



# YORKSHIRE GARDENS TRUST NEWSLETTER

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## Wentworth Castle Update

Our Conservatory is looking fabulous, helped by our mild Autumn which has allowed our winter flowering plants to put on good recent growth and hence flowers.

Our star attractions during the winter months include the two climbers along the back wall. On the house side, *Lapageria rosea*, named after Napoleon's Josephine de la Pagerie has already filled the wall space with its glossy evergreen leaves. It is also the national flower of Chile and its gorgeous pink waxy bells, some 4"/10cms long, look fabulous hanging there, sometimes as many as four or five in a row from the leaf axils.



On the western side of the Conservatory, nearest the azalea or 'Spring Garden' is a less well known plant from the Canary Islands,



*Canarina canariensis* which is a member of the campanula family. The flowers, some 3-6cm long, appear not long after the new shoots rocket up the back wall and are not blue or white but a wonderful orange veined with red whose tips flare out prettily into six points.

It was a very interesting challenge to find suitable plants for this historic greenhouse and most of our advice came from Dr. David Mitchell of Edinburgh Botanic Gardens who suggested various themes for the conservatory beds. The Trust decided to plant up the beds according to which continent the specimens came from and to try and tell the history of plant introductions via the individuals chosen. Missing from the list was a suitably colourful European climber which would flower during the winter months. Ideally, it would have been grown during the C17th or early C18th in Britain and so *Canarina canariensis* was chosen.

Imagine my pleasure last summer, in visiting the exhibition at the Queen's Gallery entitled *Painting Paradise*, to discover incontrovertible evidence that Thomas, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Strafford and owner of Wentworth Castle would have been familiar with it. Queen Anne, the Earl of Strafford's major patron, not only had *Canarina canariensis* growing in her hot houses, but also commissioned a series of flower paintings from Jakob Bogdani, (an acknowledged Hungarian master of the genre) to depict her collection. Framed by the handle on the left of the vase, I suddenly spotted our climber, the first time I have ever seen it in a contemporary painting.

Jane Furse

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### YORKSHIRE GARDENS TRUST

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# Visit to the Aske Estate

Tuesday 6 October 2015



The morning of Tuesday 6 October wasn't the brightest of days; mist was turning to drizzle, but thoughts of a guided tour around the Aske landscape with Val Hepworth and Janette Ray attracted 52 members. We assembled on the terrace staircase in front of the hall to hear the owner, Lord Ronaldshay, give a welcome; to thank him for the visit he was presented with a copy of Mark Laird's latest book, *A Natural History of English Gardening*.

We split into two groups, led by Val and Janette. They had surveyed the landscape about ten years ago and were able to share their knowledge and understanding of the changes through the centuries. We learned that Lancelot Brown's involvement had only been small though tree planting on raised ground resembled his method, and the naturalisation of the once formal fish pond was in his style.

I joined Janette's group, confident that Val would give the same treat that I was expecting. The Temple was our first major delight. Sir Conyers D'Arcy had obtained sketches from William Kent (c.1685-1748) and stylistically there were resemblances with the central tower, which is also similar to the Octagonal Tower at Studley. Janette explained how a map of 1769 shows an open area in front of the temple that has since been planted with larch in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. She and Val recommended clearing the trees when they did the plan in 2004, and some clearance has taken place.

We walked along a terrace walk indicated on a 1761 map by George Jackson and viewed the house from a little temple-like summerhouse built for Sir Lawrence Dundas in about 1770. Janette explained the probable site of a parterre that was to be designed by William Andrews Nesfield (1793-1881).

Janette's theories about the name 'China Plantation' were fascinating. She put fashion into historic context by suggesting Lawrence Dundas' association with the East India Company and his purchases of 'India Goods' from China.

Fascination continued as we walked through the woods to a former pleasure ground at Aske Beck. We came upon a delightful little round pool, marked on the 1761 map. Following the Aske Beck we traced it to where it

goes under the Richmond to Gilling road. Almost hidden in the undergrowth is Aske Bridge. So many times I will have travelled over it not realising it is there. It is thought that it was recommended by Lancelot Brown, the niches and decoration suggesting that it was once an estate feature.

Our final viewing station was the lake and a chance to see the Fish Pond Temple. By this time the weather had improved but Janette had already brightened any gloom with her enlightenment, and I for one had forgotten how many miles we had walked.

*Ray Blyth*



Aske Bridge  
on the Richmond to Gilling road.



The Fish Pond Temple

*Photographs by Ray Blyth.*

# Chairman's Letter

## Knowing, Thinking and Looking

During the Summer I was reading about the artist Charlotte Johnson Wahl (mother of Boris, Rachel et al) who loves colour and carries multiple 'colour recipes' in her head. As someone who only has a few cooking recipes in her head I think that is amazing. But maybe as gardeners we unconsciously carry colour recipes as we plant, replant, design and love our gardens. Charlotte Johnson Wahl says that her approach is to follow Manet: 'I paint what I see', linked with Goethe's 'Thinking is more interesting than knowing, but less interesting than looking'. Looking; such a fundamental skill to appreciate our surroundings, our world, our landscapes and our gardens but we do also need to know and to think. All these attributes are interconnected and feed from and feed into each other.

As our children develop they are like sponges; we give them knowledge and help them to discover the complexity of their world and indeed other worlds, we encourage them to think and to look and they come up with nuggets. This year, our long standing member John Hampshire has given our schools group a donation in memory of his wife Joyce. The first recipient of the Joyce Hampshire Award of high quality ash gardening tools has been Clapham Primary School which has two children's gardening clubs. The children have told us that they would 'love and cherish these gardening tools' and have sent us their Harvest Planting Prayer; a golden nugget:

### **'Plant Four Rows of Peas**

1. Peace within ourselves
2. Peace with each other
3. Peace in our school
4. Peace in our world

### **Plant Four Rows of Squash**

1. Squash unkindness
2. Squash rudeness
3. Squash unhelpfulness
4. Squash selfishness

### **Plant Four Rows of Lettuce**

1. Lettuce be hardworking
2. Lettuce be kind
3. Lettuce be patient
4. Lettuce care for one another

### **Plant Four Rows of Turnips**

1. Turn up when you're needed
2. Turn up to lend a hand
3. Turn up to help one another
4. Turn up and make a difference

### **Plant Four Rows of Thyme**

1. Thyme for ourselves
2. Thyme for each other
3. Thyme for family
4. Thyme for friends

These are simple words but so important ... and as important now as ever they have been. Thank you Clapham Primary children.

In this Newsletter you will read of the many good things that the Trust has been doing both for our members and for the wider world; letting people know about and encouraging them to look after our historic parks and gardens. Looking after our heritage remains something of a struggle, with funding so tight and so many calls on the public purse, so whatever we can do as a small trust can only be beneficial.

As you will have read in our previous Newsletters or seen on Yorkshire Gardens Trust (YGT) visits, we are very fortunate in our region to have the expertise of our member Dr Margaret Nieke, Historic Environment Specialist at Natural England who has been able to direct Environmental Stewardship to help with the repair and conservation of many of our significant historic parks and gardens. One of these, Bramham Park, has achieved a remarkable restoration, and besides the co-operation of English Heritage (now Historic England) and financial assistance from Natural England, the driving force has been Nick Lane Fox. Nick took on the running of the family's estate relatively recently and has found new ways of increasing income with the Leeds Music Festival being a major contributor to the

'health' of the estate and its wonderful landscape. We are so delighted that Nick has agreed to become a vice-president of YGT and welcome him most warmly.

Your events team has also welcomed a new member, Vicky Price, formerly active with the London Parks and Gardens Trust, who has moved to the Dales. It's good to have your energy and ideas, Vicky, and we hope that we will be able to welcome other members to join us in progressing and developing the good things that YGT does. One aspect of this is the hosting of events for the Trust and freely giving time guiding etc. Several of our events in 2015 have been hosted by YGT members. So too this coming year including our AGM, midsummer picnic and Summer evening visit. Our members' kindness means that we can make a healthy surplus on these events which underpins our running costs and grant-giving.

This year is a very special year for YGT. Not only are we twenty years old but Yorkshire is 'pushing the boat out' or rather celebrating the achievements of Lancelot 'Capability' Brown in Yorkshire for his three hundredth birthday. *Noble Prospects: Capability Brown and the Yorkshire Landscape*, curated by Karen Lynch at the Mercer Gallery in Harrogate is probably the first major collaboration between a County Gardens Trust and a gallery, and we are indebted to Karen for taking on this huge task and to Lady Legard for pulling together the considerable funds needed to make it all happen. We are also hugely grateful to Jane Sellers, Curator of the Mercer Art Gallery, and her staff for joining us in this exciting partnership. What a team!

So much to look forward to in 2016, and much else that I've not mentioned. Thank you to everyone who 'does' for YGT and as ever if you would like to help in any way then please phone me on 01748 822617 or email: [secretary@yorkshiregardenstrust.org.uk](mailto:secretary@yorkshiregardenstrust.org.uk)

*Val Hepworth*

## ANGEL AWARDS

### Certificate of Commendation

The Yorkshire Gardens Trust has received the above certificate from Historic England in recognition of the part we played with a grant towards the restoration of the Ionic Temple at Duncombe Park.

# Pippa Rakusen

## Legacy to the Yorkshire Gardens Trust

Pippa Rakusen became a dear friend to many of us involved with establishing the Trust in those early exciting days and a great supporter and friend of the Yorkshire Gardens Trust from its very inception. That support has, more recently, also manifested itself, so generously, in a legacy to the Trust from her estate. It was, at the AGM in March, that Val Hepworth, our Chairman, was able to announce the wonderful news that, following the settlement of the estate of the late Pippa Rakusen, the Trust was to receive a final distribution of £46,261.26 in addition to the interim distribution of £31,367.89 received during the year ended 30 September 2010.

We are now, more than ever, deeply indebted to Pippa as this legacy has provided the Trust with a special opportunity not only to further the work and the development of the Trust and to honour Pippa's contribution to both the Trust and to the cause of parks and gardens in general but also to invest for the Trust's longer term sustainability.

The Trust's Council of Management initially invited ideas for the use of the Bequest from Chairs of the Trust's Sub-Committees, from Members of the Council of Management and from the Trust's membership [Chairman's letter, Newsletter Autumn 2015]. These ideas, together with some suggestions for a decision making framework that drew upon the recommendations in the Trust's Business Plan 2013-2016, were then collated into a report for Council to consider at a special meeting that took place in late June.

At its special meeting held to consider the Report, members of the Council of Management agreed, in principle, to make the following recommendations to the next meeting of Council in July regarding support for special projects.

Provide up to £5,000 towards the Capability Brown 300 Mercer Gallery Exhibition Catalogue as fitting tribute to Pippa and to seek an appropriate person to lead on all communications, including to maximise the opportunities provided by the Mercer exhibition.

Provide an allocation of up to £5,000 towards the publication of the Richardson catalogue following approval of project brief and resolution of copyright issue.

Explore erection of plaque to commemorate James Backhouse in conjunction with other organisations, such as the York Civic Trust.

It also agreed, in principle, to make the following recommendations to Council regarding support for the continuation and further development of the important work of the Trust's Sub-committees in relation to events, conservation, education and to research and recording.

Events: support for development of a range of events that had the capability to raise YGT profile, increase membership, forge links with other organisations and assist in developing long term sustainability: the allocation of £2,000 for a special fundraising dinner in 2017, our 21<sup>st</sup> birthday.

Refugee events: the allocation of up to £2,000 over 5 years to support their continuation.

Conservation: the allocation of up to £10,000 to support a 5 year small grants programme and £2,000 to support publications.

Education and Schools: the allocation of up to £2,500 to support a special grants programme over 5 years.

Research and Recording: the allocation of £5- 8,000 to work with Parks and Gardens UK to create a web-based resource of Yorkshire's registered and non-registered parks and gardens site information: the allocation of up to £500 to upgrade the YGT web-site.

Council has now approved these recommendations and has also subsequently agreed to invest £45,000 to provide support for future running costs. It should also be noted that some of the funding allocations are potentially income generating and therefore may lead to some funds ultimately coming back to the Trust.

