

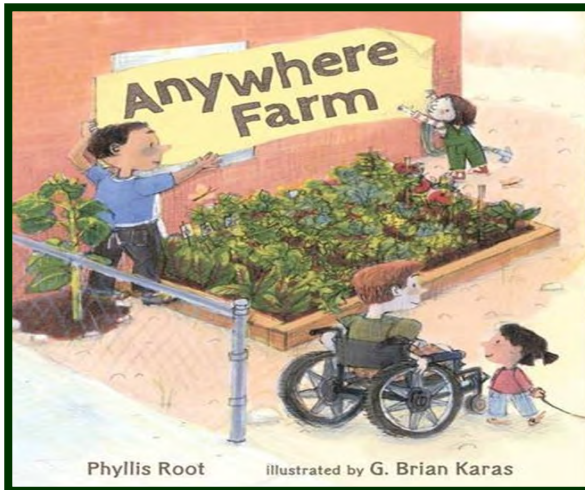


YORKSHIRE GARDENS TRUST NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 41

Autumn 2017

YGT Schools News



The book donated to our 42 YGT schools this year.

This year, our support for Yorkshire schools is loosely based on the concept of forest gardening. Forest gardening shows that it is possible to produce food even in conditions of semi-shade. Most schools do not have the luxury of dedicated fruit and vegetable plots in full sun, so we are aiming to show that food can still be grown in some less obvious spots.

Our first gift to schools this year comprised 15 bundles of Autumn-fruiting raspberry canes – fruits that can grow in semi-shade and can be picked after the long Summer holidays, when children return to school. Our second gift to all our member-schools is an exciting new book aimed at younger readers and entitled,

Anywhere Farm; it encourages children to grow food anywhere, for example an old boot, a crate or even a tea-cup! The book is in hardback and each copy contains a YGT bookplate, noting that this was a gift from the Trust. The books were gifted from the Plantsmanship donation.

Over the Summer we will be making three awards available, courtesy of the Pippa Rakusen bequest. The first of these goes to St Oswald's Primary School, York; providing funding towards a school visit to the Yorkshire Arboretum at Castle Howard. The other two will be offered as YGT Schools' Grounds Development Awards, allowing schools to develop their own garden areas.

Last September, the Joyce Hampshire Award, a very special award in memory of a treasured member of YGT, was presented to Old Town Primary, near Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire. This Award, being a set of high quality junior gardening tools, will allow lots of children to experience the joy of gardening at the school for many years to come. This September, we look forward once more to granting the Joyce Hampshire award to one of our schools.

Nicola Harrison

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Schools' news continues overleaf...

The YGT Schools Group: How we do what we do!

There are three of us on this Sub-Committee – Nicola Harrison, who you may know from her days working on Council and from her articles in the Newsletter, plus Lucy Porritt and myself, Sue Lindley, a member since 2012. We exist to support, advise and channel funds in one way or another to our 42 member schools.

I thought I would tell you a little of how we go about channelling the funds. Obviously, it varies from year to year depending on how much money we have available. However, whatever the state of the coffers, we still aim to provide a variety of opportunities to the schools. This is because the schools vary significantly – some may be well-equipped, some just starting out on their gardening ventures, some may be surrounded by lots of space to fill with a variety of gardens, others may just have a tiny area to play with squeezed between the netball pitch and the bicycle rack. Therefore, offering a variety of opportunities is a way, we hope, of making sure all our schools benefit.

Over one year, we aim to give all schools something. It may just be a packet of seeds or a book or something else that catches our imagination. Hoping to cash in on the success of Nigel Dunnett's landscaping at the Olympics we sent all schools a packet of his Pictorial Meadows seeds – that was in 2013 – and one year we gave all schools a copy of the RHS book 'Ready, Steady, Grow'.

Each year we aim to offer something to all schools. It might be a mushroom box or, as last year, a Field Maple. Those schools to whom that offer appeals will apply and receive the gift. We budget so that if all schools wanted that item, they would receive it. Similarly, if we have funds available we can offer support for workshops or visits, such as the Wack's Wicked Plants Workshops about carnivorous plants, and the visit to the Mercer Art Gallery last year, but these more expensive offers are on a first-come-first-served basis and we will only be able to offer one or two schools the chance per year.

