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Stunning results from sustainable design at the award-winning Barnes Wetland Centre, south-west London

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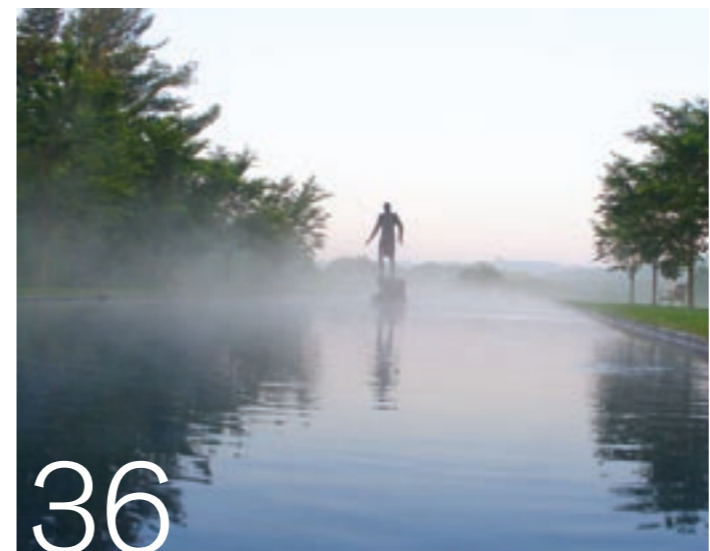
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Not strictly for the birds...



"The first day of spring is one thing, and the first spring day is another" Henry Van Dyke



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welcome



**DOES HISTORY MATTER?** Is it really relevant to design in the here and now? One very cutting-edge designer of my acquaintance has just completed a Masters in Garden History as a way of making sense of all the design information that he had accrued over the years. The course has not changed his approach – which is very contemporary – but he says that knowing more about the 'masters' who came before has provided a framework for his concepts. Something about not reinventing the wheel, perhaps.

One such master was Andrea Palladio (see page 28). Judging by the way in which his name is bandied about in historic garden guidebooks, those of us who have not studied garden history might have assumed he was an 18th-century English gentleman gardener. But, in fact, he was a 16th-century Italian stonemason who turned architecture on its head – and 'Palladian' became a by-word for a certain kind of proportion and style. He created a new architectural language based on classical principles while fulfilling the demands and aspirations of his own age.

Designers can embrace the past *and* be forward looking. Examining an illustrious career can help us to reappraise where we are at with our own design, and, in this issue, we begin a new series of interviews with Fellows of the Society of Garden Designers (page 18) beginning with Robin Williams, FSGD. And, take heart from reading about how Thomas Church started up his garden design business in the Great Depression of the 1930s (page 50). Yes, I think history actually does matter.  
**Jackie Bennett, Editor [gdj@jppublishing.co.uk](mailto:gdj@jppublishing.co.uk)**

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**"It was not Palladio's garden design that was to prove so influential on English gardens, but his love of classical forms and allusions"**

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