



# NEWSLETTER

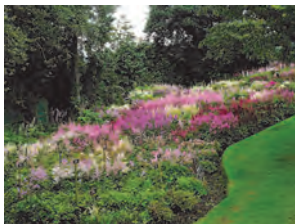
Issue 25

New Series 8

Summer 2009

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For those of you who have not visited the new website – [www.yorkshiregardens-trust.org.uk](http://www.yorkshiregardens-trust.org.uk) - I strongly recommend you do! It has been created by Heritage Technology and I think they have done a great job. However we are not going to stop there, as we have ideas to improve what is on offer:

1. *Members' Forum* – this will be in the Members only area (you need to put in your surname and membership number to access this). Here Members can post requests for help or give information on relevant events such as garden openings, talks etc outside of the Trust's activities. We will put information on the Members' page when it is up and running (hopefully in the next month).

2. *Book Reviews* – I would like to invite any Member who has recently read a good book on gardens/

## New YGT website

gardening to do a review and send to me to put on the website (email [webmaster@yorkshiregardens-trust.org.uk](mailto:webmaster@yorkshiregardens-trust.org.uk)). We are intending to have a new

for that as well.

If you have any other suggestions for changes or additions, please let me know!



New Home page

section especially for this, so keep an eye out

Louise Wickham

### With Abundance and Variety: Yorkshire Gardens and Gardeners across Five Centuries

Work continues at a furious pace to bring you the Yorkshire Gardens Trust's first book. If all goes to plan the publication will be available in the late autumn, so do please make a mental note now to include it on your Christmas list.

*With Abundance and Variety: Yorkshire Gardens and Gardeners across Five Centuries* features essays on a wide range of subjects – from flowers to fruit trees to follies; from public parks to private palaces. Many of the authors will be familiar as fellow YGT members, or as respected garden historians and journalists.

The book takes its main title, *With Abundance and Variety*, from the 17th century Yorkshire gardener William Lawson's book *A New Orchard and Garden*, also the source of the YGT's tree logo. This phrase neatly sums up the fascinating mix of subjects covered in the pages of the book.

We are planning a launch event that will give you the opportunity to buy the book and enjoy a glass of wine with friends. **Further details of the book and the launch will be sent to all members in due course.** Meanwhile, if you would like any further information please contact Karen Lynch on 01943 816747 or [karenlynch2009@googlemail.com](mailto:karenlynch2009@googlemail.com)

## Chairman's Letter—July 2009

As I write the heavens have opened and another monsoon-like storm is taking place; this seems to have been the weather pattern over the past few weeks and not one redolent of the summers I used to know. Global warming or not, our changing climate is influencing the way we garden and what we grow in it and this in turn affects the creatures and insects which have come to depend on our gardens for food. On one of the wettest days our spotted flycatcher chicks finally fledged their beautifully constructed nest in the vine beneath our bedroom window, a place they return to year after year. These courageous little birds arrive in May having completed their epic journey from Africa and always seem happy in human company. One of my greatest pleasures is to sit in the garden and watch both male and female fly to and fro the nest with their beaks crammed full of flies. They like to perch on the bamboo canes supporting my *Paeonia officinalis* whose seed heads bear a distinct resemblance to their own neat little grey forms. From dawn to dusk they perform a sort of ballet which requires perfect timing for they repeatedly leap into the air retrieving from it all manner of insects. I have noticed that this ritual can result in them almost bumping into one another. While the flycatchers are doing well in our garden, the swallow population has drastically plummeted for reasons we simply do not understand.

One thing is for sure a summer without swallows in our skies would be unbearable. Swifts, the spittires of the avian world, are plentiful, yet generally in decline throughout the UK. As for bees most of us are aware that they (especially the honey-bee) have suffered the most

during recent years; in the UK nearly one in three hives didn't make it through the winter and spring of 2007/08 and although no one really knows what's causing the bees to die, wet summers, garden and farm pesticides and the blood-sucking varroa mite, are prime suspects. Incidentally a new class of systematic pesticides called neonicotinoids are highly toxic to bees and have been linked to Colony Collapse Order which results in sudden death. For those of you who want to encourage bees, I have found *Allium sphaerocephalon* or, as I have named it 'bees lollipops' to be the plant they most adore. Many species of bees are attracted to its deep purple heads which flower just about now, and often remain glued to them throughout the night in a state of total intoxication!

A garden is a wonderful platform to watch nature and each day brings its surprises. Last week I found a half eaten toad and wondered what on earth could have eaten it; next evening I discovered the culprit - a large hedgehog whom I caught devouring the remaining half, legs and all! The majority of those of us who garden care passionately about wildlife. In a recent issue of the Kew magazine I read that the University of Sheffield has documented (for the first time) the scale of the contribu-

tion that our gardens make to the 'green space infrastructure' in residential areas. Apparently 22.7 million households have access to a garden covering a total area of 432.924 hectares. It is estimated that 7.4 million households use bird feeders and some 4.7 million nest boxes exist within all gardens. UK gardens contain around 3.5 million ponds and 28.7 million trees which is about a quarter of all trees outside woodland. Kevin Gaston, who led the research team at Sheffield stated that 'The value of urban areas for biodiversity would be transformed if, say, 20 per cent of people decided to do something different - do without decking and plant a tree instead' which just goes to show how much we as individuals can make a difference.

This year marks the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew and to celebrate the occasion, landscape architects GROSS.MAX have been commissioned to draw up a visionary master plan for Kew's unique site. The principal aim is to enhance and conserve the gardens in keeping with its historical landscape and its World Heritage status. Over the years many eminent architects and landscape designers have contributed to the development of the gardens including Lancelot 'Capability' Brown and William Andrews Nesfield who designed the Broad Walk, Palm

House Parterre and Arboretum in the 1840's. Today Kew attracts over 1.3 million visitors a year and as a scientific institution contributes enormously to conservation projects all over the world. This includes the Millennium Seed Bank, housed at Wakehurst Place which is part of a global effort to safeguard 24% of the world's plant species from extinction. Already it has secured the future of nearly all the UK's flowering plants - quite an achievement don't

you think?



Flycatcher on bamboo canes supporting *Paeonia officinalis*

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(Continued from page 2)

The Yorkshire Gardens Trust is growing from strength to strength, attracting new members of all ages and continuing to achieve the goals we set out from its inception. We have enjoyed some wonderful days out, especially this year's summer picnic which was held at Skipwith, the beautiful home of YGT members Charlie and Rosalind Forbes Adam. Hulling and chopping strawberries and cream for more than 90 members was always a cause for concern, however Lotty Forbes Adam, Charlie and Rosalind's daughter, and her friend, came to the rescue and executed the task with speed and precision. Charlie and Rosalind had kindly set up tables and chairs under cover but luck was with us that day and the sun shone enabling us to enjoy their glorious garden which has recently undergone some inspirational changes. Events are becoming more and more popular and sadly we sometimes have to

turn people away. I am aware of the disappointment this causes and to compensate I have tried to introduce more events into the annual programme; applying early for tickets really is essential. This of course requires a huge amount of work for Alison Brayshaw, our bookings secretary, who I know would like to lessen her work load. Any members who feel they could take on this job please let me know.

Many people like Alison, who do not sit on the Council of Management, work tirelessly for the Trust and I am grateful to them all. I particularly appreciate a young newcomer Lucy Porritt, who is giving up much of her time and experience as a garden designer, to help council member Nicola Harrison run our Schools Education Project. Nicola's achievements can only be described as dynamic and with Lucy's support the future looks exciting - you can find out more about 'YGT for Schools' on our website.

A special YGT Journal, edited by Susan Kellerman and assisted by Karen Lynch is in the pipeline, and I for one, am greatly looking forward to seeing it in print. This will be an elegant work of a very high standard indeed, containing articles relating to a wide range of Yorkshire's historic gardens and landscapes.

I should like to end by thanking Louise Wickham, who is stepping down as YGT Newsletter Editor. This is a very demanding job and she has done it brilliantly. Her idea to introduce colour has made it a more attractive publication. Helen Lazenby will take on her role so I feel confident that the high standard set will continue.

As always, my thanks and best wishes to you, the members, whose loyalty to the Yorkshire Gardens Trust is never taken for granted.

Penelope Dawson-Brown

## Middlethorpe Hall – Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> April 2009

Outings with the Yorkshire Gardens Trust are always a good mix of nice people, interesting landscapes and, often, good food. Today was no exception – we even had good weather – a lovely sunny day after two days of much needed non-stop rain.

The Head Gardener, David Barker, greeted us on the immaculate lawn on the south side of this beautiful eighteenth century house. He had been in charge of the gardens for twenty seven years, so was largely responsible for what we were about to see. His assistant, Andrew, also joined us. The two of them do all the work with the occasional help of two volunteers.

We started off going round a series of garden 'rooms' on the eastern side of the main lawn. Most of these are surrounded by walls and yew hedges and include various courtyard gardens, a rosewalk with a viburnum trained over a brick arch and the walled kitchen garden in front of the ancient, restored dovecot. This is about twenty years older

than the present house, having been built in 1681 by Sir Henry Thompson for an earlier seventeenth century house.

The kitchen garden is mainly planted with flowers and fruit trees – wonderful espaliered apple trees in full blossom and pears, peaches, plums etc on the surrounding walls. A tunnel through the centre of this area has recently had roses replaced by pear trees – including old varieties – so in a few years one will be able to walk through a tunnel dripping with pears. The centre crossing of the tunnel is planted with golden hop – *Humulus lupulus aurea* – underplanted with alliums. The beds had just been heavily mulched with what could only have been cowdung! Unfortunately there are obvious signs of the dreaded box blight, probably as a result of the last two very wet summers. David is hoping that by cutting off the top growth and thinning out the bushes they might recover or at least survive for a bit longer.

Some of the plants in these formal gardens that particularly stood out

were *Peonia mlokosewitschii* in full bloom, a pair of weeping mulberries: *Morus pendula alba* and a wonderful *Azara microphylla* which completely covers the south wall of the dovecote and which, in a week or two, will be covered in a mass of vanilla scented yellow flowers that are made up of a mass of stamens.