Finally, but definitely not least, we give Grounds Development Awards, normally two a year. Schools have to apply for these, demonstrating their commitment to their project, its viability and usefulness, the involvement of the children in the planning and use, and provisions for aftercare.

We'd like to thank Council, members of the YGT and those who have made donations for making all this possible and I'll end with the words of one school garden club leader on hearing that they'd won our most recent Award:

"So exciting, sick and awesome; the children's favourite words encompass everything I feel. Warmest wishes...."

Sue Lindley

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To learn more about practical ways to support the work of our Education team, please turn to the back page. By helping today, you can nurture the gardeners of tomorrow.

Yorkshire Gardens Trust

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YGT Nominated trustee to Wentworth Castle Trust

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Louise Amende; Vicky Price representing the Events Team
Tony Cleaver
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**www.yorkshiregardenstrust.org.uk
secretary@yorkshiregardenstrust.org.uk**

Chairman's Letter

Knowing the Past and Influencing the Future

It's the third week in May and we have festoons of cream and pale lemon roses on the front of our old house in almost the most northerly part of North Yorkshire. I planted *Rosa* 'Alister Stella Gray', *Rosa* 'Céline Forestier' and an unnamed rambler rose cutting from nearby Easby House more than thirty years ago and I've never known them to flower so early. What a topsy-turvy climate we seem to have now; very little snow and a very dry Spring this year. I wonder what the rest of the year will be like for the garden. Whatever the weather brings it's likely that gardeners will have experienced something like it before and they and their plantings will adapt to changing conditions.

Like so much else, gardens are about change; whether by co-incidence, by indifferent or lack of management or by the desire to make alterations. Perhaps it's only with the passage of time and in depth study that we really understand the changes that have been made in a designed landscape and what previous generations were seeking to achieve... and how successful they have been, not least on the 'eye', the views and the economy of the estate. Understanding and knowing what has gone before can have real benefits for shaping and influencing the future. So it is interesting to learn about work going on in three of Yorkshire's great designed landscapes.

At Bramham Park, Nick Lane Fox and family have taken the brave decision to take three areas out of forestry. These areas, from map evidence, have been in forestry since at least 1845 and some are shown as forested in the map by John Parker dated 1817. However this was not Robert Benson's Bramham landscape when he commissioned John Wood the elder to produce the map of 1728, and incidentally today's layout is virtually unchanged from that design except that those forested areas are marked as meadow. So Nick has been using the 1728 map as the template for restoration and with the agreement of the Forestry Commission has taken down the trees, removed the brash, dug up the stumps, levelled etc and will sow with a wildflower mix. He says: 'The



Bramham Park. Image: Nick Lane Fox

effect, when the trees came down, was dramatic, but the views it opened up are fantastic and the effect of light and dark which it has introduced made me appreciate the variety that Benson was probably trying to achieve.' The photograph above shows the effect on the Open Temple of removing the trees in the area to its north west (which is also south of the Four Faces Urn).

In Newsletter No 37, our member Dr Margaret Nieke, Historic Environment Specialist, Natural England wrote about the work of Environmental Stewardship and Yorkshire's historic parks and gardens including Castle Howard. As she says, 'Historic parks have to have a future as well as a past – the trick is to take new developments forward, which are respectful of and sympathetic to the past.' So although it was thought that the great 18th Century lime avenue which frames the main approach to Castle Howard would have to be cut down completely and replaced, the detailed tree survey indicated that the actual condition was not as bad as anticipated and a more measured approach of a rolling programme has been taken. There will be further tree replacements but next time with home-grown clones of the best 18th Century Hatfield Tall lime trees; a future deeply rooted in the 18th Century past!