Taken together, these proposals not only provide the Trust with a challenging 5-year development programme, they also have the potential to lay the foundation for a longer term strategy for a Trust that is both more sustainable and that continues to contribute to the well-being of the communities and landscapes of Yorkshire.

## Future Visit to Hornby Castle

**Saturday 16 April 2016 at 10.30 am**

On a commanding position in rolling landscape a few miles west of the AIM and just north of Bedale in the Vale of Mowbray, Hornby Castle is only beginning to reveal its hidden secrets. Built by William the 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Conyers in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, his descendant Robert Darcy, Earl of Holderness, created a typical Brownian landscape complete with a string of lakes, crossed by a rustic bridge and 'eyecatcher' farms on the horizon. But Erik Matthews, Fieldwork Officer of the Archeological Society of Durham and Northumberland, will reveal to us that all is not what it seems, and hidden in the woods beyond the ruined gothic-style banqueting house, archeological excavations have disclosed fascinating evidence of a much earlier hunting lodge, a medieval 'pleasance'. Places are limited, so if you want to enjoy a treasure trail, book early.

# Research and Recording Group

Researching and recording historic parks and gardens has often been compared to detective work, hunting for clues in maps, documents and on the ground. Sometimes you have an 'eureka' moment when you make an important connection but equally there are times when you reach a dead end. It is very easy to get bogged down in detail but simply we are trying to determine 'what was done and when'. The R&R group continues to add to its volunteer base, a testament to the increasing interest in discovering more about Yorkshire's unregistered (and hitherto undocumented) historic designed landscapes. However we **always** welcome more help, so if you want to become another 'landscape detective' then please get in touch!

## East Riding

This was our 'pilot project' where we refined our processes and documentation. While that sounds a very dry exercise, for those involved it has been quite a revelation. This has largely been a 'recording' phase as we commissioned the initial historic reports from the local historians, David and Susan Neave. However, before going onto to the sites we acquainted ourselves with their landscape history which has provoked many further questions.

Louise was particularly interested in Grimston Garth on the North Sea coast, not for its late 18<sup>th</sup> century John Carr house or Thomas White designed landscape but the possible earlier gardens on the estate 500m to the north, surrounding the old moated manor house. In addition to a smaller moated enclosure that is shown as an orchard on the 1855 Ordnance Survey map, there were also areas called 'parks' on the western side marked on the tithe map of 1843.

Despite the threat of coastal erosion the smaller moated site still survives largely intact, the rest of the 'park' area has been extensively ploughed but possible remnants of the boundaries can still be seen on aerial photographs (Figure 1).



Figure 1.

As Yvonne reminds us, there is always potential for features to survive beneath the ground. An estate map of 1686 does seem to show some enclosed area but any more detail will be difficult to find. There is a map of c1560 made for Lord Burghley of the North Sea Coast which shows some trees above the manor house. It is tempting to think that this 'garden' dated from the time of the Armada...



Figure 2.

Yvonne was keen to revisit Watton Abbey, which she had previously studied using aerial photographs. The site was an important Gilbertine priory that unusually housed both nuns and canons (Figure 2). However, there has been scarce recognition of its garden history before Susan and David Neave's documentary research report for the YGT.

Visiting the site with fresh eyes, accompanied and guided by the expert opinion of Ed Dennison, the site reveals a complex story. The 19th-century listed country mansion incorporates parts of the medieval prior's lodge. A sense of calm and tranquillity pervades within enclosing walls, surrounded by lofty mature trees, including parts of a triple row tree avenue. The undisturbed grassland harbours great crested newts, whilst the ruined buildings are home to bats and barn owls.

The walled garden reveals an internal terrace walk lined with yews and inset steps (Figure 3); it incorporates a mound named Butt Hill, encased in stone, which remains somewhat of a puzzle, embroidered with tales of Civil War defences and which overlooks a former orchard, where we see yet



Figure 3.

more earthworks of embanked walks, potentially of late seventeenth century date.

There are complex water features fed by natural springs, deep ditches and remnant fishponds. Although typical of medieval monastic precincts, there are hints of modifications as garden features, a bridge with date stone 1723, possible ornamental ponds and perhaps even a swannery.

Helena, as a keen amateur gardener and lover of natural landscapes, found the opportunity to learn a little more about the East Riding irresistible. She says that 'one should walk through a landscape, not over it'. She visited Wassand Hall, a familiar small estate and walled garden overlooking Hornsea Mere and armed with clipboard and pencil, saw it with new eyes, while trying to pin down and record what had actually happened in the gardens over the centuries. In doing so, she has discovered duck decoys which were hitherto unknown to her and been privileged to see the icehouse, bothy and game house at Saltmarshe Hall. She notes: 'I have a lot to learn, and am grateful for the encouragement, training and support that the experts in the group provide. I am intrigued!'

### Selby District

Unlike the East Riding, we decided we were going to do the historic research as well as the recording with volunteers. While a few came forward from the current YGT membership, it has been new recruits that have really made a significant contribution. We have found that there are many in our region who are very interested in local history. So we tapped into their knowledge of and enthusiasm for their area to get started looking at the chosen sites. One group, called the 'Monk Fryston Time Team' are examining the gardens surrounding the Hall there and (Monk) Fryston Lodge just outside the village. Meanwhile a couple of members from the Tadcaster Historical Society are putting together the history of Grimston Park; for one of them it is a personal exercise as she is lucky to live there! These groups are being helped on the background garden and landscape history by Louise and Yvonne respectively.

Louise has also been working with another new recruit, Mary Ratcliffe, on the park and gardens at Carlton Towers. The property has been owned by the Stapleton family for the last 800 years and their extensive archive on the estate has been deposited at the Hull History Centre. In this collection are a set of household accounts from the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, compiled by Sir Miles Stapleton. Sir Miles was the owner from 1656 to 1707 and 18 account books survive from this period. Despite being over 300 years old, they are quite legible. Usefully for us, Sir Miles had an ordered mind and put in neat categories such as:

*Disbursed & paid since then for young trees, plants & seeds for seting [sic] & sowing in the garden & for sithes [sic], garden shears, spades, rowlers made for the garden & for wages to the Gardener & other workfolk, for mowing, growing & weeding in the Garden etc*

A lot of the entries relate to local women doing weeding (nothing changes!) but he also details a garden he makes in

1672/3, which has now disappeared (Figure 4).

*Disbursed for grounding, digging & levelling the great Garden at Carlton House & for laying the green swarth in the four quarters, or grass plats & for levelling & laying the Walkes in the garden & the high terras [terraces] walkes, round about the great garden.*

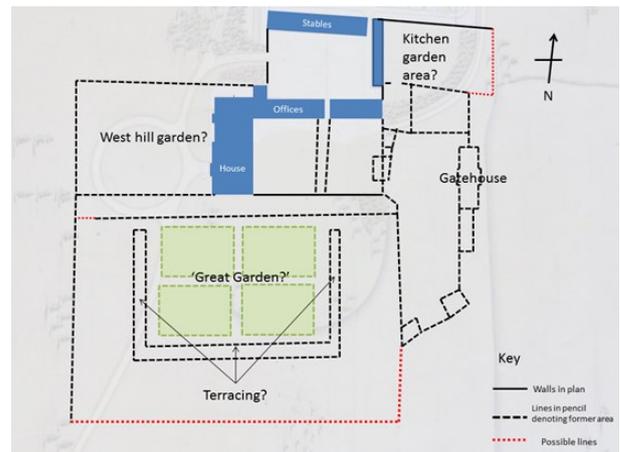


Figure 4

Two improvement plans by Richard Woods (1765) and Thomas White (undated) were prepared for Carlton and a large amount of time has been spent trying to see what was implemented from either plan.

The plans at Carlton and research on the other sites were the subject of a meeting of the Selby volunteers on 24 November at Monk Fryston Hall. During the day we covered many areas and time periods as we learnt about the wide variety of parks and gardens we are looking at. One of the more bizarre was 'Bonnie Scotland' in the old quarry area next to Monk Fryston Hall created in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The owner, Constance Hemsworth, a keen amateur artist, painted a 'Scottish mountain scene' on the quarry wall and put in an old cottage and planted heather to complete the effect!

As ever with gardens, it is not only about the 'what' was done but also there is the question of 'why'. Susan Kellerman and Dick Knight have been looking at Hazelwood Castle and Susan in particular has been examining the effect of the owner's Catholicism on the landscape. We also discussed the role architects (of buildings) had on parks and gardens. For some of the sites, the archive material is quite sparse, so it is about making connections. In the days before mass media, personal contacts were important either through relatives or like-minded acquaintances.

### Hambleton District

We have also started working in a third area, the Hambleton district of North Yorkshire. This is being led by Clare Booth, the Conservation Officer at the local council and she is currently compiling a list of sites to look at. For more information about this and all the other work we are doing, please visit the R&R page on the YGT website.

Our thanks as always go to our dedicated volunteers – keep up the good work!

R&R Team

(Helena Anderson, Yvonne Boutwood & Louise Wickham).

# ***Noble Prospects:*** **Capability Brown & the Yorkshire Landscape** **Mercer Art Gallery, Harrogate 25 June - 11 September 2016**



NPG6049 Capability Brown by  
Nathaniel Dance, oil on canvas, c.1773  
©National Portrait Gallery

I realised on Christmas Day that it was exactly six months until *Noble Prospects* opened in Harrogate. As I write this now, in the first days of 2016, it suddenly seems very close but I am delighted to report that all is going very well. I am writing up my research both for the book that will accompany the exhibition and for a paper in 'Yorkshire Capabilities', the 2016 volume of the *New Arcadian Journal*, edited by YGT stalwart Dr Patrick Eyres. Our partner, the Mercer Art Gallery in Harrogate, is hard at work arranging the loans we have chosen and dealing with insurance, security and ensuring the gallery conditions are right for the high-calibre works we will be showing. Together we will work to promote the show and attract the largest possible audience for this innovative collaboration.

On that note I'd like YGT members to be the first to know about some of the treasures we will have on display. We have secured the loan of an important Claude Lorraine from a private collection in Yorkshire. Claude's paintings were an inspiration to Brown when he was creating his Arcadian landscapes and this particular work has direct links to one of his parks in Yorkshire. From the collection at Harewood House we have a J.M.W. Turner view of the house from the south showing Brown's landscape looking superb two decades after Brown's work. Also on display will be Brown's large-scale plan for the park at Temple Newsam, a very rare

surviving example of his work in our county. Of course there are lots more exhibits to illustrate Brown's work in

Yorkshire but I won't spoil the fun by revealing them all here. I would like to thank the many private and public lenders for making this all possible.

To complement *Noble Prospects*, Jane Sellars, Curator of the Mercer Art Gallery, has commissioned artist Kate Whiteford to create new work inspired by Brown's landscapes. We have also jointly commissioned photographer Simon Warner to make a film looking at the Yorkshire sites as they are today.

Our celebrations in Yorkshire are part of the national Capability Brown Festival and its work in promoting the tercentenary has come to fruition with a number of prominent articles on the tercentenary in the national press in recent weeks. If you missed them have a look at the exhibition's Facebook page where there are links (you don't need to be a Facebook user to browse the entries).

If you can help promote the exhibition by displaying leaflets or would be interested in volunteering as a gallery attendant during the exhibition please get in touch with Val Hepworth or Louise Amende. I look forward to seeing you all at the Mercer Art Gallery this Summer to celebrate the life and work of Brown and 20 years of the Yorkshire Gardens Trust.