After the formality of this area, there is a nice contrast as you walk into the Spring Garden which has trees with drifts of daffodils underneath and mown grass paths meandering through which lead one to a wilder area ending with a lake at the lower end of the grounds. A haven for wildlife and David has planted trees and shrubs with a view to encouraging birds and butterflies. What should have been a lovely peaceful area is blighted by traffic noise from the busy A64 York by-pass. Among the interesting trees planted by David over the years were: a large *Quercus rubra*, *Betula ermanii* 'Grayswood Hill', *Acer griseum*, *Aesculus flava*, *Acer negundo*, both male and female, *Betula nigra* with

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## Middlethorpe Hall cont.

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wonderful shaggy bark, Metasequoia and a weeping elm, hopefully resistant to Dutch Elm disease.

As this area floods to a depth of six feet most years, it is interesting to see what survives. David pointed out wild cardamine growing round the lake which started a discussion about common names – some of us called it ‘Lady’s Smock’, some ‘Cuckoo flower’ and others ‘Milk Maids’. No doubt there are many other regional names.

We saw a section of the ha-ha

which has survived and the main lawn is divided from the field which stretches down by a shelter belt hiding the bypass by a ‘pretend’ ha-ha – a deep ditch planted with wild flowers with a fence in the bottom which cannot be seen from the house. This area would look more interesting with sheep or cattle in the field or, better still, a lake with a temple on the far side! But the owner likes it as it is and it acts as a helipad for his guests!

At the end of the afternoon, we enjoyed a very nice cream tea during which Moira Fulton gave a short, interesting talk about the history of the

house and garden. She also gave us copies of Francis Place’s 1705 sketch of Middlethorpe. The dovecot and the main house being the most obviously still existing features.

Penny Dawson-Brown rounded up a very pleasant visit by thanking David and Andrew for giving us so much of their time and the staff of Middlethorpe Hall for a delicious tea

Penelope Haldane

## Going (Grey) for Gold.....

This is a reflective article, which I can only now begin to write, when the pain of the event has receded sufficiently and I have had some nights with sleep!

The Event?

The Harrogate Spring Flower Show, and my role co-ordinating the Park Lane College, Leeds (now Leeds City College) Student Show-Garden entry. This was our second year at the show and only the second year such gardens had been included in the exhibits. They are quite a focal point within the exhibitors’ marquee and obviously a brilliant way to showcase the colleges. In particular, it is a good project for my Foundation Degree students in Plant Use and Design to undertake.

The design and build garden starts with an outline ‘brief’. This is a set of instructions from the NE Horticultural Society (the organisers of the Spring Show). Each participating college is given a different brief on which to develop their ideas. An outline design has to be sent in to the show co-ordinators by the 1<sup>st</sup> of December, which does mean a rapid start to some serious work for the students newly arrived on the course.

Little do the students know at this stage, that the brain-work and “headology” is only a tiny amount of the total work which they will find

themselves involved with to complete the project! The NE Horticultural Society also donates some sponsorship monies to encourage participation, but this has to be supplemented by finding sponsors and persuading the college to fund the garden, up-front, to allow the works to begin. And now, perhaps, you will begin to see the full implication of such a project.

Teaching horticultural and design skills and persuading the students to apply these on a speedy turn around, suddenly goes from pure horticulture to business planning; public relations, in and out of the college; research into materials & ideas across a very wide spectrum - from in this case, the Kenyan languages to audio/ light shows via pergola design and timber stains of sustainable provenance; to pure logistics.

Our outline ‘Brief’ for 2009 was for a Harrogate-dwelling family of five, Father a wine-loving, accountant, Mother a volunteer charity worker for a hospice, 2 sons at university and one son still at home. Their house is an impressive 3-storey, mid-terrace, York-stone town house. The family had “fond memories of their last Kenyan holiday”. From these clues, plus a photograph of the dwelling, the students have to come up with a feasible design. The size of the show garden is 5m x 5.65m. The first team last year, managed to come away with a silver gilt award so there was a healthy sense of competition to at

least meet this standard again or to better it if possible.

Now picture the scenario in the studio – every student is applying their imagination to the idea. Some come up with descriptions, some come up with drawings of part or whole of the garden; discussions become heated; “elephants, water-holes, savannah; I’ve been to... I’ve seen a.....” No one at this point really grasps the actual size they have to design this garden for and general mayhem results. I have the unenviable task to direct all this towards a useful solution. It is all very creative and it is good for as many ideas as possible to be aired and shared and discounted or earmarked for consideration. At this point I suggest they all go their separate ways and work up their ideas to present to a judging panel the following week. Rapid introduction to scale drawing and attempts to convince everyone that any sketch/section/ axonometric or plan they produce will help to sell their ideas in visual terms as well as their strong, verbal presentation. We are very tight on time, but as ‘student time’ and real time are often at odds I have to be strict in keeping everyone and everything to timetable *and this is only the start!*

The projects are proudly presented with varying amounts of confidence and panache. It is always interesting to see the student characters re-

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vealed: the spokesman, the hesitant, the thoughtful, the one who wants to include everyone else, and yes, even the waffler – who has forgotten to do anything until about 3 minutes before the session begins! The students, in the large, are very kind, listen patiently, question tactfully and comment fairly on the schemes as they are presented. They are too considerate if anything, trying not to knock anyone back at this stage. (They all guard their own egos and a sense of fair play is demonstrated.) However, a theme usually emerges amongst all the presentations and the general ideas become more keenly focussed.

From the many designs it is my task to whittle them to a few, and to steer the thoughts to a feasible design solution. Justifying my choices is done on grounds of practicality and cost although I do have to try and ascertain the practical skills which are available within the student cohort - the aim of getting from plan into a real, built-in-3-days, garden has to be achievable. Also I need to have support from all in the group and to build belief in the 'team' to achieve this.

So, I do try to incorporate a multiplicity of ideas both big and small, to show that everyone has a contribution. The idea may be a colour - to start the colour scheme or the basic layout which can be embellished and gently discard the more outlandish proposals. Hopefully one or two student will then be nominated, and agree, to work on the plan whilst others are delegated to research plants, materials, costs, possible sponsors, to trial facets of the design, work up the detailed 'brief' to be sent in with our plan and to contact the college PR department to warn them of our intended excursions into the outside world and request their guidance.

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This is all going on whilst other lectures and lessons happen and the students work 3 or 4 days to earn enough to put themselves through the course. At this stage I am also teaching on other courses and going out to assess students in their places of work and this is only a part-time post for me! However, at this point 'Harrogate' begins to feature in my

day-dreams& sleeping dreams and I begin the "the note book" to jot down ideas beside the bed. Many times in the middle of the night I find my thoughts wandering along the lines of ~'how will that be fixed to make it stand and support the weight of.....? Oh, galvanised wire would ..... where can I get those connectors? .....etc.'

This is one area where e-mail and text phone messages make the whole thing possible. The e-mails fly around and strange conversations ensue in corridors and doorways whenever any two of the team meet up. "I'm not sure if it should be Bustani ya Kenya or Kenya Bustani?" "Need to check with the Kenyan Embassy" "OK". "What time is your lunch?" All good horticultural stuff!

Our students on this course are, in the main, part-time and many are in demanding jobs outside college hours. The students chose their preferred options to lead them in their career direction. Foundation degrees try to be all things to all people at all times and it can be a case of juggling time to the extreme. Not all of this years students felt able to participate and there were also 'drop-outs' who faded and dwindled away, not always informing the team of their intentions, some felt their ideas had been over-looked and there were instances of people being 'loners' who would not be any part of a team. This is problematical as one of the core components of the course is 'Personal Professional Development' a module of learning, which encourages the students to work outside their usual patterns, and to stretch their understanding of working situations, failing to use this opportunity at the Spring Flower Show is a sorely missed chance to show examples of PPD. However the show can pull in learning from plant sciences, to contract documentation and usually many more things besides.

By the end of January the garden design has to be fixed. From this point onwards it is a case of pre-fabricating as much as possible so that the whole can be reassembled at the show in the three days ahead

of the judges walk around, and ready for unveiling to the public. This is done utilising about one and a half lecture sessions per week and a lot of student (and staff) out of college hours.

During this academic year the Park Lane College, Leeds merger with Keighley College became solid fact and a merger with Thomas Danby and The Leeds College of Technology were underway, but not yet launched under the one title, still to be decided. Problems loomed large for all the PR leaflets and college prospectuses. "Can you wait a while? What leaflets will you need exactly?" Were the first replies. More work, liaisons, and meetings - to not very useful outcomes. "Can the joiners at Keighley help?" meant weekly trips over to Keighley College (which is absolutely excellent, their building at Harold Town was an education in itself.) Liaising with Dougie and Ian, whilst very instructive and entertaining, was time consuming. The students enjoyed their sessions in the workshops developing new PPD skills on circular saws and power drills and I began to fret at the ever-shortening time available for the construction and even the supply of plants that no one had even begun to source. (Student 'time' was now about 4 weeks behind real time.) Also our department technician was having domestic problems and was either absent or prone to sudden absences, my colleague was due off on a holiday/honeymoon and, to cap it all, my bad back resurfaced which made life even more challenging.

However, with some strong painkillers; a very small cohort of extremely keen students and much encouraging of a few more" interested "students; by the sliding of a couple of teaching sessions into very practical ones; several late evenings in meetings and discussions; hours of frustration with the college finance and ordering department; a high mileage on the car in running high and low to source plants and get supplies from places as far afield as York and Stapeley Water Gardens in Stafford; working extremely long days through the

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## Going (Grey) for Gold.....cont.

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Easter holidays; chauffeuring students to keep them in the loop; keeping moral high; trying to prevent disputes from becoming major incidents, smoothing ruffles and trying to keep my mounting panic in check ; so the work progresses. These factors were just part of the daily round (and the stuff of nightmares).

There were high points such as when we saw the wonderful stained glass panels that had been made to our specification by Carryl Hallett of Harrogate and the 'flat bottle man' returned from holiday and presented our sponsor-finding student with ten green bottles for use on the stand. There were low points too when it was necessary to go 'back to the drawing board' and try again – but it is all valuable experience (remind myself) and *my* PPD is benefiting enormously, *I hope*.