In the East Riding, Burton Constable; a significant 'Capability' Brown landscape, has difficulties in common with so many other great houses and landscapes where the maintenance costs are vast. However, income-generating events such as music festivals, car rallies and gardening shows bring our historic jewels to a wider audience but can have a damaging impact on the special historic and ecological qualities which make the site so attractive; it is imperative that organisers of such events do sensitive impact planning guided by a Parkland Plan. This was an approach which paid dividends at the Spring Bank Holiday weekend when Burton Constable hosted a



Tree 'protected' by stalls at Burton Constable Hall. *Image: Margaret Nieke*

BBC Music Festival which was the biggest event of its type ever in Hull or East Yorkshire and a real, collaborative team effort co-ordinated by the Hull 2017 City of Culture team. As Margaret said to me; 'The aim was to ensure that the event had the lightest and most recoverable footprint possible. We worked hard to ensure that suitable access tracks were used, that protected, medieval earthworks of the village and fields which preceded Capability Brown's landscape were not damaged and that Capability Brown's landscape, including the trees, were not damaged. With careful and early planning and a good understanding by all parties of what we were aiming at, all worked really well. Thinking about it – I think Capability Brown was a bit of a showman with an eye to using the landscape as 'theatre'. I think he would actually have approved of the event!' Natural England was also involved in a BBC led education day beforehand, when a hundred local children and their supporters enjoyed a special behind the scenes tour of Burton Constable Hall and the BBC event area. They went away with lots of information, badges, environmental playing cards etc and the teachers and history students were given copies of our Capability Brown book; all very encouraging for the future of historic parks and gardens.

Turning to South Yorkshire, many of you will have heard about the agonising situation at Wentworth Castle where the gardens and park were closed with little warning immediately after Easter Monday despite visitor numbers recently in excess of 100,000 each year. This is a huge loss not just for the communities that it serves in South Yorkshire where it is the only triple Grade I listed site for its historic parkland, gardens and house, but also as National Collection holder of species magnolias, rhododendrons, and x Williamsii hybrid camellias. Wentworth Castle is an internationally important heritage asset which has had a large amount of public funding to restore and make it accessible to us all and it is an irony that this has happened just as nearby Wentworth Woodhouse has been saved by another charitable trust for restoration and public opening. YGT trustees have written to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), who granted much of the finance for the restoration of Wentworth Castle, expressing our concern for the future of this important site. We have also alerted our concerns to The Georgian Group who like YGT have been a nominating body giving expertise to the Wentworth Castle and Stainborough Park Heritage Trust.

I'm very sad to write that we have lost two wonderful supporters of YGT this Spring. John Barker was a mainstay of the events team and many of you will remember him in his 'hi viz' jacket and his organisational skills with his wife Liz. The Trust is going to plant a Ribston Pippin apple tree in Ripon Walled Garden; a place that he loved and where the YGT is already giving a grant. Matthew Wrigley, who died on 18 May, was a founder trustee of YGT and throughout the past twenty one years has been a huge supporter both as our honorary solicitor and as a good friend. He was always available when we needed thoughtful advice and encouragement. We will miss them both tremendously.

In March, Win Derbyshire represented YGT at the Gardens Trust meet-up in London where several of the County Gardens Trusts gave presentations on their research and recording, conservation and education work. Win mentioned the work that we are doing in these areas and it seems that we all have the common problems of development pressures on our historic parks and gardens and the need to encourage more members to get involved in the efforts of their Trust. We were delighted that Win could be our voice at the meeting and she says that she much enjoyed meeting so many members of other Trusts. This is a joy of being a part of the Gardens Trust nationally.

We had a very happy AGM at Masham and I'm sure that you will enjoy reading the accounts of the day which start on page 12 of this newsletter. We are delighted to officially welcome our four new trustees; Fiona Barlow, David Morgan, Vicky Price and Nigel Tooze; it's really encouraging to have more expertise round the table, thank you for taking on YGT! At the AGM we said thank you to our very long-standing trustee and treasurer, David Tiptaft, who has been another mainstay of YGT with his wise counsel and money management. We hope to see you and Jenny at more of our events, David, as you definitely should have some time now to enjoy visiting rather than doing sums.