*Karen Lynch*

[www.yorkshiregardenstrust.org.uk/capability\\_brown\\_2016](http://www.yorkshiregardenstrust.org.uk/capability_brown_2016)

[www.facebook.com/nobleprospects](https://www.facebook.com/nobleprospects)

[www.harrogate.gov.uk/musm/Pages/merceraartgallery.aspx](http://www.harrogate.gov.uk/musm/Pages/merceraartgallery.aspx)

*Noble Prospects: Capability Brown & the Yorkshire Landscape* could not have happened without the support of The Landscape Agency, Saffery Champness, Savills, Coutts, The Capability Brown Festival 2016, ArtFund (through a Jonathan Ruffer Curatorial Research Grant) and Natural England. The display of individual exhibits has been made possible by The Calmcott Trust, The Friends of the Mercer Art Gallery, Leeds Philosophical & Literary Society, Historic Houses Association Yorkshire Friends, Mr & Mrs J.Samuel and private donors.



# Capability Brown Northumberland Tour

Friday 3 – Sunday 5 June 2016

This year marks the tercentenary of the birth of Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown who became arguably the most famous landscape gardener in English history. To celebrate this important event Yorkshire Gardens Trust has organized a tour to Northumberland, the county in which Brown was born. This also gives us the opportunity to welcome and include members from Northumbria Gardens Trust. In July 2014, while planning the tour, YGT Vice-President Caroline Legard and I visited the areas which we thought would be the most interesting and enlightening to our members and which would give them a better understanding of Brown the man as well as seeing first hand the genius of his work, exemplified at Alnwick Park while engaged by the 1<sup>st</sup> Duke of Northumberland to transform the countryside around Alnwick Castle.

The weekend starts with a reception and dinner for members of Northumbrian Gardens Trust as well as YGT at Linden Hall Hotel, a fine Georgian house sited in beautiful grounds which has been sympathetically converted into a country hotel and where we hope the majority of members will choose to stay. The following day we visit Kirkharle, the estate where Brown was born and where he lived and worked for the Loraine family until the age of 23. Two years later he took up the position of head gardener to Lord Cobham at Stowe in Buckinghamshire and thus began his long and prestigious career. Today the courtyard at Kirkharle is a popular visitor centre with a unique collection of galleries and workshops but most importantly it tells us about Brown’s life, including his time at Kirkharle, through a series of display panels. One in particular reproduces an exciting find, Capability Brown’s Plan of Kirkharle, circa 1770, when Brown stayed with Lady Loraine at Kirkharle (possibly when he was working at Alnwick Castle). Sadly the plan was never implemented but recently the present owners of the estate, John and Kitty Anderson, have created a section of

Brown’s lake which was included in it. There will be time to walk around the lake and also take the short walk from the courtyard through a field to the pretty 14<sup>th</sup> century church of St Wilfrid’s where Brown was baptised in 1716. You will leave Kirkharle sensing Brown’s presence, his love of the countryside, its trees and wildflowers, part of the surrounding landscape which inspired his career thanks to the Andersons who have done so much at Kirkharle to promote his early life.

From Kirkharle we head to Wallington. For those who would like to undertake Brown’s daily picturesque walk to his school in Cambo village which passes through Wallington, there will be an option. Arriving at Wallington we shall be given a talk about Brown’s connections with the estate and look at some early maps. Afterwards we shall



Brizlee Tower

enjoy lunch prepared by Cambo W.I. at nearby Cambo Village School before moving on to Rothley Lakes designed by Brown. Here we shall meet beef farmer Simon Bainbridge whose land encompasses the lower lake. Simon has become something of a Brown enthusiast taking great pride in preserving this beautiful romantic site with its fine view to Codger Fort.

Nick Owen has agreed to be our guide on Saturday and keep us on the right track for our walk as well as showing us Rothley Lakes with Simon. Hopefully there will be ample time to visit the charming gardens of nearby Herterton later in the afternoon.

For most of us, the following day will prove to be the highlight of the weekend as we head for Alnwick (approximately 45 minutes away). We shall be welcomed by Bill Hugonin, agent to the 10<sup>th</sup> Duke of Northumberland for 40 years. After coffee at his house on the estate we shall be transported by two minibuses to survey the majestic parkland with Bill as our guide. Caroline and I have already been treated to this guided tour so we can promise you the most breathtaking experience especially with Bill’s knowledge as he knows every square inch of the estate. The first Duke planned the transformation of Hulne Park to accompany his restoration of the castle. The old parks were replanted creating a sweeping stretch of parkland to the north side of the castle with horizons deeply planted with trees to give the impression of a massif boundless park. You will visit a perfect view-point where you can drink in Brown’s masterpiece and rejoice that his great legacy lives on. The Park covers some 3,500 acres so we shall make many stops to include Brizlee Hill and Tower before arriving at Hulne Priory, once home to Carmelite friars circa 1265 who were granted an extensive charter with rights to gather wax and honey from Hulne forest. The beauty of its setting coupled with its early history makes it a most special place to visit and



Hulne Priory

we are most grateful to the present Duke for allowing us the pleasure of picnicking within the Priory walls.

In the afternoon we drive 14 miles North East to Howick Hall, once the seat of British Prime Minister Charles Grey, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl Grey, after whom the famous tea was named. The arboretum at Howick

holds one of the largest collections of wild origin plants in the UK and covers an area of 65 acres, where, if you are lucky, you may see a red squirrel. On arrival, Charlie Howick will give us a talk about the arboretum before we explore the area at leisure. Hopefully there will be time to take afternoon tea in the charming Earl Grey Tea House. Howick is a magical place drenched in history and exploding with botanical gems and has been owned by the Grey family since 1319.

Our tour ends here but for those who would like to spend more time at Alnwick to explore the castle and gardens or revisit Wallington, we recommend that you stay an extra night.

Penelope Dawson-Brown

For more details and the full costs of the tour, please contact Caroline Legard who will send a booking form. 01944 758123 or e-mail: [Caroline@scampston.co.uk](mailto:Caroline@scampston.co.uk)

## Book Review

### *Pleasure Ground and Promenade*

#### *Sparrow Park and the Recreation Ground, Pateley Bridge*

Sheila Wilkins

Since childhood I have been fascinated by lost landscapes, be they gardens, orchards, parkland or farmsteads. So when I began researching aspects of the Yorke family's legacy in Nidderdale I was surprised and intrigued to find a postcard of c.1900 showing a beautiful small public garden laid out beside the River Nidd. This was labelled as Sparrow Park, a garden which no longer exists and of which I had never heard.

Early research brought another surprise: Pateley Bridge had an earlier Recreation Ground; a field of around ten acres, granted by the Enclosure Commissioners in 1865, in a 'bleak and exposed' situation around 580 feet higher than the town and about a mile distant. Not surprisingly, it was never used.

Researching the history of public parks I discovered that the story of our Park conformed to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century concerns for public health and outdoor activity expressed through philanthropic self-help and public subscription, and increasing local authority support. The growth of tourism and the marking of events in our national life also feature in the story.

The Park was initially laid out in 1897 to celebrate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. Thomas Edward Yorke of Bewerley Hall, the principal landowner in the dale, offered an acre of land beside the River Nidd for a *pleasure ground*, and £80 was raised by wealthy benefactors and public subscriptions to fund the development. Sparrow Park, as it was mysteriously named, was laid out with a serpentine path, shrubs, a line of conifers and flower beds and borders (though no details of the planting have been found). Seating was provided with river-views. The public footpath, regarded as a *promenade for the town* and maintained by the Parish Council, extended beyond the garden along the riverbank. The Recreation Ground consisted of paths and play areas for children.

To mark the Coronation of George V in 1911, and to make the park more attractive to tourists, Mr Yorke donated or leased further parcels of land. Development was slow after the onset of WW1 but a bowling green and tennis court were eventually laid out and a pavilion erected in 1923. The

funding for these facilities came very largely from a gift of £300 from Sir Norman Rae MP, a Harrogate wool merchant and politician. A War Memorial formed from a 'large native boulder' was unveiled in 1925.

The development of the Park was not without its shades of *Clochmerle*. The provision of public conveniences was discussed as early as 1902 (Coronation of Edward VII), but it wasn't until 1926, after years of indecision over cost and location that the conveniences were built in the Park. (Even then there were problems with the locks being picked and the light bulbs being unscrewed!)

More trees were added to the Park – four cypresses to commemorate the Silver Jubilee of George V in 1935, and 20 saplings of beech, silver birch, cherry and chestnut for the Coronation of George VI in 1937 (despite it being a wet and windy day with *widespread destruction of bunting*). During the late thirties a paddling pool and drinking fountain were installed.



Happily, the Recreation Ground flourishes today. The pavilion and the bowling green survive though the tennis courts, paddling pool and fountain have gone. A bandstand was erected in 1998 and new play equipment has replaced the splendid *Wicksteed of Kettering* pieces installed in 1947.

Sparrow Park remained in its original layout until the mid-1920s, but was reduced in size by the building of toilets, and was further compromised by attempts to construct effective flood barriers. Today, a row of conifers survives but the rest of the riverside area is given over to a few evergreen shrubs, and, sadly, no trace of the flower garden survives.

*Booklet written by Sheila Wilkins, produced by Historic Parks and Gardens Study Group [www.hpg-nidderdale.co.uk](http://www.hpg-nidderdale.co.uk)*

# Conservation – Planning and Grants Update

## Planning Advice

We continue to deal with a steady flow of planning applications and one of the more unexpected proposals was to build a new home within the nineteenth century designed landscape in the valley below Eagle Hall, near Pately Bridge. In Summer 2015 we were asked to advise both the applicant and the local authority, Harrogate BC, on the history of the site and to consider whether a new building could be accommodated without harming the significance of the landscape. The proposals included opening up of vistas and tree and shrub management works, together with greater public access. We felt that subject to a woodland conservation management plan and various planning conditions the proposal would be of benefit to the long term protection and preservation of the landscape and so we supported approval of the planning application. At the time of writing no decision had been made.

We have also been involved in further discussions with Bradford Council about works at Cliffe Castle, Keighley

and in Autumn 2015 commented on an application for the redevelopment of the cafe terrace. This included a replacement glasshouse range, incorporating a cafe and a replica Palm House, and a replacement animal house and aviary. We had considerable concerns about the form of construction and detailing of the proposed new buildings and objected to them in their submitted form on the basis that they did not reflect the historic design of the glasshouses and could harm the significance of the terrace. Thanks to Anne Tupholme we were able to provide Bradford Council with comprehensive advice and historical photographs showing the original glasshouses. We hope that a more sensitive and historically accurate design solution can be achieved and at the time of writing no decision had been made on this application.

On a more positive note, we were pleased to be consulted by the Yorkshire Sculpture Park at pre-application stage on a proposal for a new visitor facility, gallery and cafe at the Country Park entrance to Bretton Hall Country Park. We noted with interest the proposal to create a new quarry garden and suggested that this could be an exciting opportunity to raise awareness of Reginald Farrer's work and to add an extra dimension to the YSP offer and wrote that we

would be very happy to meet them and their landscape designers if they would like to explore this further with us.

## Small Grants Scheme

We have received three applications for support under our Small Grants Scheme this year. Following on from the successful restoration of the Ionic Temple at Duncombe Park we have received a further request for £1,000 contribution towards the restoration of the Doric Temple at Duncombe. The Friends of Prince of Wales Park, Bingley would like to restore the Round House and nearby stream and create a new stumpery garden. And Incredible Edible Brighouse would like to create a sustainable orchard. All of these proposals will be assessed against our grant criteria and successful projects will be announced at the AGM in the Spring.

Next year we would like to widen awareness of our grants as we are sure that there must be many organisations out there where a small amount of funding would make a big difference. So if you are aware of anyone who would welcome the opportunity to apply for a grant of up to £1,000 or if you would like to join us on the Conservation Committee and help to develop our grant strategy please get in touch with Val or me; it would be great to hear from you.

*Kathryn Gibson*

## Small Grants Scheme 2015

# The Ice House in Fishpond Wood, Bewerley

In our Autumn 2015 edition we reported that the ice house is one of two projects we have funded this year and we thought you might like to know more about it. We awarded £1,000 to the Friends of Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) towards the conservation of this typical

stone-faced estate feature which also typically, was in poor condition. However its location is unusual on the edge of the uplands and before the remedial work is described it is worth taking up some page space to set the scene.