Abandoning the bedside notebook – eyes too tired to focus from a prone position - I had to progress to rising at 5.00am and shooting off the e-mails for the day to the team. For this last push we drafted in students from other courses, past-students with practical know-how and even the support of employers, notably Leeds City Council to help us out. A couple of other staff members from the land – based team came in to do such glorious tasks as washing our 'Rainbow' cobbles and a ton of gravel ahead of their transfer to the show. We were not always a jolly band of jovial workers, but with some dogged persistence, in the rather cold weather conditions we assembled all the necessary components of the Kenyan Garden.

D-Day and the whole garden has to be carefully carried and loaded into the box van. Load One, the basic framework. The nearest the van can get is approximately 200 yards from the mock-up, construction site. But today we are relatively fit and keen! Cars follow the van filled with a team of high-spirited garden builders! Unload at Harrogate and start the garden for real. Other colleges are already there and at a glance we can see the standards have risen from

last year!

A whole crop of thoughts and doubts suddenly loom large. How can we add extra? What about...? Can we get .....? So the whole game opens up again and it is all to play for! Check the build-rotas, who is where and when? Bless the mobile phone, our salvation for keeping the organisation running smoothly. Phones, *and* everyone being as good as their word. But it goes great.

Everyone on the final build team turns up when they said they would. We have people cleaning, brewing endless cups of coffee, holding bits in the air while others scabble below to fix the lights and electrics, trying to keep track of the tools, plants are put in pots, pulled from pots, garden centres visited to fill those final gaps with 'the right plants' and most importantly of all – we keep our cool . At least, as long as one person at a time keeps their cool they can rescue the remainder. Hour by hour problems arise, are dealt with and progress is made. Time out is spent promenading around all the other gardens that invariably serve to spur everyone on to a speedy return to complete the task in hand.

Amazingly we *can* pull out all the stops. Our wall-builders find their stone. The water feature works! Between nine of us we can heave the decks into place. There has been a glitch in the construction but we can get round that with sheer people-power. We lift and hoist and heave and pull. So, we all lose a finger nail or two, get trapped fingers and a great set of bruises to each shin, but that is small beer. It is about Load Three that arms and legs and backs and necks begin to remind us that they are weary, but we are nearly there, so we go on. The final night before judging we are still at work at ten o'clock in a cold, dimly lit marquee, but in tired euphoria we can crack open the wine and drink a toast to the 99%-completed garden at 10.30pm. Other colleges are still hard at work and we can allow a small feeling of

satisfaction that comes from knowing that in the morning we have only the 'window-dressing' to complete.

A last check – planting is good, colours, textures, scale and condition. The timberwork is well built and finished and the whole idea has come together extremely well. The stain on the barrel (Lakeland Plastics herbal remedy!) is perfect and has dried to a good finish. Our lights in the night-time marquee sparkle like stars, the stained glass panels glow warmly and our audio-visual unit - for the grown up, family sons of our 'Family' is playing a great selection of African music to accompany the slide show of the Kenyan holiday slides projected onto the back wall! It is a garden to suit all our would-be clients. We can sleep well - for a few hours.

6.00am start on the final day. Two students and a member of staff from each college are asked to stay and discuss their garden with the three judges. But the final touches must be added. The 'Charity' fund-raising salad boxes are put in place; the cheese and wine set out using a flat-bottle cheese board and photographs taken to record the sight of the garden at its absolute peak of perfection. The much travelled tulips have just begun to open, a couple of less than happy plants are removed, the greenery is sprayed to give it a morning-fresh appearance and reluctantly, we leave the garden to await the judges' critical eyes.

It was two of the year 2 students and myself who, after a long and nerve wracking wait, met up with judges and who, with very mixed feelings after their questions and comments, went on our way to await the outcome early on the following morning, when we compare our results with those of the other colleges and of course, the first day the show is opened to the public - and the comments which are given, kind or hurtful, from these visitors to our garden.

At this point, apart from overseeing the duty rota for the show and man-

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ning the stand at different times, my work is done, so for four days I can unwind. I know the core team could not have worked any harder, or given any more hours. They were all so dedicated and determined to seeing it through and I really take my hat off to them for all their Herculean efforts. I honestly do not know what the judges have made of the garden. I know it is of a high standard, but exactly how high, I cannot put a mark to it. I have explained that the judging is open to the judges' own interpretation of the 'Brief' and their own experiences and expectations of a "Show Garden". All we can do is wait.

I did not go early to the show ground, I waited in the wings until the students had been in and seen their results. The show ground is



Before....

open at 7.30 for exhibitors. I waited and waited. The phone call came eventually, well after 8.30 am, and in calm, measured tones - which at first made my heart sink – Gary said very slowly and levelly “



....After

We have got a gold!" Did I hear that right? We have got a GOLD, Now we could smile, we could grin, and suddenly all the pain was worthwhile! Well done everyone! Big Thanks to those who had helped! Despite everything that had caused a glitch and everyone who had hindered us, we had shown them, we could do it. What a team!!

Show 'time', like student 'time', works

on a different plane to real time and blissfully I could forget all the work and jobs that had been piling up for the last month or more, blissfully I could meet and greet people; explain features of the garden and name the plants for the keen plants-people. Even some of the 'Management' of the college managed to come to see and praise our exhibit. Bliss it was - until the sparkle and the glamour came to a sudden abrupt end and the awful task of ripping up the golden garden had to be done. Of course it rained and rained, and it was cold, and not as many students could help dismantling as could be in on the build, so the return to the real world was harsh and pretty soul destroying. But, the one bright light, the little warm glow, which helped us through the week, was the one, satisfying thought – we had got a GOLD award.

Liz Simson

## Dorothy Lee

It is always a pleasure to see Dorothy Lee at our YGT events for not only is she our oldest member at 95, she is delightful company.

Dorothy was born in Nottingham on May 27<sup>th</sup> 1914, just a month before the start of the Great War. When she married she moved to Yorkshire and throughout her life she has been an active gardener with a passion for beautiful plants and trees.

She still potters in her own charming garden at Studley Roger, close to Fountains Abbey, where she lives today though regrets she cannot do as much as she would like to.



valley at the edge of the North Yorks Moors, she was thrilled with the show of Rhododendrons and Azaleas which were giving their best in early June.

Dorothy joined the Yorkshire Gardens Trust during its first year and continues to be a loyal supporter for which we thank her. Gracious, elegant and always smiling, she is a role model to us all and exemplifies the fact that gardening enriches the mind and keeps you young.

Penelope Dawson-Brown

On a recent YGT visit to the lovely gardens at Pennyholme seated in a



## Thomas Knowlton

While Thomas Knowlton does not qualify to be a true Yorkshireman, having been born in Kent, he nevertheless spent the majority of his long life in the county. Like many men of his age he was a polymath, endlessly fascinated by the world around him and developments in scientific learning. While his 'day job' was as head gardener at Londesborough, the estate of the Earl of Burlington in Yorkshire, he also found time for botanical experiments, archaeology, ornithology and the study of fossils. He also acted as what would now be described as a 'garden or landscape consultant' to neighbouring estates such as Everingham.

He was a prolific letter writer, many of which have survived today and are the basis for Blanche Henery's comprehensive biography *No ordinary gardener: Thomas Knowlton 1691 – 1781*, published in 1986. His correspondents included many of the leading figures of the day such as Sir Hans Sloane, president of the Royal Society and Peter Collinson, the renown importer of new plant material, particularly from North America. For a man with such good connections, surprisingly little is known of his early life. We do not know what his father did for a living (although one of his three brothers also became a gardener) and do not know the extent of his schooling. We also have to assume that his horticultural training occurred during his employment.

His first known position was as a gardener at Offly Place in Hertfordshire. There he had undertaken experiments for Thomas Fairchild to demonstrate plant reproduction, the results of which Fairchild presented to the Royal Society in 1720. Shortly after he started to work for one of the leading nurserymen, James Sherard. In 1725 he moved to one of the grandest estates in the country to be head gardener: Canon's in Edgware, belonging to the Duke of Chandos. The following year he left to collect plants for Fairchild from Holland and Guernsey before moving to Lord Burlington's estate at the end of 1726. By becoming gardener

to Burlington, Knowlton was to start working for the creator of the most innovative garden in England at the time: Chiswick.

Little had been done to the formal gardens at Londesborough, laid out by Robert Hooke in the 1670s, when Knowlton arrived. The changes that had occurred by the time of the estate map of 1739, indicated Burlington's desire to utilise the naturally attractive setting. From the house at the top of one hill, the view was down to the lake below and onwards to the hill opposite. In contrast to Chiswick that had no such attractive vistas, Burlington did not need to add focal points such as buildings. David Neave argues that Burlington himself was the designer of the landscape at Londesborough, as he was at Chiswick. The extent of Knowlton's input into the design is uncertain but given his horticultural expertise, it is clear that he would have influenced the plants used. One example is the turkey oak avenue, a novelty as they were only introduced into England in 1735. It is possible that Knowlton planted the turkey oaks that remain today.

Knowlton was only at Londesborough a few years before he was being consulted about other neighbouring estates. The earliest record we have is from a letter of 8 May 1727 when the estate manager at Everingham is considering him. This was not an uncommon occurrence at the time: a contemporary was Thomas Greening, gardener to the Duke of Newcastle at Claremont who went on to design gardens. However he remained at Londesborough unlike Lancelot Brown and others such as William Emes and Thomas White who became 'professional improvers'.

The first estate where Knowlton was consulted was Dalton Hall, owned by Sir Charles Hotham. Hotham had a competent head gardener, John Scott, whom he employed in 1728, so Knowlton's role could be described as an advisor. There are no records as to who did the design but a drawing by Rocque made in 1737 owes much to Londesborough and Chiswick. Thomas Willoughby, at Birdsall Hall near Malton, also consulted him in 1729

but it was at Everingham Hall however, four miles east of Londesborough, where he was occupied for many years.

We know a lot about the work he completed here due to the letters that have survived between Sir Marmaduke Constable, the absentee owner and his Chaplain and de facto agent, Dom John Bede Potts. They discuss the progress that is made from 1730 until 1743 in the improvement of the estate. Knowlton and a Richard Lawson appear to have worked in partnership at Everingham. He is described as 'M' Lawson of Mowerby' and Henery speculates that Lawson was the gardener at Moreby, 5¼ miles south of York. However Peter Roebuck who published the estate correspondence believes that he owned a nursery at Scarborough and so supplied a lot of the plant material. In the letters there is a reference to Lawson having a farm at Bielby, another estate owned by Constable, 1 mile northwest from Everingham.

