

Laudation Arley Hall & Gardens

Roswitha Arnold, Cologne

Ladies and Gentlemen,
sehr geehrte Damen und Herren,

We are very glad to welcome you for the Special EGHN Award of Schloss Dyck Foundation – and the winner is:

Arley Hall and Gardens

Before I start describing what Arley Gardens can be characterized by, I will look back to the beginning of EGHN, to a meeting in Chester, England, when Lord Ashbrook was introduced as the owner of one of the gardens within the EGHN network.

A tall man, communicative and sophisticated as well, spoke to us. Exactly how German people imagine a ‘Lord’ to be like. And with well-known English sense of humour:

Among other things, Lord Ashbrook, you told about a necessity of maintenance, the opportunity to invest by time even if this could be a bit more expensive.

I was really sure that you’re talking about your car, in my opinion definitely a Jaguar or an Aston Martin, perfectly fitting the Arley estate.

In fact however, you have given us a lesson what to do for a lifelong living with your wife....

What kind of garden that man may have?

For the members of the Jury there were different reasons to select Arley Gardens from more than 50 nominations:

There is the history of Arley and its overall design: The listed grounds of the garden cover over 7 ha. They’ve been created over the last 250 years by successive generations of the same family, which offer an unusual blend of long history and traditional design with inspired modern ideas and additions.

The result is a garden rich in atmosphere, interest and vitality.

Already the entrance area promises you a fantastic experience of English garden and landscape architecture. An avenue of clipped lime trees leads to a clock tower and the Flag Garden with roses, lavender, climbers and hedges.

Silent and secret garden rooms close to the entrance attract visitors looking for a distraction from everyday life.

Having been a kitchen garden until 1939 and later a market garden, the walled garden is a more recent addition. In 1960 it was incorporated into the pleasure ground, with additions including a pond with a heraldic beast taken from the roof of a demolished wing of the house.

A wide variety of shrubs and foliage specimens adorn the borders planted along the walls. A kitchen and herb garden, as well as a scented garden, were first planted in 1977.

One of the impressive highlights is the double herbaceous border; for me it is the most beautiful example to be found in the U.K.

Colours change throughout the year, with early summer pale blue, mauve, yellow, white and silver. In July and August rich warm hues are added, tumbling in an ordered chaos of flower and foliage, each time accompanied by mighty yew trees as topiaries precise formed and clipped.

At the end of the herbaceous border a Quercus Avenue leads the eyes into the parkland beyond. These 14 evergreen holm oaks are clipped into an unusual and distinctive cylindrical shape and are one of Arley's most famous features, too.

Beyond the house is the Grove, which is an area of woodland and shrubs that has been restored and planted since 1970. There is a wide range of species, including oak, birch, beech, acer, cornus, magnolia, malus as well as numerous types of evergreen, conifer and over 300 varieties of rhododendron.

The borrowed landscape, extending behind the garden's ha-ha, which is included from different views of the garden, completes the great features of Arley Gardens.

Dear Lord and Lady Ashbrook - we do only have a limited idea of the enormous commitment needed for the conservation and management of the gardens today and for their future development.

We proudly present the Special EGHN Garden Award of the Schloss Dyck Foundation to Lord and Lady Ashbrook of Arley Hall and Gardens for these fantastic and well maintained gardens that are also prepared with a great dedication for the future.