### History of the landscape

Bewerley is a hamlet just downstream from Pateley Bridge, North Yorkshire in the heart of Nidderdale AONB and on the slope of the Nidd valley itself. It is known that there was a grange farm of Fountains Abbey at Bewerley in the Medieval period and a 17<sup>th</sup> century chapel, possibly on the footings of its monastic original, still exists in the hamlet. After the Dissolution the land

was eventually bought by the Yorke family, who are almost old friends of the YGT by virtue of owning Temple Grounds in Richmond which some of us visited for the Midsummer Picnic this year. They built Bewerley Hall which no longer exists and designed a small Picturesque landscape within the woodland known as Fishpond Wood on the hillside opposite. Landscaping included the excavation of a lake, thought for a long time to have been a monastic fish pond but now after some research by John Buglass (Buglass 2013) it is more likely to be late 18<sup>th</sup> century feature. At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century John Yorke the elder was busy creating employment on his estate

during a poor economic period nationally and Cooper in his book "Yorke Country" (1988) records that it was probably around 1780 that John Yorke was creating a landscape just uphill at Ravensgill and a folly at Guisecliffe. John Yorke's nephew, confusingly also John Yorke, refined what his uncle had begun and after he inherited the estate added walks and a new entrance to the wood in about 1832. In doing so, he began a long tradition of encouraging public access to the wood which continues today with the current owner Dr Peter Brambleby. Once the Nidd Valley Railway was completed, it was a very popular place to visit in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and one writer (Grainge) recorded in great detail the gardens around the hall and how the walk would have led from these uphill through the woods including Fishpond Wood and up to Skrikes Wood with appropriately picturesque waterfalls and a bandstand at the top. Today the main feature of the wood is the lake or eponymous fishpond, with a dam at its eastern end and an island which at one time was linked to the shore by a footbridge; there was also a boathouse. Entrance steps of gritstone set within fine dressed gritstone walls and estate ironwork gates completed the scene and still create a formal feel.

### Icehouses

An icehouse is a structure used for storing naturally-created ice, usually obtained from ponds and other places where water was still enough for ice to accumulate in the right conditions. The ice would be cut during a cold spell of weather and stored, wrapped in straw, in a subterranean chamber to keep it cool for as long as possible until needed for use in the kitchen to make elaborate desserts for dinner guests and cool drinks in hot weather. Above the chamber was a domed roof to hold warmer air away from the ice. A horizontal passage at ground level would connect, igloo-like, the domed chamber where a long ladder allowed access to the cold depths, and the entry door from outside. In fact, there would be a door at both ends of the passage to keep cold air in and warm air out. The whole structure would appear as a

mound on the surface, often thickly covered with soil and set within an existing woodland or with trees planted around and on top to create shade in warmer weather, although with time the tree roots would cause difficulties with the brickwork.



Solid new entrance door.

At Beverley the ice house is situated on the eastern side of, and just inside, the wood at about 160m above sea level. It is well situated to be sheltered from the sun by the trees, although there are fewer today than there may have been during the period of use. It is also only a few hundred feet around the contour of the hill from the pond which is presumed to be the source of the ice since a pathway is shown between the two on old Ordnance Survey maps. The structure consists of a brick subterranean chamber with a beautifully corbelled roof and a local gritstone passage and façade. Icehouses can be difficult to date because they have few distinguishing features other than architectural embellishments which may be added occasionally but here, John Buglass reports that it is thought from their size that the bricks making up the cylindrical below-ground structure date could date to between 1687 and 1776 because at the time brick sizes were set by law. The later date would fit well with John Yorke the uncle and the stone façade, which is butt-jointed to the brickwork and not keyed into it, may have been added later by his nephew. Dressing on the masonry is variable, suggesting it may have been reused from other sources.

### Conservation work

As so often happens, the ice house had not been maintained after it went out of use and was in poor condition and not suitable for safe visiting. In particular, anyone could enter through the well-rotted outer door and walk along the dark passage to the drop at the chamber end where the inner door had long gone. A heritage management plan for Fishpond Wood had been drawn up by the Upper Nidderdale Landscape

Partnership Scheme which had identified it as a Flagship Heritage Site suitable for conservation in 2013. Consequently funds were sought for a measured survey to record the structural features of the icehouse, a one-day lime mortar training day for volunteers, the installation of a new grille to replace the door at the chamber end of the passage and allow the visitor to see the structure, and supervision by a structural engineer. It is the lime mortar training day and building recording that the Small Grant of £1,000 has funded. Under the supervision of Louise Brown the project officer, the work has been done to a high standard and it is very heartening to know that volunteers have been trained to work on historic features using appropriate materials. The icehouse is now safe and even the resident cave spiders have been catered for with the outer door completely blocking the light to allow them the darkness they need; fortunately bats were not resident or roosting so there was no conflict of interest to deal with! An interpretation board will shortly be erected outside, complete with YGT logo.

*Linda Smith  
Conservation Committee*

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# Visit to Shibden Hall, Gardens and Park

Thursday 17 September 2015

*On a bright September morning a party of over twenty YGT members and friends gathered on the terrace of the striking modern cafe in Shibden Park to meet Kath Gibson, one of our trustees and chair of our Conservation Committee for a tour of Shibden Park. Some ten years ago Kath was working as a Conservation Officer for Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council when they successfully bid for Heritage Lottery funding to conserve and restore the park. She advised on the heritage and conservation aspects of the project, working closely with colleagues from the, then, Leisure Services Department. In this article Kath discusses the evolution of the Shibden landscape and the people that shaped the park as we see it today.*

Shibden Hall, the imposing architectural centrepiece of Shibden Park, was built around 1420 for Halifax cloth merchant, William Otes. Originally a late medieval gentry house of typical hall and crosswing form, it was altered in the later 16<sup>th</sup> century when it was partly encased in stone and a new central rear wing was added. The Shibden property passed through several owners during the succeeding centuries, and was first occupied by the Lister family, also cloth merchants, in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century.

According to an article in the Garden History Society Journal in 1997, the Listers' interest in gardening was not notable. In the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century the accounts show gardeners working in the vegetable gardens and the orchard and in 1754, payment was made 'To the gardener for fruit trees, viz: Nectarine and Peach 3s., Apricot 1s., Plum 9d., and carriage from Pomfret 3d.' This was probably from Pomfrets, the nurserymen in Pontefract. Flowering plants do not seem to feature in the accounts, although they do record first sightings of swallows and hearing the cuckoo!

Major work took place to both the house and parkland in the early – mid 19<sup>th</sup> century and it is the 19<sup>th</sup> century work by perhaps the best known resident of Shibden, Anne Lister, which shaped most of the park as we see it today. Anne was a strong and determined woman who wanted to develop her property in a way that would demonstrate her taste and status in society. And what is particularly interesting is that she kept a journal for

over 20 years – the first entry was on March 21<sup>st</sup> 1817 and the last just six weeks before her death in Russia in 1840. It details all of her day to day life but parts relating to her personal life are in code as she did not want details of her lesbian love affairs to be readily accessible to all. The Journal still exists, with the exception of three small groups of excised pages, and it provides a valuable insight into the life of a cultured early Victorian businesswoman and estate manager. It is the property of the local authority, Calderdale MBC, and is housed in the Archives Department in Halifax where it is easily accessed by researchers.

Following the fashionable Romantic style Anne had a wilderness garden built, including a flowing cascade, where she favoured an arcadian picturesque style, which included some fine cut-leaf beeches. She also made a number of improvements to the house and its immediate surroundings. Setting it on an extensive new terrace and adding the gothic tower to emphasise her status and her significance as the estate's owner, and to provide an appropriate home for herself and her partner Ann Walker. We are able to learn from Anne's diaries the day to day details of carrying out this work, including that the erection of the rockwork for the cascade caused her to have nightmares as she worried about the massive stones toppling over onto the workmen.

How Anne came to live at Shibden is a complicated tale! She was the eldest surviving child of Jeremy Lister and Rebecca Battle, and the niece of the owner of Shibden Hall, James Lister, a bachelor. On the death of her brother, in 1813, it was decided that Anne was the most able to take over the ultimate management of the family's 400 acre estate.

Initially Anne ran the estate alongside her uncle, whose death in 1826 brought the appointment of two informal trustees, her father and aunt. She then took over the management of the estate, although she did not actually inherit it until after the death of her father, Jeremy, and aunt, also Anne, in 1836.

Then aged 44, and settled in a same sex relationship with Ann Walker, Anne Lister was able to invest her inheritance in her property which was old fashioned

and somewhat rundown with a modest garden on the south-east side of the Hall.

In 1836 Anne employed the architect John Harper of York to remodel the Hall and provide proposals for structural works in the grounds. A lot of the work proved to be beyond her means but she was able to build the south terrace on which Shibden sits today. According to the register entry her landscape architect on this and other projects to do with drainage was William Grey, (though guide book makes reference to a Samuel Grey) who had previously worked at Clumber Park for the Duke of Newcastle. He was instructed to lay out the grounds using Harper's building designs.

A lake was constructed, and a substantial kitchen garden was walled. The tunnel or 'dry arch' was constructed in 1836. It gave the gardeners access to the kitchen garden and it was used to channel water from the feeder ponds in Cunnery Wood across the road and in to a rockwork pool, which in turn fed the cascade and the stream that runs down through the wilderness garden to the Mere, as the lake is known. Some evidence of the former hothouses remains and when Anne Lister developed the kitchen garden a double skin wall system was installed. This accommodated an in-wall coke forced heating system which was used for forcing fruit trees to flower earlier than they would naturally in the colder north and also encouraged the fruits to develop and ripen.

Anne also had a new approach constructed from the north-west, replacing an approach directly from Shibden Hall Road to the west. The main entrance and approach to the Hall before the 1830s appears to have been from the south (watercolour, John Horner c 1815, WYAS); it cost 7/- (35p) per yard to build and she first drove out along it in 1837 when she went to Halifax to celebrate the coronation of Queen Victoria.

*Continued on page 14.*

# Book Review

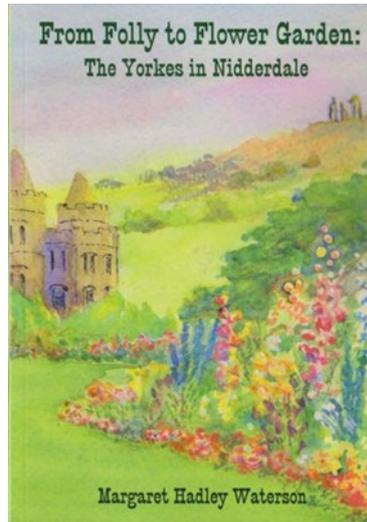
## *From Folly to Flower Garden: The Yorkes in Nidderdale*

Margaret Hadley Waterson

Originally there was no intention on my part to write a book about the Yorkes and the remarkable gardens they once had in Nidderdale but, during the course of the Historic Parks and Gardens Study Group's research in the area, I became captivated by the beautiful landscape around the village of Beverley. Preliminary surveys around the village by the group led to further investigation and I became more and more intrigued by how much impact on that landscape had been made by generations of the influential Yorke family. Primary sources from the past four centuries provided further fascinating insights, as did conversations with many local people who clearly appreciate the historical value of their neighbourhood. By the time contact had been made with the present members of the Yorke family, who allowed access to their rich store of archives, it had become obvious that an account of their previous designed landscapes in Nidderdale merited more than a brief entry on a database.

The resulting text gradually grew longer and longer, spanning the years covering six generations of Yorke family influence in the dale, from the time of the purchase of Beverley manor by Dame Mary Yorke in the seventeenth century up to the sale of the estate in 1924 and the subsequent demolition of the family home of Beverley Hall. Designed landscapes of various styles from the eighteenth to twentieth centuries once surrounded that home: extensive parkland, elaborately designed pleasure gardens, enhanced woodlands, fern-filled ravines, ponds, walled kitchen gardens - and, of course, a folly. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries many thousands of people visited these gardens, brought by special trains from the industrial cities of the West Riding and even,

occasionally, from Lancashire. At the sale of the Beverley estate, the grounds were split into different lots and subsequently some parts had other dwellings built upon them.