In the period from the end of 1730 to the last recorded payment on the 10th Dec 1743, Knowlton was paid at least £22 16s for his work at Everingham, excluding his supply of plants (about £30,000 in today's money based on average earnings). Everingham was a long-term project for Knowlton in collaboration with Lawson and he may have been the designer, as no other candidates have come to light. If he was the designer, then his work here shows how his ideas changed. Although two formal avenues were planned, there was also, in the latter stages, some more naturalistic clumps planned and executed. This indicated a change in style, possibly following the ideas of Kent, which he would have seen at Chiswick that he often visited.

In his latter years, he worked at two more notable estates: Aldby Park and Burton Constable Hall. Henry Brewster Darley owned Aldby Park and on inheriting the house in 1743, Darley wanted to landscape the

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grounds. Three years later, we have a record of Knowlton working there. From a survey of 1746 and a bill from Knowlton dated 8<sup>th</sup> September of the same year, we can see the extent of the work that he completed at this time.

**March 17<sup>th</sup> 1745/6 & March 24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> 1746**

'To setting out & Levelling of y<sup>e</sup> West of the House'

**March 24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup>**

'[To] planting of y<sup>e</sup> Filberts [*Corylus maxima*], Elmes, Privetts & y<sup>e</sup> Pruning all the Larches'

**March 31<sup>st</sup> & April 1<sup>st</sup>**

'To planting 1000 of Beech, 500 Hornbeam & 2000 of Birch & Levelling part of y<sup>e</sup> Court'

**April 15<sup>th</sup> & May 19<sup>th</sup>**

'To Directions & Levelling the West Front...[and] Inspection'

**May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup>**

'To Levelling the Court... and finishing'

**9<sup>th</sup> June**

'To setting out the South Front'

**16<sup>th</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup> June**

'To setting out & Forming the Slopes'

**3<sup>rd</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> July**

'To setting out & Levelling of the Dove Court Avenue & Lawn Slopes'

For the above and the supply of 2000 Birch seedlings & 20 Wickin? Trees, Knowlton charged £8 7s 6d (about £12,000 in today's money).

There is an undated and unsigned plan in the archives at Northallerton which given the layout is almost identical to the 1746 survey, one can speculate that this may have been Knowlton's plan for the estate. There are meandering paths that lead to the old Saxon fort on the site, reminiscent of South Dalton and there is also what appears to be

a walled kitchen garden to the bottom left. The slopes mentioned in the bill may have been inspired by the work Knowlton did on the terraces at Duncombe Park. Although Christopher Hussey attributes the design of the Duncombe terraces to Bridgeman, there are two references that connect Knowlton. The first is in a letter dated 27<sup>th</sup> February 1733/4 from Dom John Bede Potts to Sir Marmaduke Constable when he states that 'y<sup>e</sup> person y<sup>t</sup> commands y<sup>e</sup> labourers under M<sup>r</sup> Knowltons directions is to go up to M<sup>r</sup> Duncome (Thomas Duncombe)'. The next is a letter from Knowlton himself, dated 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1736: 'I imagine I shall be sent for to M<sup>r</sup> Duncombs...very soon they I know are Drawing to conclusion of what I had...seat...out'.

There are two more bills for work done at Aldby, the first from 24<sup>th</sup> August 1749 for £4 14s 6d refers to



**Aldby Park, Estate Survey, 1746 (Northallerton Archives, Ref ZDA-DAR 88)**

the following work:

**27<sup>th</sup> October, 15<sup>th</sup> November & 14<sup>th</sup> December 1748**

'For Direction & Inspection & Setting out an Underground Drain'

**20<sup>th</sup> December & 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1749**  
'To Levelling & Setting the Pales'

**20<sup>th</sup> January & 17<sup>th</sup> February**  
'To setting out & planting the Meanders'

**26<sup>th</sup> April**

'To Levelling with Directions'

**24<sup>th</sup> May**

'To setting out the Slope'

Aldby Park provides the most complete picture of Knowlton's mature design style. Although there is some formality with straight avenues, the informal areas are now the most prominent, in particular his planting of the slopes. He is now using the natural landscape, just as he did at Duncombe, to create a better effect. However as the plans are not

signed, we can never be sure that he was totally responsible for these.

The last place that Knowlton worked was the estate of Burton Constable in East Yorkshire, owned by William Constable, a keen amateur botanist. Constable had inherited the property in 1747 and devoted much time and expense on improving his property. He called in many designers (including latterly Brown) to make suggestions for improvements. Whether Knowlton was involved in changes to the landscape is not known.

We do know that however he planned and built the menagerie in 1761 that is sited at the end of

the lake and a stove garden complex as confirmed by him in a letter in 1758: 'I have Latly just finished 2 stoves with a Little Green house in y<sup>e</sup> middle of y<sup>m</sup> 206 feet Longe for w<sup>m</sup> constable Esq<sup>r</sup> at Burton near Hull with fire walls 170 Long at y<sup>e</sup> each end of y<sup>m</sup>, all now I say compleat & finished

## Thomas Knowlton cont.

about 6 week since & is y<sup>e</sup> greatest in it[s] kind of any I know.'

Knowlton's first bill of 15 January 1757/58, is for 'drawings concerning alterations at Burton: 10 pounds' could this be the plan in the Burton Constable archives that is undated? Elisabeth Hall dates this plan to post 1763 due to the inclusion of the menagerie. However this may be from an earlier date as it is in the same hand as the survey from 1755 and the menagerie shown could be merely part of the plan. It is also a significant sum (about £13,000 in today's money) for just a plan of the menagerie.

Henery also speculates 'that

Knowlton assisted [William Constable] with the selection and planting of the various species [he] purchased' from nurserymen such as Christopher Gray and Robert Blake. The latter supplied many hardy flowering shrubs such as Bladdernut trees, Spanish brooms, Bird cherries, 'Spirea frutex', laburnums, syringas given in the list in the Aldby archive.

Lord Burlington died in 1753 and Londesborough passed to the Duke of Devonshire, his son-in-law. Knowlton remained in East Yorkshire although he also worked at Chatsworth as 'director of his Grace's new kitchen-garden, stoves, &c.' (recorded in a letter

from 1762). This was the one built between 1760 and 1765 as part of the major remodelling of the estate by the 4<sup>th</sup> Duke, directed by Lancelot Brown.

Thomas Knowlton died in his ninetieth year and was buried in the churchyard at Londesborough: the memorial to him still stands today. It appeared that he never retired from his post as gardener at the estate, although towards the end of his life he was totally blind. His grandson, Thomas junior (1757 – 1837), carried on the family tradition, as he was a steward for the fifth and sixth Dukes of Devonshire.

Louise Wickham

## AGM

This year the YGT AGM was held at Swinton Park, near Masham. Penny Dawson-Brown thanked Sue Cunliffe-Lister (whose son and daughter-in-law run Swinton Park) for allowing us to be there and she thanked Helen Lazenby for organising this event. A bowl of magnolias was presented. The AGM table would not be the same without the magnolias picked from Jane Furse's garden. Sadly Jane was unable to be with us this year. Martin Page (Vice President) took the chair.

He then handed over to Penny who spoke kindly of Geoffrey Smith, a previous Vice-President of our organisation and very well known Yorkshire gardener, who sadly died recently. He was born in Swaledale on March 23rd 1928 and trained with his father who was gardener at Barningham, North Yorkshire. He helped set up Harlow Carr in the 1950's and was Superintendent there for 26 years. He was a visionary gardener who left as his legacy the Stream Area at Harlow Carr. Parcevall Hall was also a special place for him. We then stood for a minute's silence in memory.

Martin Page then took over and the AGM resumed. Apologies, minutes of last meeting and resignations were mentioned and we had the reports from the sub-committees.

We then had the election of officers with Ray Blyth standing down from the council because of other commitments. Alison Brayshaw, who had so kindly looked after the bookings of tickets and much besides, also felt it time for a well earned break. Val Hepworth and Helen Lazenby were stepping down but available for re-election. Martin Walker and Jenni Howard were proposed and seconded for the council. We then had presentations to Alison, Ray and Val.

Sue Cunliffe-Lister was introduced by Helen and gave us a most interesting talk on the house and garden. George London laid out Swinton Park in 1699 but in 1760 this was probably swept away by William Danby as part of his landscaping programme. Lakes and the connecting streams were dug. In 1784 after the Grand Tour, William Danby the Younger, who had inherited 3 years earlier, returned and set out enlarging house and parkland. He built promontories and creeks by using boulders from the nearby moor and built the dramatic, nearby Quarry Gill Bridge, and a Druids temple. In 1886 Samuel Cunliffe-Lister bought the estate. In the 19th century plants from all over the world were brought to the Orangery. There were 9 greenhouses in operation - a true Victo-

rian garden!

It all fell into disrepair during the 1st World War and was later used by Harrogate College and the Conservative College during the 2nd World War. In 2000 it was bought back by Sue Cunliffe-Lister and her children and made into a hotel. There was large-scale clearance of laurels and rhododendrons making possible the planting of wild flowers. Sue told us of her wonderful Black and Decker "Alligator" which helped in this clearing. The walled garden had been previously planted up with Christmas trees and these were cleared to form a large growing area. Planting was done through black plastic and flowers for the house and fruit for the table were grown: asparagus, raspberries, artichokes and blueberries being the principal crops. Gravel was laid down making the area maintenance free. Amazingly she has had only 2 boys to cut lawns and the "Alligator" to help with the hard work!!

We were by now all very keen to look around the garden, lakes and rockery and Peter Goodchild gave a speech to thank her for a lively and interesting talk. After an excellent lunch in the dining room we had the opportunity to venture into the grounds. Although early in the sea-

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son there were large beds of blueberry bushes, Russian red kale and raised beds ready for planting up.

Altogether a good day, with our thanks going to the staff of Swinton Park who looked after us so well and

to Sue Cunliffe-Lister whose house provided such a splendid setting.

Jane Bottomley

## Harewood House

At the beginning of March a large group from the YGT met at Harewood House for a tour around the Harewood Estate. Over the last three years the landscape has been the subject of a three-year PhD project undertaken in collaboration between the University of York and the Harewood House Trust and is funded by a CASE studentship award from the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC). The project has aimed to study the development of the estate during the second-half of the eighteenth century in order to gain an in depth understanding of a period when the landscape underwent considerable change. A tour around the landscape provided a great opportunity to present some of the results from the research.