As you will read in Vicky's report, we are making good progress with the events programme for 2018 and have some very special visits and lectures arranged not least to celebrate the bicentenary of the death of Humphry Repton who arguably was the outstanding landscape practitioner after 'Capability' Brown. The Trustees have also allocated a grant to the New Arcadian Press towards the publication costs of *ON THE SPOT: The Yorkshire Red Books of Humphry Repton, Landscape Gardener*, which is being researched by Karen Lynch and Patrick Eyres. Patrick will be giving our joint lecture with the Yorkshire Philosophical Society in York next May on Repton in Yorkshire. As well as large designed landscapes and parks we will be visiting gardens next year as we usually do, and which reminds me that it's a pleasure to congratulate the Wyvill family of Constable Burton Hall near Leyburn who have received a sundial from the National Gardens Scheme in recognition of opening their gardens for the past forty years. We hope to visit Constable Burton in 2019.

So, much to look forward to and enjoy in the coming months, and as ever if you would like to help with the running of YGT in any way then do please get in touch with me, any of our trustees or our invaluable part-time administrator, Louise Amende.

Val Hepworth

Welcome to new YGT Trustees

Part 1: David Morgan

Born in Otley, David has returned to live in Yorkshire after spending most of his career away in London and New York. After September 11 he moved to Virginia for a year and then decided to return home to have a go at one of his bucket list jobs; managing a large park garden and house.

Working for the National Trust for 11 years, David first managed Lyme Park in Cheshire, and in 2013 moved to York to manage the three Trust houses there.

Gardening has been an ongoing hobby, even in Manhattan where he volunteered at the Cooper Hewitt Museum, and in upstate New York where he created a garden surrounding an 1830's former general store. Out of the garden he enjoys music, (he plays the piano) plus travel, theatre and the gym, and of course being a new trustee for Yorkshire Gardens Trust..



Conservation and Planning

Since I last wrote, the Conservation sub-committee has been joined by three new members:

Win Derbyshire, Chris Mayes and Anni Vassallo; we are delighted to have them with us. In addition we have continued to receive advice on specific planning applications from David Rhodes and Susan Kellerman using their particular local knowledge and expertise; this is most useful and a great help when I'm writing planning responses. We still hope for a Conservation Chairman or someone to co-ordinate our conservation and planning efforts.

In February, I attended the Royal Town Planning Institute day in York – '50 Years of Heritage Planning' to celebrate 50 years of conservation areas and to look at how innovative techniques and management of historic assets drive regeneration, quality and prosperity. Following this, Jane Furse and I had a useful meeting discussing planning case work with Neil Redfern, Principal Inspector of Ancient Monuments and Development Management Team Manager, at Historic England in York who invited YGT to the Historic Environment Local Management (HELM) meeting that he was arranging in Sheffield. HELM is essentially heritage training for local authority officers, consultants and others such as Natural England and the National Trust; people at the 'sharp end' of looking after our heritage. Jane attended on behalf of YGT and found it very heartening to listen to others working in the historic environment and in particular to debate the question of views from and into historic landscapes which are so important and to note that they must be detailed in the listing. The example that Neil gave was for Studley Royal; the protected view from Studley Royal Drive, over the intermediate fields to Ripon Cathedral. Quite pertinent, as with David Rhodes help we have written three letters objecting strongly to the outline planning applications for 390/excess of 400 residential dwellings on land to south west of West Lane, Ripon which would affect the setting and views from Studley Royal and Fountains Abbey.

Also with David's expertise we were able to comment on a planning application for a restaurant, car park, access bridge etc at the Japanese Garden at Grantley Hall. Earlier this year, again using expertise within YGT, we commented on the proposals to Register the Japanese Garden at Grantley Hall and which is now Grade II. There has

been quite a lot of other case work, some of which has necessitated site visits. Historic England invited YGT to look at the proposals for major stabilisation works at South Cliff Gardens, Scarborough, gardens designed by Joseph Paxton, Edward Milner and others where historic paths and ornamental trees will be lost. We have written giving advice and our concerns that a Conservation Plan had not been put in place; fundamental in our view. Planning applications at Milner Field, Saltaire and proposals for a 'Go-Ape' attraction at Temple Newsam have also entailed site visits. We have given advice at Cliffe Castle and Bowling Park, Bradford, and visited Busby Hall to advise on the extremely interesting historic glasshouse belonging to YGT members.