Consequently the use of some areas has changed and some parts of the pleasure gardens have disappeared. However, although much of the land is now in private hands, there are many areas which can still be visited. Much of the extensive area of the parkland has been preserved by being bought by the Nidderdale Agricultural Society and is used still for the annual agricultural show and for other events, sales and cricket matches. In the woodlands there are public footpaths and one popular long distance walk, the Nidderdale Way, passes over the dramatic heights of Guisecliffe very near to the renowned Yorke's Folly. In another attractive spot, Fishpond Wood, there are both public and permissive paths with the added attractions of an ice house (see p. 10) which can now be visited and a pond which some believe to be a reminder of medieval days when Fountains Abbey had one of their granges in Beverley. The chapel built by an abbot of Fountains, which later became incorporated into the Yorkes' gardens, still stands open to visitors.

Because of the pleasure gardens being divided up after the sale, the overall design has largely disappeared. There are, however, a number of areas which have changed very little whilst some stylistic features remain along with much of the planting of specimen trees and shrubs. Members of our group had the privilege of exploring the private grounds of the present owners which helped enormously in enabling us to plot the arrangement of elements of the landscape. Similarly invaluable were the old photographs supplied by the Nidderdale Museum in Pateley Bridge and watercolour paintings done in the nineteenth century by members of the Yorke family. As illustrations for the book, they also help in bringing to life the world of bygone Beverley. The influence of the Yorkes on this particular area was to a large extent shaped by three generations. of the family, the resulting landscape hinting at their interests, style and status. Similar allusions were also apparent in gardens made by previous generations of the family at other homes in the Yorkshire Dales, and so further insight into the developments in Beverley was given by looking at some of their earlier gardens: at Gouthwaite higher up the valley of the Nidd, The Green by the Swale in Richmond and Newby Hall by the Ure.

Although the accepted convention allows us to describe certain gardens being 'made by' the wealthy families it was, of course, their workforce which (by definition!) did most of the 'making'. So it was with great satisfaction and delight that I received a photograph, from his great-granddaughter, of one of the gardeners who had worked for the Yorkes for over sixty years. Details of others came from census returns, from gala brochures and even from newspaper reports such as



So gradually and inexorably, the project - and the word count - grew. I could envisage many more years of research. As fruitful and satisfying as that might be, I realised that an ending had to be reached. My co-members of the group seemed reluctant to assign me a word limit, so a deadline was set which, almost inevitably, I over-ran. But eventually the last sentence (which I had decided on months before) was slotted into place. And then the hard work began ... getting the text ready for printing, ready for its launch at the end of August. Without the Historic Parks and Gardens Study Group, that might never have happened!

*Margaret Waterson*

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the one which told of the flower and fern decorations for a wedding of one of the Yorke daughters, 'artistically carried out under the direction of (the head gardener)'.

*Continued from page 12.*

Anne was a great traveller and it was a great shock when she unexpectedly died in Russia in 1840 from an infection caused by an insect bite. Shibden passed to Ann Walker for her lifetime but, sadly, this Ann spent the last years of her life in an asylum in York. The hall was therefore tenanted until, in 1855, Dr John Lister inherited the estate.

He was married with three children, an upright Victorian gentleman, member of several scientific societies and abreast of many fashions.

Maps show the West Terraces planted as an orchard in 1850, including apple, pear, cherry and hazelnut trees, along with quince. And we saw on our visit that, working with the Northern Fruit Group, the terraces have been replanted to recreate an orchard and feature some historic varieties of fruit trees. These include Golden Pippin, Lemon Pippin, Golden Russet and Herford Pearmain apple trees and Catillac and Black Worcester pear trees. The orchard is also home to other fruit varieties which were common in the 1700s, especially those with Yorkshire origins such as Flower of the Town and Fillingham Pippin apples as well as Portugal quince and Red Filbert (or hazelnut) trees.

In 1855 Joshua Major and Son provided a drawing of the proposed 'shawl garden' on the south terrace of Shibden Hall (held by WYAS) and Lister employed William Berry of Halifax to lay out beds and a fountain on the south terrace. The shawl refers to the intricate pattern of beds designed to reflect the Paisley pattern commonly used on shawls at the time. Snake-like beds were created around a central feature with heart shaped beds in the four corners. A fountain of playful cherubs formed the centrepiece. To the east side of the house he erected a lean-to greenhouse, later described as an orchid house.

All this disappeared in the post war period but evidence remained in the form of Joshua Major's original plan in the

Shibden Archive and a number of wet collodian glass plate negatives dated 1858-1860, also in the Archive. A geophysical survey undertaken in 1995, described in *Garden History Journal* confirmed the presence of the beds and using all the information together it was possible to restore the shawl garden as part of the HLF project.

Following Lister's death his son, also John (1847-1933), inherited the estate, but in 1923 was declared bankrupt. However, John Lister's friend Mr A S McCrea, a Halifax councillor, bought the Hall and presented it and 90 acres (c 37ha) of parkland to the people of east Halifax as a public park, which was officially opened by the then Prince of Wales in 1926. It became known locally as 'Happy Valley of Halifax' reflecting the townspeople's appreciation of the facilities which included a new network of paths, a bandstand, and boating on the Mere. John Lister lived out his life at the Hall, which upon his death in 1933 was handed over to Halifax Corporation who opened it as a museum.

The site remains in use as a public park and museum but, as did many public parks, suffered from lack of investment in the 1980s and 90s. But in 2004 the Heritage Lottery Fund approved in principal a £4million grant, towards renovation costs of over £6million, the balance being financed by Calderdale Council. In Spring 2007 the restoration project started and, after an eighteen month contract, work was finished in 2008. A major aspect was the recreation of the mid 19th century gardens close to the hall with the rest of the park following its 1920s styling. It remains much loved and well used as a public park and it is to be hoped that in these times of financial restraint and local authority budget cuts Calderdale Council will be able to maintain its commitment to this significant landscape with its fascinating history.

*Kathryn Gibson*

# Schools' News

There have been lots of YGT-supported activities taking place in schools across the county since the last Newsletter.

In the Spring Term, schools were offered the gift of a Suttons Seeds 'Jungle in a Box'. These growing kits were designed to support the National Curriculum Key Stage 1 and contained Mimosa, Coleus and Amaranthus seeds, along with compost, mini propagators and plant labels. All the seed varieties were recommended for children – easy to grow, intriguing and good pot plants for the classroom. They also gave another boost to our 'Cool Plants' theme for this year.

Also continuing the 'Cool Plants' theme, Swainby & Potto Primary School hosted a carnivorous plant workshop, courtesy of the Trust. This was again delivered by Wack's Wicked Plants. I was lucky enough to be able to attend and saw first-hand how much the children got out of this lively afternoon; engaging with the presenters, the plants and each other as they learned about these amazing plants in a fun way. The company also left the school with the gift of a potted Sundew to study and care for.



Wack's Wicked Plants at Swainby and Potto Primary School.

In the Summer Term, applications were invited for two, £250, YGT Schools' Grounds Development Awards. We were very pleased to receive some detailed and carefully thought-out applications which had also involved the children in the planning and ideas stages. One of the awards was granted to Marwood C of E Infant School in Great Ayton, to help them create their garden pond for wildlife. We are delighted to hear that work has already started on the pond and the children are looking forward to getting involved in planting in the Spring and some supervised pond dipping later in the year! The other award went to Ingleby Arncliffe C of E Primary near Northallerton to help them develop an attractive and inviting, wildlife-friendly area, at the front of school. It was lovely to meet staff and children of both schools when certificates and YGT cheques were presented in their school assemblies in the Autumn Term.



Ingleby Arncliffe C of E Primary School  
YGT Award Presentation.

This Autumn also saw the first Joyce Hampshire Award being granted to Clapham C of E Primary, North Yorkshire. This award has been kindly donated by John Hampshire, in memory of his wife, Joyce and is particularly aimed at supporting working gardens in schools. Appropriately, a collection of high quality junior gardening tools were gifted to the school. Clapham Primary has two children's gardening clubs and told us they would 'love and cherish these gardening tools'. They were out planting Spring bulbs within a week of receiving the equipment. The school wanted to share their Harvest Planting Prayer with us, as printed in the Chairman's Letter on p.3. Gardening and growing are clearly at the heart of Clapham Primary!

Following on from the success of the earlier carnivorous plant workshops, two more have been made available to schools in the Autumn term. St Joseph's RC Primary in Keighley and Royston St John Baptist C of E Primary in Barnsley are the lucky recipients and we look forward to hearing all about them.

This concludes our 'Cool Plants' theme, next, we move on to activities to support and raise awareness of, Lancelot 'Capability' Brown, as part of the 2016, tercentenary celebrations.

*Nicola Harrison*



Marwood C of E Infant School  
YGT Award Presentation

# Visit to Dove Cottage Nursery and Garden

Thursday 17 September 2015

It was after lunch, and following an interesting morning exploration of the grounds of Shibden Hall, Halifax, when YGT members made their way, some by car and others on foot through the Shibden Hall parkland, to the gem of a nursery called Dove Cottage.

Here we were welcomed by the delightful owners, Kim and Stephen Rogers. Some years ago the couple had sought a change of direction in their lives, with Stephen not wanting to follow in the family butcher business. He trained in horticulture at Askham Bryan and later gained invaluable experience at the prestigious Savill Garden at Windsor Great Park. Created by Sir Eric Savill in the 1930's, it is managed by the Crown Estate, and features plants which have been collected from all over the world. Stephen worked in propagation here for 4 yrs.

Returning to their home area, Kim and Stephen acquired land behind Dove Cottages on a north facing hillside, enjoying panoramic views of Shibden valley, Chelsea valley and a hillside of mixed woodland. It was in 1995 that Dove Cottage Nursery and Garden were conceived to both offer and showcase a new range of perennial plants and grasses.

Such a plant palette is seen as part of 'Prairie Planting' and the 'New Perennial Planting Movement' which hit the horticultural scene, offering a more naturalistic and ecological approach to planting design. It was led by such plantsmen and designers as Piet Oudolf, who developed his pioneering nursery in Hummelo in the Netherlands and influenced gardens worldwide. Lady Caroline Legard loved this new approach and commissioned Oudolf to design the Walled Garden at Scampston Hall, here in North Yorkshire. Her friend John Coke of Bury Court in Hampshire, had connections with Oudolf and adopted some of the new ideas in his own established nursery and gardens. Kim and Stephen have visited this, and the gardens of Beth Chatto in Essex, as well as nurseries and gardens in the Netherlands (Hummelo), France, Germany, Belgium and Luxembourg looking for new plants and inspiration. Such 'plant hunting trips' have been conducted usually during September and October and have proved exciting and rewarding, especially for their customers.

Kim pointed out that the first things to be planted here were the yew hedges, to protect this 1/3 acre sloping site from easterly and westerly winds, and also to enclose the gardens from the nursery. Their undulating profile was chosen to mimic the shape of the old hawthorn hedges and surrounding hilltops. The Garden area had thin soils and was a meadow originally. Grass was sprayed off, and only fork and hoe used for weeding: a minimum cultivation technique learnt from Askham Bryan. Some soils were brought in, and for the first 15 years bark mulch

was used until the soil became rich enough. In places, gravel was added for improved drainage, but drier and poorer soils proved more effective for some of the grasses. The garden and nursery were opened after the first year.

The garden is entered from the sales area through a green oak gate, and it revealed to us a breathtaking display of late Summer flowering perennials and grasses in vast swathes of carefully blended textures and colours. Plants are selected to create an overall picture in any given bed, which Kim and Stephen change from time to time. The style is a mix of Prairies and British meadows, with North American plants such as Eupatoriums and Echinaceas featuring quite strongly in these late displays.

The planting combinations are aimed at creating a look of wild, naturalistic beauty throughout the Summer, Autumn and into Winter. Planting is seen not just as decoration, but more of a 'process' over time, reflecting the life cycle of the plants and grasses.

Many of the plants are nectar rich, attracting insects, and the now mature hedges provide shelter and nesting sites for birds. The peak month for perennials flowering is August, and for grasses September, so the YGT visit was well timed.