The walk began on the south terrace overlooking the former manor house Gawthorpe Hall, whose outline had been laid out in hay bales following a recent geophysical survey. This had been the first house on the site, inhabited by a succession of families including the Wentworths and Gascoignes, until Henry Lascelles (1690-1753) purchased the Manors of Harewood and Gawthorpe in 1738. As a wealthy merchant returning from the Caribbean, Lascelles had looked to broaden his commercial interests having already made his fortune in Barbados through money lending, sugar plantations, government contracts and victuals, and a number of investments in slaving.

The development of Harewood as we see it today did not take place in earnest until 1753, the year of Henry's death and Edwin Lascelles' (1712-1795) inheritance of his father's estates. Henry's legacy is likely to have been close to £408,000, of which two-thirds fell to Edwin thus leaving a significant amount that soon became the principal source of funding for the projects at Harewood.

Improvements began in 1754 with alterations made to Gawthorpe Hall by the young Palladian architect, John Carr of York, who shortly afterwards also submitted plans for the new stables. Built in the fashionable classical style between 1755 and 1759, Carr's stables featured triumphal pediments, a Tuscan colonnade and Romanesque arches. Drawn from William Kent's design for the Royal Mews in London, they represented Edwin Lascelles' wish to create a fashionable structure that could also boast convenience and utility. But when the scale of the building became apparent, plans were made to replace the smaller, antiquated Gawthorpe Hall with a new mansion.

Harewood House, which was designed by Robert Adam and John Carr in the Palladian style, became one of the finest houses in Yorkshire and was included in the fifth volume of Colen Campbell's celebration of British Palladian architecture, *Vitruvius Britannicus* (1771). Until the nineteenth century the north elevation, a seventeen-bay symmetrical façade, had included four medallions representing *Britannia, Liberty, Commerce and Agriculture*, all suitable emblems for a Whig family whose colonial legacy was supporting the improvements being made to this Yorkshire landscape. Here the watchwords of pleasure and profit, land and commerce, beauty and industry were combined as the improvement of the estate became tangible, emblazoned on the front of the building. On the southern side, a tetrastyle portico designed by Robert Adam completed the elevation. This enclosed space acted as an extension to the adjacent saloon, allowing guests to move freely from the classically designed interior to an area that encouraged contemplation of the landscape to the south.

From the southern terrace the tour

group were led from the house towards Lofthouse Gates and through an area of the landscape that had been modelled as a part of Edwin Lascelles' initial improvements. From the 1750s and 60s it was around Gawthorpe Hall and Harewood House that the ornamental gardens were first developed. Fields such as the Eller Close, Timber Garth and Wheat field were grassed over in favour of ornamental parkland used to accentuate the views from the house. Designers including Richard Woods and Thomas White were employed in creating the northern pleasure grounds and the planned walks that took visitors past an array of garden buildings.

It was not until the early-nineteenth century, however, that Harewood Castle was incorporated into the formal landscape. Plans had initially been made as early as 1796 when the Duke of Rutland noted that "as yet there is no park at Harewood, but the present owner is in the intention of forming a considerable one, in which he means to include the old ruinous castle ... the vale down to the river, and the ground two miles beyond the Wharfe" (Manners 1813, 260, quoted in Lynch 2004). During the early 1800s the area north of Robert Adam's Lodge was cleared and turned to parkland as re-routing of the Otley-Tadcaster turnpike created a vast tract of land that connected the house with the castle.

At Lofthouse the group enjoyed lunch while overlooking the site of a former medieval village. First recorded in the Domesday Survey as being a separate manor, the village of Lofthouse now survives as a series of earthworks surrounded by traces of surviving ridge and furrow. Until the early-nineteenth century it had been persevered as a single farmstead, depicted in contemporary illustrations, but Humphrey

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## Harewood House cont.

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Repton's landscaping schemes from 1800 are likely to have removed any visible structural remains. .

From Lofthouse Gates the group were also shown the agricultural land that lay to the east of the A61. This was formerly known as Harewood Common and had been enclosed as a part of the Lascelle's reorganisation of the local agricultural economy. Over 700 acres were brought into cultivation between 1738-1765 leading to the establishment of nine new farms in the area. New Lays, one of the first model farms to be built on the estate featured a new model farmhouse built with modern farming practices in mind, and was the epitome of improved agriculture. The house, with its layout of *Large Parlour*, *Little Parlour*, *Back Kitchen* and *cellar*, followed by a first-floor of a *Bed Chamber* and *Mens Chamber* reflected the all-pervading influence of Palladian symmetry. By 1777 these complexes had become cultural markers in the landscape representing both aesthetic fashion and innovation, causing one commentator to suggest that 'the whole ground forms a theatre of ornamental farms' (Witts 1777). By building these farmsteads as well as the Home Farm in Stank, Lascelles demonstrated both a commitment to agriculture, and to modernisation, as they

helped to attract wealthy tenants whose capital investment would be used to improve the land still further.

From Lofthouse the group followed



**Harewood House Parterre and Main Building**

'Capability' Brown's coach road as far as the southern pleasure grounds before turning towards the estate offices at Stank. The construction of the complex, which included the workshops and home-farm, was built between 1768-80 as part of a cohesive system that supplied the household with a variety of luxuries and foodstuffs throughout the calendar year. In addition to the kitchen gardens to the south, the complex formed an exercise in functionality and efficiency illustrated by improved designs and convenient layouts. The complex stood as a

symbol of the Lascelles' status and rank expressed through a modern, improvement philosophy and fashionable classical architecture.

Overall the landscape of the eighteenth century was presented as a mixture of beauty and use, pleasure and profit. Notably, this theme was captured by the artists who visited the house at the turn of the nineteenth century. Carefully structured views of an improved, highly cultivated landscape were depicted by the likes of J. M. W. Turner, John Varley and Thomas Girtin. In their paintings Turner and Varley capture the essence of the estate at the turn of the nineteenth century, with the assets of sheep, cattle and deer roaming freely next to the ploughed fields filled with men servicing the estate. In juxtaposition was the backdrop of a carefully designed arcadia with wood 'enamel'd' and open vistas across the 'fertile plains' surrounding Harewood House (John Jewell 1819). This represented the 'lush productivity' that had resulted from Edwin Lascelles' plans for a fashionable landscape that also produced a notable income.

Timur Tatlioglu

## Geoffrey Smith, our Vice-President who died on February 27<sup>th</sup> 2009

Most of you will know of Geoffrey's achievements - he was after all a celebrity in his own right having appeared regularly on Radio 4's *Gardeners' Question Time*, presented two fabulous series of *Geoffrey Smith's World of Flowers*, written many books and countless articles and, to top it all, was a charming castaway on Radio 4's *Desert Island Discs*.

Geoffrey was born on March 23<sup>rd</sup> 1928 at Barnigham in Swaledale, North Yorkshire where his father was head gardener on the Barningham Estate. He at-

tended Barnard Castle school as a boarder, a place which did not suit his love of freedom. He went on to train as a gardener for 6 years alongside



**Geoffrey Smith, 2nd. From right**

his father before studying horticulture at Askham Bryan College. At the young age of 26 he became superintendent at Harlow Carr Gardens, Harrogate, now run by the RHS, a position he dearly loved and one which he held for some 20 years. His legacy can still be seen in the beautiful stream area planted up with his favourite choice plants such as candelabra primulas. He was also instrumental in setting up trial grounds to assess what types of plants were suitable for cultivation in a northern climate. But Geoffrey was no friend to change and I know

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that he felt unhappy about the changes carried out at Harlow Carr after he had left.

It is common knowledge that he and Pippa Rakussen - the then Director of the gardens - did not see eye to eye. Having known them both personally, I can well understand why for although they both shared a love of woodland gardens and natural planting, Pippa felt passionately that Harlow Carr needed a facelift to meet the challenges of a new and more glitzy style of gardening, something that was to happen once the RHS took over the gardens. Geoffrey, on the other hand, clung to the traditional values of horticulture which he had been taught by his father in an age when garden husbandry involved double digging, leaving beds fallow and patiently waiting for the soil to be ready. He was a visionary gardener who planted for the long term - quick-fix make over gardens clad with decking Geoffrey found abhorrent.

His favourite Yorkshire garden of all was Parcevall Hall where nature seems to embrace the art of gardening. With the passing of Geoffrey I feel we have lost the link to a golden age of gardening and the values that were born from it. Geoffrey was a per-

sonal friend: many years ago our garden was filmed for a television programme in which he and I discussed the plants I grew. He loved talking which was a good thing as I felt extremely nervous so I left most of the talking to him! The same applied when I hosted a two day event at home in aid of the British Red Cross which raised a great deal of money due to the fact he refused to accept a fee - unlike so many gardening personalities I can think of. He and I were to talk about our favourite plants but, to be honest, I hardly got a word in edge way! Not surprising of course because everyone loved to hear Geoffrey swoon over a flower, its scent, its colour, its pollinator and its history of which he knew so much. He had a way with words enhanced by his soft Dale's accent.

Rhododendrons, Azaleas and Roses were amongst his favourite plants and of the former he knew the names of all the early hybrids. He shared my love of species Pelargoniums from South Africa and inspired me to search for them in the wild. However, if he was here today he would tell you that it was the wild flowers of the Yorkshire Dales that were closest to his heart. Geoffrey was a keen supporter of the York-

shire Gardens Trust and felt honoured when approached to become Vice President. There were many occasions when we turned to him for his taxonomic knowledge: Keith and Gilly Schellenberg, owners of Saint Nicholas at Richmond will remember a special event organized by the Yorkshire Gardens Trust, to identify shrubs and roses planted by the legendary Bobby James in their garden. Geoffrey was amongst an elite group of garden cognoscente - being the elder statesman his wisdom proved invaluable.

Several years ago I was talking to Geoffrey about early flowering snowdrops on the telephone - it was autumn but he had a certain species already in flower. I was envious though never dreamt to ask him for the odd bulb or two. The next morning a brown paper bundle arrived in the post meticulously tied with string. There they were in full bloom. Such was his kindness and for me they will always be a poignant reminder of a great man who found life's riches in plants, gardens and nature and not in the material world we inhabit today.