Several years ago our members Moira Fulton and the late Helen Lazenby carried out a research and recording project for the Yorkshire Dales National Park (YDNP) which has proved invaluable for advising on planning applications affecting historic parks and gardens within the YDNP. In the Spring we were asked about work to be carried out at Edgley Park in West Burton and noted that the rubble farmhouse is reputedly one of the earliest houses in Bishopdale. In the early 18th century it was the property of Matthew Robinson (1694-1778), father of Elizabeth Montagu (1720-1800), who is said to have been the owner and builder of Sorrel Sykes, which lies almost immediately opposite.

However, probably the most recent time-consuming conservation work has been undertaken by Susan Kellerman and Dick Knight researching the significance of Parlington at Aberford which I wrote about in the last Newsletter. This is an historic estate, former seat of the Gascoignes, which has been put forward for a proposed new settlement. In February Susan and I had a meeting with the planners at Leeds City Council and explained the significance being revealed by Susan and Dick's research, and we have written to confirm YGT's objection to Parlington being included in the Site Allocation Plan and also to Historic England to confirm our support for Registration. Our site visit with the agents has been cancelled twice but we are persisting as it's so important to relate the documentary research to evidence on the ground. The research has revealed several very interesting strands about the evolution of the estate including: horse racing and breeding



The Triumphal Arch, Parlington. Image: Val Hepworth

from the early 18th Century with interesting paddocks and stallion pens still extant; the Triumphal Arch Grade II* (1783) which is unique because it is the only contemporary monument that explicitly celebrates American independence and the only example of such a monument in the designed landscape of a country estate; the gardening dynasty of the Kennedys (including John Kennedy who wrote *A Treatise on Planting* dedicated to Sir Thomas Gascoigne, first published in 1776); and the industrial archaeological features in the landscape which the Gascoignes developed.

Returning to my introduction, any help with conservation and planning would be very welcome. We are not experts but with an interest, some knowledge and a willingness to learn from each other I believe that we are making a difference regarding the future of Yorkshire's historic parks and gardens.

Val Hepworth

Welcome to new YGT Trustees Part 2: Vicky Price

Vicky Price worked in television as a documentary programme editor before, upon retirement, completing the RHS Horticulture Level 2 course. This was followed by a diploma course in Garden History at Birkbeck.

Moving to North Yorkshire three years ago, Vicky joined Yorkshire Gardens Trust and soon became a member of the Events Team, using skills learnt as programme organiser for local history societies in Twickenham: the Marble Hill Society and the Friends of Turner's House. She believes that the work the Gardens Trusts do in conservation, education and research is of huge importance in helping to maintain our heritage of designed landscapes, parks and gardens and we must try to promote this work to as wide an audience as possible by attracting people to join us.



Visit to Beningbrough Hall Gardens

Monday 27 February 2017

On a wet Monday at the end of February, 44 members arrived at Beningbrough Hall near York where we were welcomed by David Morgan, General Manager of National Trust Properties York, with a hot drink, delicious bacon butties and fresh scones. We were then treated to a talk by David Morgan and Head Gardener Sam Shipman about the evolution of the gardens at Beningbrough and the 12 year plan to implement Andy Sturgeon's new designs. Sam has been at Beningbrough for 8 months, having previously worked for 8 years for the Earl of Halifax at Garrowby Hill, and before that, 5 years at Burghley House in Lincolnshire and prior to that in Istanbul.

There is little archive material of the gardens at Beningbrough: one painting from 1852 and some early photographs and pictures from Country Life, but most of what the public sees today was implemented in the 1970's. Prior to appointing a garden designer to develop the gardens here, a Conservation Management plan was written to ensure that the right elements would be kept. Unlike at Sissinghurst, where the National Trust are obliged to maintain Vita Sackville-West's vision, here there are great opportunities to evolve the gardens to meet the needs of the visiting public. When Beningbrough went into partnership with the National Portrait Gallery in the 1980s, visitor numbers began to increase, generating better levels of income for investment in the site. This is important because the gardens are not working for visitors at the moment, with no obvious route and lots of repetition of planting in a space that was designed in the 70's and 80's for 30,000 visitors a year when now they are welcoming 140,000 visitors a year.