Kim and Stephen stated that they set out to create a garden that 'looks good, feels good and smells good' and this they have certainly done.

Our visit concluded with the offer of tea and cakes in the garden shop, and a look at the display of handmade garden tools and garden vintage items. Of course, many members couldn't resist the tempting selection of plants for sale, which were duly carried away as treasured mementoes of the visit. Please note that Kim and Stephen no longer offer mail order, but do provide an excellent catalogue from which to pre-order if required, as long as customers bring something to carry their purchases home. The nursery is open from March to September, and the garden from June.

*Marilyn Elm*

For more information please visit  
[www.dovecottage nursery.co.uk](http://www.dovecottage nursery.co.uk)



Wonderful textures of perennials and grasses in the Dove Cottage garden.

# Garden History Society and Association of Gardens Trusts Merger: The Gardens Trust



After lengthy discussions at the YGT Council of Management, trustees decided that YGT would vote for the merger of the Garden History Society and the Association of Gardens Trusts as the best way forward for our parks and gardens heritage in the current financial climate. So at the Joint Annual Conference in Newcastle, where the AGMs of the two organisations were held on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2014, our representative Kath Gibson voted for the merger and the slate of new trustees on our behalf, at the Association of Gardens Trusts (AGT) AGM. This was a decisive meeting for the merger and it was pleasing that a number of YGT members attended besides Kath and myself: Marilyn Elm, Patrick Eyres, Valerie Greaves, Karen Lynch and Janette Ray along with a good attendance of other County Gardens Trust (CGT) members and Garden History Society (GHS) members, (probably approaching 150 people in total). Eleven CGT's voted in absentia and there were three CGT's absent who didn't vote. So for the CGT's the total in favour of the merger was 24 with one abstention and 7 voting against. Similarly the GHS at their AGM voted for the merger with a large majority.

The first AGM of The Gardens Trust followed and the 12 trustees (6 from GHS and 6 from CGTs) were elected. The new trustees had a further meeting to elect the chairman of the new board and decide on roles. Jim Bartos (a retired lawyer) from Dorset GT/GHS is the new chairman and I'm pleased to say that Mike Dawson (from London HGT/AGT Vice-chairman) is Vice-chairman and will be continuing with the work that he's been doing whilst chairing the Transitional Committee and progressing all the details needed to make the new organisation work. Lisa Watson (AGT Treasurer) will continue as treasurer.

The AGM was memorable in other ways as after more than twenty years, first as Chairman of AGT and then President we all said a very big thank you to Gilly Drummond, naming a narcissus after her and presenting her with a special scrapbook; 'Memories of Gardens Trusts'. We contributed to Gilly's collection and I wrote to her before the conference as I'd not had time to write

something for the scrapbook before it went to print. A copy of the scrapbook was also presented to Lorna McRobie who had been instrumental in the formation of the AGT. A big thank you was also given to Steffie Shields for her chairmanship of the AGT over the past three years of very hard work in getting the organisations to this stage of merger.

Karen's letter re the Mercer exhibition was well circulated.

Cambridgeshire GT are hosting the next AGM at the TGT Conference from 2 - 4 September 2016 at Robinson College, Grange Road, Cambridge. The subject 'Lancelot 'Capability' Brown. 'There wants a good plan!' Any CGT member is entitled to attend the TGT AGM and also any Business Meetings which have now been renamed The Gardens Trust CGT's National Forum.

*Val Hepworth  
November 2015*

## **The County Gardens Trusts North Regional Forum**

On 15 October 2015, on behalf of YGT, Kath Gibson welcomed members of our own and other northern Gardens Trusts to the second County Garden Trusts North Regional Forum, which was held in York.

The opportunity to come together at a regional meeting like this is particularly welcome as it not only gives us a platform to discuss issues and share successes with neighbouring trusts and heritage sector colleagues but it also gives people who focus on one aspect of the trusts' work to find out more about the great work that people in our own, as well as other, trusts are doing.

In the morning, presentations were given by Mike Dawson, from The Gardens Trust and Cris Mayes and Erika Diaz-Petersen from English Heritage. Key Points to note are that The Gardens Trust has maintained its Statutory Consultee status and that The Gardens Trust intends to issue a Planning leaflet to local authorities in late 2015/early 2016 advising them on the Planning System and the Protection of Historic Parks and Gardens, reminding them of their obligation to

consult The Gardens Trust and clarifying the position of county gardens trusts in the planning system.

After lunch Louise Wickham and Yvonne Boutwood told the group about the sterling work that the Research and Recording Group has been carrying out with local authorities to record local landscapes in East Yorkshire and Selby. This was followed by an inspirational talk from Barbara Moth, of Cheshire Gardens Trust, about its HLF funded project to research and present the archives of the famous Cheshire nursery, Caldwells ( see [www.caldwellarchives.org.uk](http://www.caldwellarchives.org.uk)).

Thanks go to Linden Groves, Historic Landscape Project Officer for all of her hard work in putting the day together but we mustn't take her for granted. At the time of writing there is no certainty that HLP funding will continue beyond March 2016 so we need to organise ourselves to programme in and administer future meetings.

## **The Gardens Trust CGT's National Forum, Autumn 2015**

On YGT's behalf Kath Gibson attended the first The Gardens Trust CGT's National Forum on 24 November at The Gallery, 70 Cowcross Street, London. The business meeting was preceded in the morning by a workshop on County Gardens Trusts and the Statutory Consultee role, led by the Historic Landscape Project Officers, Caroline Iken and Linden Groves. There was useful discussion about the content, format and circulation of the 'Planning System and the Protection of Historic Parks and Gardens leaflet'. The aim is to distribute this document to all Local Planning Authorities in England and to relevant heritage organisations and to promote it on the TGT website and using social media. A bespoke circulation list will be put together in early 2016 and several suggestions were made of organisations to be included. A key to success will be targeting the appropriate people at management level in Local Authorities in order to ensure that historic landscapes are fully embedded in the planning process.

The afternoon session comprised introductory reports from Jim Bartos, the chair of The Gardens Trust and representatives of the five new sub-

committees: Administration and finance –chair Mike Dawson; Conservation - Sarah Dickinson, vice-chair on behalf of Marion Harney, chair; Education, Publications and Communications – Charles Boot on behalf of Tim Richardson, chair; Events – Virginia Hinze, chair and Membership- Ian Varndell, chair. Since the merger the focus had been on developing the new logo and branding for TGT, and people have been working on updating the website, developing a new conservation casework log, and the planning leaflet which will launch TGT to a wider audience.

Efforts are being made to create efficiencies regarding staff, space, outsourcing of services, insurance and purchasing and it is anticipated that next year's business plan will show an organisation living within its means and

with no losses. Funding for 2016/17 is being applied for and, unless there are unexpected repercussions from the 2015 Comprehensive Spending Review, it is expected that everything will continue much as is in 2017/18. However, Historic England funding is likely to become more competitive which may affect the amount of funding received from them.

Charles Boot will be editing the TGT newsletter and will be sending out two newsletters and two micronews leaflets a year. Two Journals will be published every year and each CGT will receive one copy to circulate. Initially six copies of the newsletters and micronews will be sent to each CGT but this is open to review and suggestions as to how best to keep people informed. Two Journals will be published every year and each CGT will receive one

copy to circulate. Charles would welcome articles for the newsletter. Ian Varndell reported that, when the Nottinghamshire Gardens Trust has been re-established, every county in England will be covered by a Gardens Trust and that there are currently (November 2015) 1247 individual members of TGT. Ian is now the line manager of the Historic Landscape Project Officers, Caroline and Linden, and he will be writing to all gardens trusts to open up lines of communication. Some very good news is that TGT has been fortunate to get £10,000 from the Paul Getty Trust and this is being used to extend Caroline and Linden's hours of employment so that they can support the Capability Brown Festival Board.

The next meeting will be held at the AGM and conference in September 2016 in Cambridge; see below.

## The Gardens Trust and Cambridgeshire Gardens Trust invite you to A Tercentenary Conference on Lancelot 'Capability' Brown plus New Research Symposium and AGM of The Gardens Trust (Thursday 1 – Sunday 4 September 2016)

Further details can be found on the Cambridgeshire Gardens Trust site at:  
[cambsgardens.org.uk/event/the-gardens-trust-conference](http://cambsgardens.org.uk/event/the-gardens-trust-conference).

Any queries relating to the Conference should be made to: [admin@cambsgardens.org.uk](mailto:admin@cambsgardens.org.uk).

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## Visit to Littlethorpe Manor Wednesday 8 July 2015

What a jewel of a visit! This garden has been on my wish-list for a while, and I found I was not the only one. It does open on certain days under the NGS, and has popular tours, such as 'Winter Walks' and 'Lighting in the Garden'; but to have the garden and Head Gardener, Eddie Harland, to escort ourselves and members of the Welsh Historic Gardens Trust exclusively was exceptional.

You can go on their comprehensive web site [thackray@littlethorpemanor.com](http://thackray@littlethorpemanor.com) and find the history of the site and its development with plenty of photographs, but what would be difficult to appreciate is the scale of the work and what has been achieved since 1985, when the Grade II property and 11 acres of ground was acquired by Mr and Mrs Thackray.

The rain stopped, and the sunshine followed us around the 4 acres of formal garden set around the house and outbuildings, and we managed to see some of the remaining 7 acres beyond. It would take up the entire YGT Newsletter to list all that we saw and heard, but I will mention what to me were the highlights, and what I will think about in my own garden.

We first were escorted to the Walled Garden, which has existed since the 1700s, but was presented to Eddie as a field of wheat in 1985! What has developed is a garden for the four seasons, 'all the seasons run their race in this space' Eddie explained. Each quadrant had been planted so as to be at its best, whether it be Summer, Autumn, Winter or Spring, each

marked by a bronze figure nestling in amongst the scene. It was pulled together by the dwarf box hedging and a central pergola covered with roses - *Frances E. Lester* providing Summer flowers and orange hips in Autumn. There are personal touches throughout the garden, and here it was shown by the choices to represent the cycle of life through the seasons, to put a family reference in the centre – the *Ygdrassil* (Norwegian Tree of Life) around which there was bespoke ironwork. When I worked as a garden designer I was surprised at how many clients shied away from personal references in the garden design, but throughout Littlethorpe Manor you soon get an impression of here is a family wanting to be involved in the gardens development. We visited next the Sunken Garden, dug out in 2000. This is where you learn that the dwarf box used to give this area its



formal clipped look succumbed to Box blight, and has been replaced with *Ilex crenata* Stokes, a dwarf Japanese holly, which leafs better and has white flowers! This gives a better and more interesting effect, against the four *Pyrus salicifolia pendulas* marking out the quadrants, and underplanting of dwarf white lavender and Santolina, forming the 'White Rose of York' patterning to the lower terrace. Something yet to appear on the website!

The upper terrace intriguingly used honeysuckles trained up umbrella supports to give an upright growth with a cascade of flower and foliage – not all honeysuckles need go against a wall! The contrast of this informal loose habit against the formal clipped lower terrace was most effective. In order to give this area a more personal interest, it is proposed to develop a physic garden to tie in with the family history and their involvement in medicine and pharmaceuticals.

I should reiterate that all the beds were bursting with planting and profusion; the opulence of the planting could not be overestimated.

From here we passed along the terrace where the patio doors from the house were interspersed with clipped *Magnolia grandiflora* underplanted with *Ophiopogon planiscapus 'Nigrescens'*, giving yet more drama to an already theatrical area. This is the breathing space after the 'intimate and personal rooms' we had visited so far. Beyond the terrace was an expanse of lawn (the springest I have ever walked on!) with a large formal pond and fountain central to the house, and beyond which were steps down to the lower terrace. The boundary to this upper terrace was hedged by tall clipped Hornbeam giving you a feeling of a large ballroom, with teasing framed glimpses out, down the steps to the lake or through windows punctuating the hornbeam hedge, hidden amongst the foliage. Eddy was most proud to explain that there are only three gardeners, including himself, but he has the Ferrari of all lawnmowers which helps significantly!