Penelope Dawson-Brown

## Visit to Pennyholme, May 28<sup>th</sup> 2009

Venturing from the Highside above Ripon across the Vale of Mowbray, I spent the morning at Rievaulx Abbey and its excellent museum. I ate my picnic at Rievaulx Terrace before continuing through Helmsley and discovering Sleightholmedale from the given instructions and perusal of an OS map.

What a wonderful place to have a house, a real hideaway from civilisation! It is at the end of the lane, in the narrow valley of Hodge Beck, 600ft up in the area of the North York Moors. The owners live near Harrogate and only spend weekends at Pennyholme.

Originally the area was part of the Feversham estate and later Lord Halifax was a resident. During the 1950s, the original farm was enlarged by the Feversham family, adding the present

front of the house. Subsequently a member of the Wills tobacco firm (who was also a film-maker) became the owner. Then 10 years ago, it was purchased by the present owner.

Parking in the small area outside the outbuildings, eyes were immediately drawn to a stunning blaze of colour on the moorland slope on the far side of Hodge Beck, as well as a band of yellow in the area just over the wall. The extensive lawns bordering the beck were formerly grazing meadows, so wild flowers are to be found, as the lawns are merely the result of a regular mowing regime. The gardener and his two assistants are landscape gardeners who travel twice weekly from Wakefield (encountering a sudden snowfall one day last winter, they needed to be towed up the lane out of the

Dale!), keep everything in good order. Initially much structural work and restoration needed to be done, the cascade in front of the house was completely overgrown and riverside walls needed restoration and reinforcement. The stone walls along the lane leading to the house have also been repaired.

The blaze of colour on the day of our visit was from azaleas and rhododendrons of all hues. The walk led us across a lawned area to a bridge over the beck, from the far side of which there was a steep short ascent leading to a narrow section with lovely views across to the house. The beck is crossed by wooden bridges, one of which was swept downstream in the dreadful Ryedale floods but retrieved and reinstated.

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## Visit to Pennyholme cont.

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Some of us lingered among the rhododendrons before descending to the waterside where we also discovered magnificent candelabra primulas and other water-loving plants. Continuing past the cascade (a mini version of Chatsworth's famous feature), we crossed a wilder meadow area to a summerhouse where we enjoyed delicious cakes and drinks. Finally we



Cascade in front of house

visited an area with a pond where bluebells were still in bloom, which will attract many kinds of wildlife.

A memorable afternoon in real summer weather and the owners deserve many thanks for allowing us to visit their rural haven of tranquility.

Gwynneth Jackson

## Holehird Gardens 6<sup>th</sup> August 2008

Few could deny that the Cumbrian Lake District is home to the most romantic and picturesque landscape in England with its rolling fells and jagged mountain peaks, lakes and pristine tarns and fern-rich mossy woods. It is also a place well endowed with



Hot coloured alstroemeria and dahlias look stunning in the Walled Garden throughout August.

beautiful gardens and none more so than Holehird, just north of Windamere which is run by the Lakeland Horticultural Society (LHS). The gardens are part of the Holehird Estate which belongs to Cumbria County Council and it is they who lease them to the Society. They are centred around an impressive Mansion with magnificent views across Lake Windamere and the Lansdale Fells which is now a Cheshire Home.

Last August, over thirty YGT members made the journey across the Pennines to visit the gardens and this proved to be a most memorable event thanks to Fred Dunning whom I had invited to show us round. An extra bonus was that the LHS Chairman, Peter Hogarth, insisted on joining us. Many will re-

member Fred as Editor of Northern Gardener, Harlow Carr's popular journal which sadly ended when the RHS took over the gardens. Subsequently Fred became heavily involved with Holehird, a place which he and his late wife had loved and often visited. He was responsible for producing the interesting and exquisitely illustrated Holehird Guide Book which most of us purchased on the day.

Holehird Estate dates back to the early 17th Century but it was not until 1854 that John Rowson Lingard commissioned J. S. Crowther (later to become diocesan architect to Manchester Cathedral) to build the first part of the Gothic style mansion we see today and which was later added to by Holehird's next owner, John Macmillan Dunlop, the Manchester industrialist who bought the estate in 1865. Dunlop demolished the original Lakeland farmhouse and improved the formal gardens to the west and the south and installed heated greenhouses to the present walled garden. Regrettably



Fred Dunning admires hostas and day lilies in the Davidia Bed

these proved to be inadequate to accommodate the immense and famed orchid collection belonging to the next owner, William Grimble



The 'upper pit house' containing tufa from the mansion conservatory

Groves who moved into Holehird in 1897. Groves' previous garden at Alderley Edge was famed amongst the horticultural elite as was his orchid collection, believed to be one of the finest in the country. He immediately commissioned Thomas Mawson (1861 - 1933) and architect Dan Gibson (then in partnership in Windamere) to extend the range of glasshouses in the walled garden: the result was a series of orchid houses equipped with a state of the art heating system designed so "the proprietor was to be able to go round the entire range without leaving the shelter of the glass". Sadly these were demolished before the LHS took over the walled garden area.

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William Groves was a genuine lover of all plants and developed the rockery area where he personally planted many bulbs and gentians. Henry Leigh Groves succeeded his father at Holehird but he and his wife had no children and in later life chose to retire to a smaller residence nearby. In 1945, Henry gifted Holehird Mansion and the Estate, together with £25,000 towards their upkeep, to the Westmorland County Council for the benefit of the people of the county - an outstanding act of generosity befitting a man who, like his father, had done so much for the local community. Subsequently the County Council set up the Holehird Trust as a charity and in 1961, the Mansion was leased to the Leonard Cheshire Foundation. Fortuitously the LHS was formed in 1969 and accepted the challenge of restoring the gardens. Today they attract some 25,000 visitors each year and they are run entirely by a team of sixty dedicated volunteers, members of the LHS.

We began our tour in the Walled Garden which looked stunning - Fred had told me August was the best time to visit and he was right for it was exploding with colour. Five differently shaped Island Beds were created in the main lawn during the eighties and the stunning east and west borders established soon afterwards. Within the former, elegant shrubs and small trees have been underplanted with a mixture of perennials, annuals and bulbs to ensure long-lasting displays. The beds are tended by volunteers Andy Booth and Sally Crosson, who singly take charge of their respective beds. Chatting with them as we wandered round we were impressed by their immense dedication to the gardens which they love and cherish as their own and their talent for colour and design. We admired the isolated specimen of *Cornus controversa* 'Variegata' (the wedding cake tree) and the multi-stemmed *Aralia elata* 'Variegata' (Japanese angelica tree) planted in one of the beds. We were bowled over by the dramatic displays of hot colours: bold clumps of vivid penstemons, tall swathes of *Crocsmia latifolia* 'Lucifer', rudbeckia and thick stands of orange

lilies not to mention the over-fed dahlias which looked fantastic. Apart from the wealth of vegetation in the walled garden, several points of interest were explained to us: the helio-chronometer in the forecourt and the armillary sundial, donated to the Society in memory of a founder member, which stands in the centre of the lawn. The former was purchased by the Groves family in 1908 and was used to regulate mechanical clocks before the era of radio time signals ("pips").

Within the ten acres of garden a series of designed walks leads you through the ever changing themes of the garden past areas of historic interest such as the Purdom Bed, containing plants introduced by the Lakeland plant hunter William Purdom (1880 - 1921) who joined Reginald Farrer's expedition to Kansu Province, China, in 1914 partly funded by the Groves family. The old specimen of *Rhododendron purdomii* which flowers in April was given to the Society by his sister from her own garden. It was not until 2000 that it was recognised as a distinct species. William Purdom died in 1921 while working on a Comprehensive Forestry Survey for the Chinese railway authorities but his memory lives on in the many plants he brought to our gardens including *Clematis macropetala*.

In August, the Davidia Bed was looking splendid with multitudinous clumps of hostas in every form and hue imaginable providing a perfect foil to the wide range of day lilies (*Hemerocallis*). Nearby, a veteran handkerchief tree *Davidia involuocrata* var. *vilmoriniana*, a survivor of the original garden, offered dappled shade. Recently it had undergone essential surgery for fungal disease and although somewhat reduced in size, it appeared to be making a good recovery.

An important feature of the original garden was the series of pools close to the Mansion House fed by streams running down from the fells. In 2002/2003 extensive restoration and replanting were carried out by the volunteers; the effect is ravishing with many impressive plants now established round the top pool including a gigantic Gunnera whose architectural leaves look incredible reflected in the

water. The stream bed has been re-aligned to form a Cascade bordered with drifts of hostas, iris and primula, and interspersed with specimen acers.

We also inspected the fine collection of alpiners in the old greenhouse built by William Grimble Groves and refurbished in 1999 using traditional curve-ended glass panes, and the "pit" greenhouses from the Victorian era, so called because they were built into the hillside for added protection. Tufa in the Upper Pit House was taken from the mansion conservatory when this was demolished. Many rarities are expertly tended under glass at Holehird including species *Pelargonium*s.

Over the years, Holehird has become a garden of scientific interest owning three important National Collections of plants: *Astilbe*, *Hydrangea* and *Polystichum* (a type of evergreen fern). In 2000, the *Astilbe* Collection with 20 species and 180 cultivars was awarded Scientific Status by the NCCPG. I shall never forget the ribbons of colour in these *Astilbe* beds where their huge fluffy plumes rippled like waves on a multi-coloured sea. *Astilbes* thrive at Holehird in light shade and a humus-rich moist soil yet in general they are undervalued by many of today's gardeners which seems to me a great pity. In 2003, *Astilbe* 'Henry Noblet' was named after the LHS President who had been responsible for assembling such a complete collection.

We ended our day wandering through the magnificent *Hydrangea* Walk just inside the Mansion Drive gate-posts where the main display can be seen. There are currently 13 species and 249 cultivars in Holehird's National Collection and because it is such a comprehensive one, it too was awarded Scientific Status by the NCCPG. Most admired were the "mophead" and "lace cap" sorts which have originated from *Hydrangea macrophylla* in Japan, especially one that has been named 'Holehird Purple'. Exceptionally beautiful too was the cultivar *Hydrangea serrata* 'Tiara' whose delicate flowers transform them-

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## Holehird Gardens 6<sup>th</sup> August 2008 cont.

