

The future of a hidden gem of the Home Counties has been secured through HLF-funding and the hard work of the Shuttleworth Trust.

As if from the pages of a child's storybook, the Swiss Garden near Biggleswade was the brainchild of the third Lord Ongley. A snapshot in time and place, created in the lavish Regency period, the garden's quirky buildings, bridges and ornamental structures were designed as focal points of a magical journey along alpine woodland paths. It truly was a real-life fairy-tale brought to life.

Unfortunately, time was not kind to this unique location. Years of neglect and under-investment made it a shadow of its former self. To a large extent, its magical allure had been drained away.

However, with Ongley's vision at heart, the Shuttleworth Trust – with assistance from HLF – undertook a 'Great Restoration' over 2013 and 2014.

[quote=Una Watts, General Manager, Swiss Garden]Thanks to HLF's grant, we have been able to reverse the fortunes of this remarkably rare garden.[/quote]

- The garden's 13 listed buildings and structures have undergone careful conservation using traditional materials and techniques
- Its two-storey centrepiece, the Swiss Cottage, has been re-thatched using water reed from Norfolk, its finials re-gilded with 23 carat gold leaf and missing rustic decoration replaced using slices of Monterey Pine cones and

hazel and willow twigs
- A sculpture trail has even been added through the woodland, created by chain-saw sculptor Patrick Brown and inspired by ideas from local children

As a result of money invested, and a lot of hard work, the garden can continue to inspire everyone's inner child – bringing some pre-Victorian glamour to the everyday.

Swiss Garden website



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The Grade II* listed Swiss Cottage at the Swiss Gardens, Bedfordshire

Hidden 200 year-old Swiss Garden reveals its rare regency treasures

'Hidden Gem' Swiss Garden gets go ahead for £2.8m restoration