To realise the scale, the retaining wall which had to be rebuilt below this terrace, is 85m long and 1.8m high, and took 8000 bricks equivalent to two houses!

Before descending the steps we continued along the terrace to emerge at the front entrance to the house, with a circular driveway, enclosing a contemporary water feature of a glass globe on a shiny metal saucer. Pleached Hornbeams continued the hedged theme.

After recrossing (bouncing across!) the lawn we went down the steps and between an avenue of pollarded *Tilia platyphyllos Rubra* planted in 2006 and looking well established. My eye was caught by an area off the main avenue being developed as a wildflower meadow, sown with Pictorial Annual Meadow mix. The garden is always evolving and new ideas introduced. Most of us would buy one *Hakonechloa macra* for a pot, or a few for a clump in a border, but here there were drifts following the main avenue, and had yet to provide a spectacle of Autumn colour.

The lake is 13 years old, now fed by a borehole and

surrounded by a boardwalk so it and the pavilion on the far side can be easily reached, whatever the weather. The strange blue colour of the lake was as a result of chemicals used to combat blanket weed which was proving a problem. This did not detract however from the dense planting surrounding the lake on all sides, focusing on blue and yellow, with *Helenium*, *Monarda*, and *Baptisia australis*.

Our time was nearly over so we had to forgo the Winter Garden started in 2008, and extended into the Winter Arboretum in 2010. (We must go again to see this...)

Two gems I could not have got from the web were the Pergola walkway between the walled garden and the main lawn, this short but vital link gave framed views across dense herbaceous planting of *Phlomis russeliana*, *Salvia nemorosa 'Oestfriesland'*, *Kniphofia 'Jenny Bloom'* and *Anthemis tinctoria 'Sauce Hollandaise'* with coppery Verbascum emerging through. Covered with Clematis and Honeysuckle giving the brick pillars a softer appearance, everyone walked backwards and forwards repeating their steps! Still retaining the repeated clipped box balls amongst the planting though!

For me the Brewhouse was a treasure trove as a designer – the plans were framed and on display! Drawn by Eddie they showed the planting schemes and layouts. It helps me to understand a garden if I have information as to how it evolved, and this provided that information. This archive gave added value to my visit. No garden however young is instantly constructed – it is a process that can describe the gardener, designer and owner, their particular interests and taste.

I will take home with me the reminder of how important linking views between parts of the garden are to the continuity; and however much a showpiece, it is still someone's home space. I will try the Honeysuckle umbrellas if I can, and find *Ilex crenata* to replace my dying box hedging!

Littlethorpe Manor was a treat, not something you can experience fully on the internet, and the internet cannot provide the shared experience with fellow visitors over a cup of tea and a piece of cake afterwards! I hope everyone enjoyed the garden as much as I did, especially our Welsh cousins who had a coach drive home!

Jenni Howard

Photographs: Tony Cleaver



# Visit to The White House, Husthwaite.

Thursday 23 July 2015

On a sunny July afternoon, Mrs Audrey Raper welcomed 50 members of the YGT on a first visit to her home and garden – The White House, in Husthwaite, near Easingwold. This lovely Grade II listed house stands in an enviable situation towards the top of the main street with the twelfth century church of St. Nicholas just across the road. Originally a Medieval timber building, the house was stone-clad in the eighteenth century and subsequently extended and remodelled in 1988 by Audrey and her husband. At that time the garden consisted of a half-acre of lawn with a copper beech and a similar sized orchard which contained around a hundred old plum trees and a lot of very long grass.

In her introductory talk Audrey described herself as a *passionate gardener* and this became obvious the moment we entered the south-facing garden. The prospect was stunning. First of all we paused simply to take in the view: the gentle slope down to the boundary hedge, and beyond, the 'borrowed landscape' of hay-meadows, pastures and hedgerows rising to a small hill dotted with trees. I immediately thought of Paul Nash's paintings of the *Wittenham Clumps*. The garden itself has been transformed by Audrey into five areas, distinct in concept, yet flowing naturally one to the other: the terrace, the walled garden, the lawn and borders, the yew garden, and the re-imagined orchard. Audrey began her remodelling with the hard-landscaping of the walled garden which now links into the terrace. The same dimensions were subsequently replicated in the yew garden and both provide a pleasing geometric symmetry to the softer lines of the lawn and border areas. The orchard, to the east of the plot, was the last area to be developed and experimentation continues here.

Audrey began her guided tour beside the terrace where we saw vigorous examples of *Alstroemeria*. This is a

new collection – also planted elsewhere in the garden – and is clearly flourishing here. The broad terrace is lined with many pots, some quite huge. As the soil in the garden is fairly alkaline, plants which thrive in more acidic soils are housed in these pots and clearly do very well. These include *Pittosporum tenuifolium* 'Silver Queen' with its dark glossy leaves and sweet scent, *Hydrangea paniculata* 'Limelight' and 'Levana', which has white conical blooms especially attractive to bees and butterflies, and two plants which caught my particular attention – holly-leaved sweet spire (*Itea ilicifolia*) with impressive drooping racemes some 20-30cm in length, and *Grevillea Australis* 'Olympic Flame' which Audrey told us flowered for ten months of the year and was developed from seedlings raised in 1954 and named for the Olympic Games held in Melbourne in 1956. An impressive and fruitful fig tree also grows along the terrace. Below the terrace were fine examples of shade-loving hostas, including the glossy dark foliage of 'Devon Green'. Along with many other practical tips throughout the tour, Audrey recommended this variety for its hardiness and slug resistance.

From here we stepped down into the walled garden. Immediately striking was the profusion of clematis – one of Audrey's passions. They are grown throughout the garden and are planted – usually two or three contrasting cultivars together – on tall wooden structures rather than against a wall. This technique gives a sculptural and vertical element to the borders, and helps keep the roots cool and the blooms in full sun. Much in evidence was the long-flowering *Clematis viticella* 'Polish Spirit', various *texensis* cultivars, and, particularly eye-catching, the ivory stamens and deep velvety red/maroon petals of 'Niobe'. Peonies – herbaceous, shrub and hybrids – are also a favourite and feature here as well as throughout the garden. Next year Audrey is planning

to grow white *Itoh* peonies (named for Toichi Itoh, the first hybridiser to successfully cross a tree peony with an herbaceous peony in the 1940s). White-flowering varieties of particular beauty include 'Cora Louise', 'Love Affair' and 'White Emperor'. As mentioned in her notes to the YGT Audrey pointed out her *Cornus controversa* 'Variegata' which struggled to survive last year. It looked healthy but disappointingly was not carrying many bracts again this year.

Below the walled garden, within the same geometric design, lay the fruit and vegetable garden. It is not a large space but is packed with produce. Most vegetables are permitted one metre square (and make the most of it), whilst raspberries inhabit a larger, caged, space, and red- and black- currants grow beside the walls. Plots of sweet peas and herbs, and a greenhouse with a heavy crop of tomatoes complete the lay-out. The south-facing wall supports an espalier apricot which had two tempting fruit just at eye-level.

The tour then took us into the lawned area. This is softened by generous, herbaceous flower beds and mixed sunny borders – all beautifully edged – again containing peonies and clematis, the stunning oriental poppy 'Beauty of Livermere' with its distinctive crepe-papery pillar-box red blooms and downy leaves, and the 'English Garden' drifts of salvia, lychnis, fritillary, penstemon, geranium, delphinium, lupin, dahlia and phlox - amongst others, with some lovely under-planting of *Alchemilla mollis*. Also prominent here was a beautiful *Potentilla anseriana* from Iceland. Ornamental trees and shrubs, particularly those with rich and distinctive foliage, are another of Audrey's passions and are very evident throughout the garden. We were introduced to lovely specimens of yellow holly (*Ilex aquifolium* 'Bacciflora'), *Gleditsia triacanthos* 'Sunburst', *Eucryphia x nymansensis* 'Nymansay', and a Judas Tree (*Cercis siliquastrum*) with distinctive rosy-pink

flowers. One particularly striking specimen was the Californian Poppy Tree (*Romneya coniteri*) with its impressive large bowl-shaped white flowers and prominent yellow stamens.

Audrey then took us to the yew garden which has the same dimensions as the walled garden. It held a few surprises: The enclosed low box hedges are rounded rather than straight-edged, an idea that came from a visit to the American Museum Garden in Bath (which Audrey sketched at the time on a knitting pattern!); and round balls of box appear to be growing in pots, but in fact the pots are bottomless and the plants secured firmly in the ground. This garden also includes many beautiful double peonies by Claire Austin. Audrey stressed the importance of knowing good people in both mail-order companies and local nurseries, many of whom have been her suppliers for years. The yew hedges themselves – looking positively lustrous – contain an impressive arched entrance into the orchard. This is the creation of Mark, Audrey's part-time gardener, who shares her enthusiasm for topiary. Two large creatures, reminiscent of sentinels at a



classical portal, flank the entrance. These were originally clipped as birds but Audrey has noticed in recent years that they seem to have been mutating into mammals, growing distinct limbs this year suggestive of deer or llamas. Mark has created some marvellous forms around the garden including two impressively intricate spirals which form something of an ensemble statement along with the topiary beasts.

The redeveloped orchard now contains a new large trellised

rose bed. Audrey explained that the area is not good for rose growing but that she was experimenting with a range of ramblers and Old Varieties sourced from David Austin. The display looked beautiful with a wide range of colours and some lovely fragrances, so despite Audrey's reservations it looks as though this current planting is flourishing. Attractive free-standing silvery metal obelisks provide both structure and support whilst a pergola of honeysuckle and buddleia also give height. Another notable feature of the orchard is the range of ornamental trees which do well in alkaline soil and look attractive all year-round. To pick out just a few examples: Chinese Paperbark maple (*Acer griseum*) introduced into Europe in 1901 by E. H. Wilson for the Veitch Nurseries, distinctive for its smooth, shiny orange-red peeling bark; Tibetan Cherry (*Prunus serrula*) with attractive coppery-brown bark and yellow foliage in autumn; Snowdrop Tree (*Halesia carolina*); White Fringe Tree (*Chioanthus virginicus*) with scaly brown-red bark and richly scented flowers; *Blepharocalyx x cruckshankii* 'Temu'. A number of silver birches also provide elegance here; a medlar provides fruit for jellies and desserts, and one damson remains. The low branches on all these trees are trimmed hard and the beds below planted with a profusion of *anemone sylvestris*, crocus, tulip and snowdrop for Spring colour. Several shrubs caught the eye: Bush Anemone (*Carpenteria californica*); a Japanese Bitter Orange (*Poncirus trifoliata*) and several varieties of Clerodendrum.

Throughout the tour Audrey, undoubtedly a plants-person *par excellence*, stressed her belief that a garden needs to be subject to development and experimentation and that gardeners should not be timid in taking-out and replanting on a continuous cycle. As an example, she said that she replaced the lavender each year and has plans for new varieties of peony in the future.

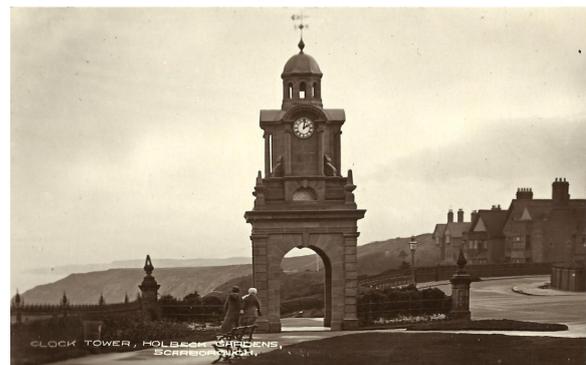
The afternoon concluded with refreshments on the terrace and a vote of thanks and presentation to Audrey by John Barker. Audrey kindly invited members to visit again, maybe at a different season, as the garden – as we had no difficulty imagining – had much to offer at any time of year. I'm sure that for all of us it was an inspiring visit.