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selves from blue to pink. Hydrangeas flourish at Holehird in a slightly acidic soil of pH 6.5 thus ensuring their full colour range.

One visit to Holehird is simply not enough so before I left I joined the

LHS planning to return many times in the future. Holehird, as I was to discover, is much more than a garden, it is a remarkable community of like-minded people who have pulled together to recreate the magic and

beauty which had so inspired all those fortunate to live there.

For further information contact [secretary@holehirdgardens.org.uk](mailto:secretary@holehirdgardens.org.uk)

Penelope Dawson-Brown

## THE GARDEN OF EDEN: A STORY FOR OUR TIME?

### **A LECTURE FOR THE YORKSHIRE PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY AND THE YORKSHIRE GARDENS TRUST, Tuesday 3 March 2009.**

When Penelope first asked me if I would give the joint Yorkshire Gardens Trust and Yorkshire Philosophical Society lecture in 2009, she naturally asked me for a subject and title. At the time I was still in a haze of enthusiasm about a book that I had recently purchased called 'Mapping Paradise. A History of Heaven on Earth' by Alessandro Scafi (published by the British Library in 2006). The book is all about the long quest by scholars to identify the geographical location of the Jewish and Christian Garden of Eden and Paradise. On and off, I have long been interested in the history, concept, and imagery of the Garden of Eden and Paradise, and their influence on actual gardens and landscapes.

I remember coming across a book, by chance, in the York City Reference Library some 30 years ago that was a discourse on the location of Paradise published in London in 1660. The author was Marmaduke Carver, the Rector of Harthill in the County of York. The title of the book is 'A Discourse of the Terrestrial Paradise aiming at a more probable Discovery of the True Situation of that happy place of our first Parent's Habitation.' In the Preface, Carver says that the subject had been an early interest of his. An occasion had arisen that gave him the opportunity to discuss the matter over several days with Sir Richard Dyer, one of the Council in the North. Sir Richard asked Carver to explore that matter further, and this he did, using the library at York Minster where he was encouraged by a Reverend, Pious, and Learned Divine who also encouraged him to commu-

nicate his findings to others. At the time he only produced one copy. 26 years passed by before he brought it to publication in an augmented form. 26 years back from the date of publication would bring us to 1640, the year before the execution of Thomas Earl of Strafford, President of the Council in the North, and on the eve of the Civil War.

Scafi's book on 'Mapping Paradise' had rekindled my interest and led me to my subject and title. In a way, it has been a self-indulgence, but on the way it has opened up a whole new subject area that will take a long time to sort out properly. My talk represents work in progress but it has enabled me to explore and clarify some of the basic aspects of the subject and to think about how they relate to bigger issues and also the interests of the Yorkshire Gardens Trust and the Yorkshire Philosophical Society.

According to the biblical account, the Garden of Eden was the first home of humanity, in the form of Adam and Eve, but they were expelled from it into a wider world where nature was not so kind and where they had to contend with it in order to gain a living. Eventually, their descendants have been so successful that that even nature is in retreat, and humanity is rapidly being forced to come to terms with the consequences.

Souls, minds, and imaginations can return to Paradise and the Garden of Eden, but the living body cannot do this, and yet we have to find ways of changing the course of human development back in the general direction of the

Garden of Eden where humans and nature lived in harmony with each other, under the watchful eye of the Almighty. But how is this to be achieved?

The Garden of Eden and Paradise have long been a compelling image in human thought and in the imagination, whether or not one has a particular interest in gardens. This lecture seeks to explore the imagery and the ideas that are, and have been, connected with the Garden of Eden and Paradise, and it will identify ways in which they might contribute to present day environmental agendas.

Although on the surface, it seems to be a simple and straight forward story, when one starts to analyse it closely, verse by verse, phrase by phrase, and word by word, and when one becomes conscious of the layers of history and interpretation that have been attached to it or that have been associated with it through the course of two to three thousand years, one begins to appreciate its richness, its complexity, its mysteriousness, and its stimulating ambiguities. In the wide spectrum of the history of Western thought, it is one of the important landmarks, whether or not one subscribes to Christianity or Judaism. As a story it comes to Christianity from Judaism. Whether or not it ever existed on the ground, the Garden of Eden exists in the human mind and imagination and has done so since the origin of the story. Adam and Eve are the only supposed humans who ever to have dwelt there or to have seen it.

It is important to say right at the beginning, that in this lecture I am not concerned with the question of whether the story of the Garden of

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Eden is literally true and occurred exactly as it is set out in the Bible. My interest is in it as a story with an ex-

tremely long life and currency, and a story that is deeply engrained in Western culture. By means of poetry, metaphor, and allegory, it re-

flects some basic truths about humanity, as it is understood in the Western world.

Peter H Goodchild

## Research and Recording

Our meeting in Masham on 1 June was to gather up the ends of the Vicarage Garden Project, which we mentioned in the last newsletter had not proved as fruitful as hoped. However, we were pleased to hear that rather more information had been gathered, as a result of this we decided to extend the date to 31 October 2009 for collecting the information.

The Reginald Farrer Day in Clapham, near Settle, is fully booked with a short waiting list. This Day has come about as a result of the Yorkshire Dales Project, when Moira and I visited Ingleborough Hall and Clapham, (which was the home of Reginald Farrer (1880-1920), the plant-collector, artist and author), on more than one occasion. It should be a very interesting day.

In the meantime, in July, four of the researchers are going to The Rectory Society Tea Party at The Old Vicarage, Grantchester. In 1909 Rupert Brooke (1887-1915) moved to Grantchester, and in 1912 wrote his famous poem about The Old Vicarage, Grantchester:

*Just now the lilac is in bloom,  
All before my little room:  
And in my flower-beds, I think,  
Smile the carnation and the pink  
.....  
And is there honey still for tea?  
.....  
Stands the church clock at ten to  
three.....*

The time when we arrive – ten to three! We will let you know about the honey in the next newsletter! (NB. This is self-funded!)

Also in September members of The Rectory Society are to visit Yorkshire! They will visit Shandy Hall, Coxwold, picnic lunch in the gardens of the Old Vicarage, Settrington and, finally, visit the Old Rectory at Foston; the rectory

originally designed by Rev. Sydney Smith in the early C19th. If you would like any further information do get in touch.

Helen Lazenby

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## Education

Since our last Newsletter, I've been delighted to welcome Lucy Porritt, a local garden designer to Schools Education. Lucy has already begun to contact schools in her region and beyond; helping the Trust to reach yet more schools in the county.

The Spring and Summer Terms have seen the Trust leading a couple of Design Workshops for one of our member schools: surveying the new garden area; getting the children to think about how they would like their garden to make them feel; producing mood boards; plotting areas of sunshine and shade and producing design and planting plans. I hear that the school has now implemented the first stage of the plans, using money they have raised from plant sales and I'm looking forward to visiting the garden for its grand opening in a few weeks time.

With schools about to close for the summer, Lucy and I are already turning our thoughts to how we can help schools develop their gardens and grounds in the Autumn Term!

Nicola Harrison  
nicola\_a\_harrison@tiscali.co.uk

## Wentworth

An enormous series of changes have happened in the past few months, brought about by the tragic death of our new director, Steve Blackburn. Steve was a young man in the prime of his life whose enthusiasm for our project was instantly apparent to all who met him. An ambitious events programme for the next year had been developed and we are still reaping the benefits, which he would have been so proud to oversee. He leaves a very young son Finlay and wife Lynn whose dynamism within the museum world, not least at Cannon Hall is well known locally. His presence is sorely missed.

One of his coups was the attraction of Yorkshire Forward money which has gone to consolidating the deer fencing, our Orangery and not least to the re-erection of a gilded sun on the top of the Apollo monument which took place last week. His work towards a second Heritage Lottery application for the Conservatory has been taken forward with the kind support of Barnsley Council who supplied someone with Lottery experience at very short notice to help us finalise our new bid.

In the interim the Trustees have been involved in the search for a new Director and we have appointed Vicky Martin who has worked at Exbury and most recently Wollaton Hall to the post. She will be joining us in August and we very much look forward to working with her in the future.

If any of you are fans of open air theatre I would draw your attention to our two summer events, Sense and Sensibility on 31<sup>st</sup> July and Romeo and Juliet on 29<sup>th</sup> August with Chapter House Theatre starting at 7 p.m. in each case. Several YGT members made the journey this last weekend to see Opera Brava put on

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## Committee Round-Up Cont.

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Marriage of Figaro that was a truly memorable occasion.

Jane Furse

### Small Grants Scheme

This month (July) we launch the seventh year of our small grants scheme; something that we can all be proud of at the YGT. I'm looking forward to receiving applications so that we can continue to help parks and gardens throughout Yorkshire. Two thousand pounds has been allocated again this year. We make the application for our grant as easy as possible and the form is available on our website ([www.yorkshiregardenstrust.org.uk](http://www.yorkshiregardenstrust.org.uk)), the Yorkshire and Humber Historic Environment Forum website ([www.yhhef.org.uk](http://www.yhhef.org.uk)) and via mailings to our local authority and societies' contacts. Please spread the word! A telephone call or e-mail and I can send out a form. The closing date is the 30<sup>th</sup> November 2009.

Just to refresh your memory: all but one of our allocations from the 2007-8 scheme have now been given and we're just waiting to hear from York Gate Garden, Leeds on progress with the replacement stone carved dolphin. The Friends of Beaumont Park, Huddersfield have spent their grant on the work for the pond at the Cliff Cascade, ([www.fobp.co.uk](http://www.fobp.co.uk)), the Derwent Riverside Project, Castle Garden, Malton have carried out the tree work, Dales Plants and Gardens Project (Richmondshire Museum & Dales Countryside Museum) now have their display cases and we're looking forward to arranging a visit in 2011/12 to Whinfell Quarry Garden, Sheffield to see the replanted rhododendrons which should be well established by then.

Currently we are distributing our 2008-9 grant: £800 to Cannon Hall, Barnsley, £700 to the Ancient Society of York Florists and £500 to Cantley Community Centre (Trust), Doncaster. Cannon Hall and park was the home of the Spencer (later the Spencer-Stanhope) family who made their fortune in the local iron industry and who employed John Carr of York to enlarge and redesign the house,

and the designer Richard Woods to landscape the park and gardens, in the mid eighteenth century. Since 1957 the hall and park have been open to the public run by Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council, and our grant is going to the Friends, as matched funding, to replace three eighteenth century stone balls set on plinths on the south front of the hall, overlooking the park.