Andy Sturgeon's practice specialises in large country gardens and the twelve year plan is designed to give visitors reasons to keep coming back. The first phase of the redesign was the planting of 200,000 snowdrop bulbs and 100,000 crocus and daffodil bulbs along the ha ha, thus extending the season for visitors and helping to generate more income. In the second phase, starting in October this year, the former glass house area is to be transformed into a south facing pergola where visitors will be able to sit and relax amongst whites and yellows. Into 2018, the Italian garden, which has early flowering cherry trees and a late

flowering border, will be transformed into a Mediterranean garden. The design harks back to the style of the hall, which is Italian Baroque, and the sloping site, with the use of interlocking walls and hedges, will incorporate a water feature.

In many ways the designs are very empathetic with what currently exists and Andy is using the lightest of touches to improve the spaces and garden rooms for visitors. The American Garden, which appeared on an 1850 OS map, currently includes any plant from abroad, but will be restored to a walk through South America, Central America and east and west coast America. Equally, the wilderness area is cleverly being manipulated by opening up views and crown lifting trees, making the play area an even more exciting place to be in. So too, the orchard, by simply removing one apple tree, will give a view all the way to the park and link the whole garden together.

The south border, which was originally designed to peak for guests coming for the St Leger at Doncaster, will be restored to the reds and yellows of old, with the addition of shrubs for Winter interest. The east formal garden will simply be tweaked, replacing blighted box balls with yew balls and standard bay trees with flowering trees. And in the more formal west garden, near the conservatory, the classic Victorian bedding will be reinstated and paths re-laid with York stone to make it more cohesive with the rest of the gardens. In both these gardens the yew hedging is now being cut back by half so that when the formal gardens are reopened in five or six years, the yew will be lush green again.

The Kitchen courtyard garden, with its extra high walls, will have a striking contemporary makeover, creating a destination seating area and a plant hunters' paradise. So too, the Laundry courtyard will become a destination area with seating and places for modern art sculptures. Sculptures will become another reason for visitors to come to Beningbrough and the Laundry courtyard is not the only place that they will be found when the installation of the garden is complete.

The big showpiece will be the walled garden, which will be closed for a year while the transformation takes place. But even here, thought is given to the visitor who will be able to observe the work taking place from a viewing platform.



Snowdrops at Beningbrough showing the edge of the ha ha.

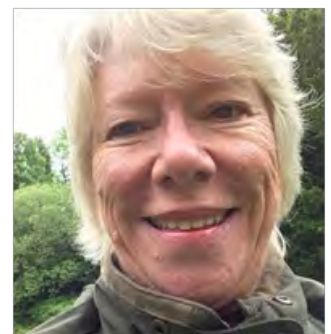
Image: Fiona Barlow

Sam described the current walled garden as being like a school disco where everything stands on the outer walls. Andy Sturgeon's design will bring everything towards the middle, barring the espaliered trees on the walls. The pear arches will remain but the trees on the perimeter will be lifted and replanted in two clumps, and a path will create a strong diagonal line across the space. Yew, beech and hornbeam hedging at three different heights will create circular garden rooms within the walled garden and blocks of planting will bring education to the visitors in terms of agricultural crops and perennial vegetables. There will be a herb garden and a nuttery underplanted with wild flowers and the whole space will be dynamic and full of new ideas.

The whole garden redesign is cleverly thought through to create space for plant lovers and families alike. Currently, the layout squashes visitors into hotspots but in the future the whole outside space will have reasons to be visited and used, thus making the experience more enjoyable for everyone. Sam has been involved with the

design from the moment he joined and his constructive feedback about what his team of gardeners can realistically achieve has been listened to and incorporated in the design. And what is so clever is that with an army of 48 volunteers, a lot of the changes will be very cost effective to implement, leaving the budget to splash out on the really cutting edge areas of new design.

