new planting schemes in the formal terrace gardens; tree and shrub planting in the park; as well as the re-development of the 1930’s rock garden as Harewood’s Himalayan Garden, with new garden features and a significant collection of Sino-Himalayan plants.

Trevor brought the Kitchen Garden back into production in the 1990s after it had been closed to visitors for many years. After overseeing further developments, including a new vegetable garden, a meadow, flower borders, he introduced a ‘no-dig’ scheme in 2021. Trevor is working with the executive team on plans for the future restoration and development of the Walled Garden.

Between 1999 and 2006 with the help of grants from the RHS Bursaries Committee, and support from Harewood House Trust, Trevor undertook four botanical study tours to Nepal, China, and Bhutan to observe plants in their natural habitats. This was to inform the development of the Himalayan Garden.

Trevor was named ‘Professional Gardener of the Year’ by Horticulture Week in 2008. His academic qualifications include a Foundation Science Degree (FdSc) in Landscape & Garden Management; a Higher National Certificate (HNC) in Plantsmanship; and a Higher National Certificate (HNC) in Heritage Management (Landscapes & Gardens). He sits on the Northern Branch Committee for the Chartered Institute of Horticulture and is a former Vice Chairman of the Professional Gardeners’ Guild.

Trevor is currently working with the executive team at Harewood on plans for the redevelopment of the landscape around the Courtyard and Bakehouse.

Steffi Shields - Writer and photographer



Steffie Shields MBE, a garden photographer, writer and historic landscape consultant, is a Vice President of The Gardens Trust and Chairman of Lincolnshire Gardens Trust.

# A member of the Garden Media Guild and Professional Garden Photographers Association, she won several commendations in the International Garden Photographer of the Year competition. A Cambridge ICE tutor Madingley Hall (2007-2016) she still lectures countrywide.

# Her illustrated book *‘Moving Heaven and Earth: ‘Capability’ Brown's Gift of Landscape’* ([Unicorn Press](http://unicornpress.org/)2016) is available in Kindle version.

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# Recently, Steffie collated the memoir of her late father, R. E. Hadingham CBE MC & Bar: *'A Black Cat Abroad - A Territorial Gunner’s Selected Memories of the Second World War and the Italian Campaign (1943-1945)'* (Uniform 2022).

Claudio Bincoletto – Head Gardener, Keythorpe Hall, Leicestershire

Head Gardener and ethnobotanist, Claudio was once the forager for the Italian army.

He has a wealth of experience, teaching at Petersham Nurseries, as a speaker for the RHS, as a chef in top London restaurants, and holding wild food cooking demonstrations at food and country shows across the UK.

His greatest passion is wild mushrooms, knowledge he shares along with his skill running the 2 acre walled kitchen gardens, where restoration began over 10 years ago

Bent Varming - Head Chef, Keythorpe Hall, Leicestershire

Bent trained at the internationally renowned Copenhagen Hospitality College before spending most of his career in London, beginning at Sketch (3\*) before working at St. John (1\*), the forerunner of nose to tail eating, and then moving to highly acclaimed Lyle’s (1\*) where he was senior sous chef. He also worked at Dusty Knuckle Bakery – one of the best in London

Originally from Denmark, Bent was influenced by the new-Nordic approach to cooking which celebrates purity, simplicity and freshness. Ingredients are left to shine which is really evident in their philosophy. He is a ‘hyper-seasonal’ chef using forgotten methods of preserving ingredients to use in the leaner months of the year.

<https://www.keythorpehall.co.uk/>