The Ancient Society of York Florists (ASYF) held their first Florist's show in 24 Colliergate, York in 1768 and the Society is still going strong; an amazing achievement. To celebrate and promote this great Yorkshire horticultural heritage we are giving matched funding for a plaque to be made and placed on the building in Colliergate. The York Civic Trust is arranging the practicalities such as the planning required, and the plaque itself will be funded by the ASYF and the YGT.

As a charitable trust, our objectives cover the education of the public on matters connected with garden land, which besides our heritage of gardens and parks also includes urban open spaces. We therefore felt that this year we should support an application from a community centre in Doncaster. Cantley Community Centre serves a varied area of housing, works from an old infant school and has a partnership with a local centre for adults with learning difficulties, who are working to transform the rather bleak surroundings into a community garden. Jenni Howard has been liaising with John, the enthusiastic Community Centre Manager, and thanks to her persuasive powers with English Heritage Outreach and Dan the Head Gardener at Brodsworth Hall, she has been able to transport a trailer-load of spare plants destined for the compost heap, to the developing garden at Cantley. We are also giving funding for garden tools.

In this tranche of grant applications we had one from the Abbeyfield, Esk Moors Committee at Castleton for help with their new garden. It has taken almost twelve years for a small group on the North York

Moors to realise their ambition for locally based accommodation for the elderly. Esk Moors Lodge has now opened, built on a brown-field site near the Esk Valley railway. The garden area amounts to some 0.6 acres and is being designed and built by local volunteers. The Council of the YGT decided that we would support this application outside the small grant scheme and make a special grant of £250 to buy fruit trees for the proposed orchard. Member Jenni Woods, who has been involved with the project since its inception, says that the garden is slowly taking shape; over 100 trees have been planted, the lawns turfed, paths paved and the herbaceous border planted up. If you are visiting the Esk valley do go and see how the garden is developing.

Val Hepworth

### Conservation and Planning

It seems that we have been chivvying forever to get the park at St Ives, Bingley onto the English Heritage Register, so it is very pleasing to write that it was finally added to the EH Register at Grade II on 28 April 2009. However on a less happy note, within the last year an early nineteenth century shrubbery adjacent to the site of the former Green House (a conservatory built in 1824) has been removed. This was in an area no longer open to the general public, which had apparently no management plan for the grounds. It had been allowed to become totally neglected and strewn with rubbish but the garden still contained shrubs possibly dating from the nineteenth century. The landscaping of this area was most likely to be from the early 1820s when Adam Mickle III (1781-1827) and the Backhouse Nursery had both been involved with laying out the new grounds of the mansion for Walker Ferrand. Hopefully a mistake like this will not occur again as a new management strategy is about to be developed for the whole estate with Bob Thorp, the newly appointed Tree and Woodland Officer for Bradford, playing a key role. We do hope that the excellent research work carried out by Anne Tupholme, and her considerable expertise, will be

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used by Bradford MBC to secure a more historic approach to the use of this park.

In the last newsletter we wrote of our concerns about the reconstructed waterfall at Parcevall Hall. We are expecting that the design for a more sympathetic re-working of the waterfall will be finalized very soon and that the daunting task of finding funding for this project will commence. Next year will be the 50th anniversary of the death of Sir William Milner so it would be especially appropriate to mark this occasion by completing the final stage of the major restoration of his gardens. Already we have £100 ear-marked from donations but would v much like substantially more. If you can help YGT in any way with this, then please let either Anne or myself know.

Debates about renewable energy and proposed wind turbine developments will no doubt continue for a long time. The YGT Conservation sub-committee is concerned when proposals will have a significantly damaging effect on historic designed landscapes and their settings, so we were pleased that the Chelker wind turbines near Bolton Abbey were refused. However in view of the 'lucrative opportunities for farmers and landowners diversifying into wind farm projects', (Yorkshire Post 21<sup>st</sup> Feb), we can expect appeals and further threats to historic designed landscapes. In fact as I write we have just learned that the turbines project near Gledstone Hall in Craven has gone to appeal.

It was a great delight for the Conservation sub-committee to be invited by the National Trust (NT) to hold their recent committee meeting at Goddards in York, and to meet Raoul Curtis-Machin, the NT Gardens and Parks Advisor (North), and the Head Gardener at Goddards, Alison Green, who gave us a tour of the gardens. As an administrative centre for the Trust since the mid 1980's there have been limited resources for garden maintenance and so parts of the garden

have been 'rationalised', however it was good to see that the 'bones' of George Dillistone's work with the owner Noel Terry remain. Dillistone came from a long line of gardeners and between the two world wars he was a prominent figure in landscape circles. He described Goddards as "a very fine series of gardens with plenty of interest through every foot". The house commissioned by Noel Terry ('Terry's of York') was to be Walter Brierley's last house; he died in August 1926 a few months before completion. The National Trust now open the gardens on weekdays during the season. It was good at this meeting to renew our links with the National Trust, started when Roger Carr-Whitworth was a member of the Conservation sub-committee in our early days, and we hope to work more closely together in the future.

Malcolm Barnett and myself have for more years than we care to remember, encouraged the trustees of Kiplin Hall near Northallerton to embrace the conservation and sensitive development of Kiplin's gardens and designed landscape. Particu-



**Members of the Conservation sub-committee in the garden at Goddards**

larly over the last ten years huge strides have been made with the Hall as YGT members will have seen on our visit in 2007. The recent improvements to the gardens and the HLF-funded project for the peninsula woodland, which we supported, are also very encouraging. During the winter we've been giving some more advice and help – in-

cluding a session with long-handled loppers! [The shrubs are really flourishing and the fine railings are visible once more.] But our major effort has just taken place, when working with the curator, Dawn Webster and the administrator, Marcia McLuckie, along with Elaine Bird who works part-time in the gardens, Malcolm, Martin Walker and myself gathered together expertise for a day, to look more closely at the future for the gardens and landscape. Andy Wimble, English Heritage's Regional Landscape Architect, YGT Vice-president, Peter Goodchild and Arts and Crafts gardens specialist and garden designer, Melissa Hay, spent the day with us for a tour of the grounds and the hall followed by discussions, when we were joined by the land agent, James Fife. There was unanimous agreement that Kiplin should build on its heritage from the Arts and Crafts period and that this should lead developments in the gardens and increase the interest for visitors. We intend to develop our ideas and suggestions in a paper for the next trustees meeting.

In June English Heritage published this year's report on *Heritage at Risk* which includes 'Landscapes at Risk' and 'Conservation Areas at Risk'; [www.english-heritage.org.uk/conservationareas](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/conservationareas) and follow the links to parks and gardens and the report for Yorkshire and the Humber. Parks and gardens in our region are in the highest percentage at risk category; 6.6% - 10.0%. One emerging theme across the North and

indeed elsewhere is the number of Grade II sites at risk often through inappropriate development, which tends to reflect the lack of expertise in many planning authorities in recognising the vulnerability of historic designed landscapes. This is very worrying as regrettably English Heritage has no planning remit or fund-

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## YORKSHIRE GARDENS TRUST

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ing for Grade II sites; something that we and other county gardens trusts have been concerned about for several years. Examples of sites at risk are landscape parks with their mansions, which have undergone change of ownership sometimes into corporate or institutional use but also through subdivision into various private ownerships. These changes have frequently brought incremental development, such as new buildings and car parks, which have eroded their character and interest. The conservation of historic features within designed landscapes, including built structures and parkland and avenue trees can be an expensive exercise, but the ultimate loss of these features inevitably threatens the significance of the landscape design. These problems apply equally to both small and grand landscapes. The villa grounds of Thwaite Hall, Cottingham were developed mainly in the 1870s/80s, but modified in the mid C20 to provide accommodate for the University of Hull and partly developed as a botanical garden. Problems with flood damage in 2007 and drainage problems are affecting mature planting and the lawns around the lake. In North Yorkshire, both the 20-hectare grounds of Ebberston Hall and the 1250-hectare designed landscape of Castle Howard have also been included on the at risk register.

## STOP PRESS...forthcoming events

*Tuesday 11 August*  
Mulgrave Castle, tour of the Walled Garden - **fully booked**

*Tuesday 19 August*  
Reginald Farrer Study Day at Clapham - **fully booked**

In early September, Father Rainer Verbourg will show us round the apple orchards at Ampleforth College which he looks after. There are some 40 varieties of apples including early varieties such as Ribston Pippin, Ashmead's Kernel and Beauty of Bath. Tea will be served in the Abbey cafe afterwards where we shall sample Father Rainer's famed apple cider cake. Date to be confirmed.

In South Yorkshire, Oakes Park, Sheffield is at risk reflecting both the condition of the park and the poor condition of its early eighteenth and

vulnerable to change within and beyond the registered area outside their guardianship. And we should also remember the extensive number of parks and gardens not on the English Heritage Register but of regional or local significance that are not included in this at risk survey. There is much to do and we should all help to raise awareness where we can.



**Topiary garden at Kiplin with workshop group**

nineteenth century gateways and ornamental iron gates. Sometimes development beyond the boundary of a registered landscape can be just as harmful as construction within its boundaries; this is especially true where development would impact on designed views that extend beyond the designated site itself. In a changing environment these views can be easily lost or spoiled if the relationships between the historic park and garden and its setting are not appreciated. Even parks and gardens in the care of conservation organisations are still

Through our membership of the Yorkshire and the Humber Historic Environment Forum we are involved with the production of the annual report on the state of Yorkshire's historic environment, 'Heritage Counts'. We are very pleased that this year's report includes a case study featuring our visits with refugees in 2008.

Finally, our congratulations to Sewerby Hall and gardens, near Bridlington, which have been voted the best place to enjoy a picnic in Britain, for the second year running. The grounds at Sewerby Hall are pristine ... and the gardens are wonderful, so if you've never visited then now is the time to take your picnic rug and sandwiches and see for yourself.

Val Hepworth

**Note from the Editor:** This is my last Newsletter and as always I would like once again to thank all those for contributing to this Newsletter  
Louise Wickham