

delightfully rustic and in the 18th century even had its own live hermit, before he was discovered skiving in the local hostelry and got the sack.

Another precious gem of a garden is Rousham near Oxford. Inhabited and owned by the same family since the 17th century, the wooded garden still retains its original design by William Kent. Today there are no gift shops or tea rooms, just the garden where you can wander uninterrupted by signage, or any other modern paraphernalia. Compact, yet packed with plenty of vistas through woods to carefully placed statues and temples, the garden slopes down to a small river which winds along the boundary, 'calling in' the local countryside to merge with the garden. Kent's Vale of Venus set with pools and statuary in a wooded glade must be the most exquisite early-18th-century experience, perhaps equivalent to attending a performance of a pastoral Handel opera exact in every historical detail. Arrive just after opening time and you can wander alone through a pastoral idyll.

Music making and garden making were both part of the cultural baggage of the gentlemen and princes of history. Garden designers and composers would have rubbed shoulders and maybe exchanged ideas about each others' arts in palaces and grand country houses. Hogarth's Rake, newly elevated from bourgeois to aristocrat is surrounded by attendant representatives employed to educate his taste and service his cultural requirements – the fencing master, milliner, tailor, wig-maker, and, standing behind the dancing master by the Rake's right elbow, looking rather fed up and patiently waiting for the attention of his new patron, holding a garden plan, is the gardener Hugh May with whom Pepys reports discussing the superiority of English gravel walks.



The Garden Party by Jan Steen (1625 - 1679)



Samuel Pepys 1633 - 1703



Judy Tarling is well known as leader of The Parley of Instruments and other assorted baroque orchestras. Her books on baroque string playing and rhetoric for musicians (Corda Music Publications) have become indispensable for anyone wishing to become a historically-informed performer. Judy has travelled widely to introduce rhetoric to performers of many kinds, and last year made her first solo teaching tour of the USA, visiting Juilliard in New York, Longy in Boston, Oberlin and Harvard. In 2009 she attained a distinction in MA (Garden History), writing about the garden of Constantijn Huygens (musician, ambassador, poet) near The Hague, and is now as intent on introducing rhetorical performance to garden historians as she is about selling garden history to musicians.