*Sheila Wilkins*

## A glimpse at this year's Urban Event

Where can you find a Star Map, a Swiss Cottage and a Strawberry Arch? They are just some of the fascinating delights to enjoy on this year's Urban Event. More of a coastal walk really, enjoying some of Yorkshire's finest views. Obviously it's Scarborough!

Starting at Holbeck Clock Tower, the Friends of South Cliff Gardens will guide us down through the Italian Garden to the Spa Complex. In the afternoon our hosts will be the Scarborough Civic Society who will take us through little known villa gardens between the Rotunda and Woodend where a treat is in store.....well, I'm not going to reveal all yet. Numbers will be limited, so please book early. See p. 23.



*Ray Blyth*

# Visit to Friarwood Valley Gardens and Pontefract Castle

Thursday 13 August 2015

The Valley Gardens are right next to the centre of Pontefract in a steep sided valley bordered on the north by a tall sandstone wall. In the bottom of the valley is a stream that runs through a culvert except for a short stretch where it has been opened up to provide water for the wildlife living there. The south side climbs up to be topped by Friar Wood Hill which has been left as a wild area.

Members of the Trust arrived at the Valley Gardens with the sun shining and were greeted by a lovely welcome of tea, coffee and scones while sitting around the bowling green. We were able to enjoy the lovely surroundings and to meet members of the Friends group who have done a lot of work over the last three years to start to restore the gardens to their original glory.

Whilst finishing our drinks we were introduced to Tom Dixon; locally known as 'Mr Liquorice', he gave us an amusing talk on the history of growing liquorice in the area and told us that his family was the last to grow it commercially in the UK. We then had a chance to view maps and photos showing some of the history of the Valley. It is a very sheltered valley with a rich deep loam soil and has been used for growing fruit and vegetables since at least 1256 when the Dominican Friars used it for their herbs etc. In 1950 the town started work, making it into a formal garden for its people to enjoy.

We headed first to the area of liquorice still growing well in the gardens and were told that the roots grew at least six feet deep and that the liquorice was made from the sap squeezed out of the roots. We saw it was actually flowering, which is very unusual this far north. We then looked around the 31 rose beds that the Friends group had replanted over the winter. They told us that the rose garden had been there since 1950 but that it had been killed off with the use of weed killers. When they went to work on it, it had been waist high in buddleia and weeds. Different people had sponsored each bed and they are now looked after by the Friends. They told us that they didn't replace the soil but used manure, bone meal and rootgrow. They certainly looked healthy and very colourful with no signs of rose sickness.

On our way through the gardens we noticed lots of Mediterranean and New Zealand plants flourishing, even though it was so far north, including a group of splendid *Griselinia littoralis* beside a path and *Hoherias* against a south-facing wall. We went on to look at the sensory garden that the Yorkshire Gardens Trust had sponsored in 2012; it is sited on a terrace under the north wall and is now an established bed that has colour and interest all year round and can be seen both from above by people walking along the road and from the bottom of the valley below as you walk up to it. In front of it are three new benches which are well used. In 1960 a scented bed for the blind was opened here but this



photograph: Val Hepworth

had been grassed over many years ago.

Throughout the gardens there are many unusual trees such as *Betula albosinensis* var. *septentrionalis*, *Catalpa bignoniodes*, a Mulberry and wonderful avenue of budded flowering cherries lining the main path in from Friarwood; these had all been planted in the 1950s to replace the original fruit trees. Two *Sorbus torminalis*, chequer trees, had just been planted as memorial trees for all the soldiers lost in the wars. There used to be a hill covered in them nearby until it had been built on. The area is now called Chequerfield but there are no chequer trees to be found there.

After lunch we headed east through town to see the castle which was built on a spur of rock overlooking the Vale of York. The castle was constructed in approximately 1070 by Ilbert de Lacy on land which had been granted to him by William the Conqueror as a reward for his support during the Norman Conquest. Initially the castle was a wooden structure which was replaced with stone over time. In 1311 the castle passed by marriage to the estates of the House of Lancaster. King Richard II was probably murdered within the castle in the Gascoigne Tower. Apparently the slighting of the castle at the conclusion of the Second English Civil War had the full support of the surrounding population. They were grateful to destroy the castle and thus stop the fighting in their area. In the view of the locals, the castle was a magnet for trouble.

As we entered the gates of the castle we saw that a herb garden had been planted at the base of the keep. First we were taken down to the magazine which was once the cellar to the 11<sup>th</sup> century hall and later was where civil war prisoners were kept. Afterwards David Wilcock of the Friends of Pontefract Castle took us around the remains of the castle, explaining their uses as we went and from the top of what remains of the keep we had a wonderful view of the area around. Pontefract has a long and rich history which we learned a little about on this visit that combined gardens and castles.

Liz Clayden

# Pontefract's Cranky Pin

After our memorial visit to Pontefract, I was intrigued as to why an area should be called Chequerfield and a road there named Monument Lane, so I returned to uncover the following story.

The Waterloo Monument was erected for Edward Trueman and built of brick by a mason called Heseltine, and bore the inscription:



*The Waterloo Monument, Pontefract.  
my eye falls on the lofty rock in  
Copyright, Oswald Holmes, Advertiser Office, Pontefract. the passage.*

‘This monument was erected September, 1818, in commemoration of the splendid and decisive victory of Waterloo, achieved by British Valour under the immortal Wellington, June 18<sup>th</sup>, 1815.’

Edward Trueman was a partner in the Quaker owned bank of Leatham and Tew, now Barclay's Bank, and was Mayor of Pontefract five times, and the monument was thought to have been a memorial to his son who was killed in the battle. If Trueman was not a Quaker it is unlikely that he would have been a partner in a Quaker bank, however if he *was* a Quaker it is unusual that he would have commemorated warfare in such a way.

Waterloo Monument became known locally as Cranky Pin because of its lean. It was surmounted by a gilded stone urn which may have given rise to the rumour that it contained gold coins. During a heavy gale in about 1943, the urn crashed to the ground and was presented to the town by Mr C Pease J.P. on whose ground the monument stood. It is thought that the urn was preserved at Monument House, an old people's home which was built on the Circle, Chequerfield.

In about 1946 Waterloo Monument was demolished to make way for a new Council housing estate on the site of Monument Lane.



In December 2008, contractors upgrading Monument Mews discovered the urn and it is now displayed in the grounds.

More factual fables can be found on my website:  
[www.fabulousfollies.net](http://www.fabulousfollies.net)

*Ray Blyth*

## For Your Diary—Forthcoming YGT Events

Tues 23 Feb 1.30pm	Austwick Hall, Snowdrops
Sat 19 March 9.45am	Scampston, AGM
Sat 16 April 11am	Hornby Castle, Landscape
Tues 3 May 7.30pm	Tempest Anderson Hall, York YPS/YGT Lecture ‘Gardens in History: A Political Perspective’ by Louise Wickham
Tues 17 May 11am	Scarborough South Cliff, Valley Gardens & Woodend, Urban visit
Fri 3 –Sun 5 June	Northumberland ‘Capability’ Brown Tour,
Tues 21 June 10.30 am	Three Haggess Wood Meadow & Skipwith Hall Midsummer Picnic,
Fri 24 June evening	Mercer Gallery, Harrogate, Capability Brown exhibition preview
Sat 25 June – Sun 11 Sept	Mercer Art Gallery, Harrogate, ‘Noble Prospects’
Thurs 30 June 6.30pm	Calm Cottage Evening Visit and drinks,
Thurs 14 July 2pm	Yorke House, Dacre Banks, garden visit
Wed 20 July 2pm	Greencroft, Littlethorpe, garden visit
Thurs 15 Sept 11am	Wortley Hall, Sheffield, landscape & garden visit
early Oct tbc.	Wressle Castle

## Newsletter Autumn 2016

Deadline for next edition: Tuesday 6 June 2016  
Editor: Tony Cleaver [tonycyork@hotmail.com](mailto:tonycyork@hotmail.com)

# Musings On An Old Garden Bench

Looking back, the highlight of my garden year has been the reinstallation – now gloriously repaired – of my old cast iron garden bench. Found languishing on a rubbish heap by my father some 50 odd years ago it stood for years outside my kitchen window and was much loved and used by generations of family and friends, not to mention various dogs. Sadly the wooden laths began to fail and it was swept aside - identified as a repair project for one of those quiet moments which, as ever, failed to materialise.



Unrestored bench ends

As far as I can gather the bench ends are well over 100 years old and designed and cast in considerable detail. I'm now calling it the 'mythical creatures' ( thanks Michael!) bench as the design includes winged sea-creatures forming the arms. More intriguing is the section below which includes scrolling leaves, an elegant peacock sipping from a flower, a central anchor and chain as well as the letters 'M' and 'V'. As an archaeologist used to teasing meaning out of the interplay of design elements in, say early Irish Art, I am mystified by the combination of design motifs used here. Surely it must be a conscious design and the lettering suggests an individual client? What does it all mean?? Sadly there are no foundry marks and we are still hunting an origin.

Part of my rationale (excuse) for not restoring it was that I didn't feel I could do it full justice as a DIY project, especially as it's the only one I'd seen of this type. Perhaps I should retain it 'as found' – with a view to using it to make copies at some point? Imagine my surprise and delight then, during an idle evening's websurfing, to find another example! Even more happily this was on the site of a company specialising in the buying, selling and

restoration of historic garden furniture [www.thompsonsgardenemporium.co.uk](http://www.thompsonsgardenemporium.co.uk) Having investigated further I decided to have my bench restored – fully stripped and repainted and re-lathed in teak. I entered this process with some trepidation given my sentimental attachment to the original. Its return from the workshop a couple of months later was a revelation. To say I am delighted is something of an understatement!

In discussion Michael, the 'Emporium' owner, tells me that he has now found a few sets of the same bench ends – scattered around the country and with no clear leads on their original provenance. He has his spies out ( there are a few other 'benchaholics' out there all trying to find out more) and will keep me posted. It now appears that many old bench ends are to be found



Restored glory

tucked away as mine was and I am delighted with the idea that they can now be rescued and given a new lease of life.

Interestingly I can't find any good specific publications on cast iron garden furniture but it appears that this became popular after the Great Exhibition of 1851 at which Francis Darby introduced the fine art castings produced at Coalbrookdale. Readers will all be familiar with the elaborate Coalbrookdale 'fern' benches and the iconic 'Serpent' benches so characteristic of Harrogate. Elsewhere the naturalistic 'tree branch' style is also associated commonly with old railway stations. In practice the range of designs is enormous ( as can be seen from the website above) with production from a number of historic

UK foundries. All were probably also producing other garden ornaments including tables, planters, plant stands and more.

Cast Iron appears to have followed on from, and then run in parallel with, wrought iron furniture which came into vogue in the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> C – presumably marking an activity change from simply promenading around a garden or landscape to being able to sit and contemplate – in partnership with others in the case of the usual garden bench. I guess some strategically placed benches could have quite a tale to tell of gossip, liaisons and intrigue plotted by their occupants. Early 'artisan' pieces took inspiration from the master furniture designers of their age – Chippendale, Hepplewhite and Sheraton and show the transformation of gardens into 'living rooms'. Many good historic wrought iron benches also survive and can similarly be restored ( I've also just had one done). Presumably mass production by casting allowed garden furniture to reach new affluent audiences; and also helped fuel and meet growing requirements for commemorative benches – seen especially in public parks, cemeteries and gardens of remembrance.

There is probably much more to be researched and said on this topic, in the interim if any readers have thoughts on the origins of my bench please do get in touch. For those of you with other abandoned examples tucked away why not also think about getting them professionally restored? What better way to help keep them alive and celebrate this understudied aspect of garden history? You could also adopt a new garden antique yourself!

Thompson's Garden Emporium are regulars at the Harrogate Flower Shows so you can investigate their work for yourselves. Other restoration specialists are, of course, available.

*Dr Margaret Nieke*

Alistair Morris 1999 *Antiques from the Garden* is a useful general guide ( and cheap on Amazon).

Georg Himmelheber 2001 *Cast Iron Furniture* is scholarly ( and expensive).