As we wandered around the gardens to find the 200,000 snowdrops flowering along the ha ha, minds were buzzing with the excitement of what is to come and we felt incredibly privileged to have been given an insight into the future of what will become one of the best large gardens to visit in the north of England.



Fiona Barlow

Our Chairman's Garden: A Spring Visit

Wednesday 5 April 2017

In mid-Spring I drove from York up to Skeeby on the outskirts of Richmond for Val's Open Garden. It was a sunny April day, good for the drive and the garden visit.

Val opens her garden for charity most years, this year in Spring for SENSE, and in Summer for the volunteer-run Richmondshire Museum; she likes to share her garden and feels raising money for charity at the same time is a very good thing. Val and her husband Ian raised £576.50 on the day of my visit.

The garden is an exposed site. Skeeby lies roughly halfway between Richmond and Scotch Corner at around 100 metres above sea level.

Local quarries suggest limestone and alkaline soil. The mature garden rises up behind the Tudor house on the north side of the road through the village, and is exposed to the wind but also to sunshine. Before Val and Ian moved in, the house had been lived in by Dr Mary Pease of the Darlington Quaker family connected to the Darlington and Stockton Railway, and Barclays Bank. She was a keen gardener and very likely laid the bones that Val has worked with ever since.

After her death, the garden was neglected so that it was 'overgrown, weeds, brambles; the usual stuff,' Val says. For the last 36 years, Val has just 'planted and gently modulated it as the basic topography....is so lovely.'

What is 'so lovely' and loved by children, family and friends, is that, hidden beyond the wind-battered beech hedge, which you might well think is the end of the garden, is an old quarry. The site of family parties and teenage sleepovers, it is also a quiet place to sit and enjoy Spring flowers such as narcissi, flowering shrubs and Val's favourite, hellebores – or the dappled shade of *Prunus* on Summer days. Val has intervened structurally here in a couple of ways. She removed a box hedge which had been planted across the slope down into the quarry; we agreed this would have interrupted the flow of the garden. Also, she has recently



Val's garden. Image: Ian Hepworth

created a waterfall which adds significantly to the drama of the space and must contribute refreshing sound on a hot day.

Beyond the quarry are sheltering trees and fields of sheep. Nearby is a small protected new rose garden adjacent to Val and Ian's shed, the shed being a replacement for the old hen house and which comes into its own on Open Days as teas are served here. Above one end of the beech hedge that hides the quarry is a weeping cherry, originally a mistake but now appreciated for the character and punctuation it adds to the garden.

On the south side of the beech hedge is the sloping Summer garden that leads down to the house; it is partly lawned with, to one side, a deep bed of traditional flowering plants such as herbaceous perennials, lavender, a few shrubs and roses. Roses feature too on the pergola that separates the bed from the productive garden. Val admits to a few problems with them; perhaps the soil is too dry and not rich enough. However, this garden must be a pretty sight in Summer and will complement the old house.

Continued on opposite page.

Unveiling of the James Backhouse Plaque at 92 Micklegate, York

Tuesday 28 February 2017



Before...

On the morning of Tuesday 28 February a number of YGT members gathered on the pavement outside 92 Micklegate, York together with members of York Civic Trust and York Conservation Trust to witness the unveiling of a plaque to James Backhouse, (1794-1868) botanist and nurseryman (see article on page 17 of the Spring 2017 Newsletter).

Daphne Hamilton was invited to perform the ceremony; her father bought the Backhouse Nursery in 1920 in Holgate, York and ran it until his death.

The house in Micklegate was where James Backhouse and his brother Thomas lived while running the nursery, then situated on Tanner Row, a road at the back of the house. It was a coincidence that the plaque was unveiled on the anniversary of the Backhouses moving into Micklegate.

The house is now owned by York Conservation Trust and everyone was invited inside for a celebratory toast, making it a truly special occasion.

Tony Cleaver



...and after the plaque had been unveiled by Daphne Hamilton.

All images: Tony Cleaver

Continued from opposite page

Despite what might be thought an awkward site, Val's garden has variety and character and its domestic scale and nature suit the unpretentious old manor house. My strongest memory is typical of a garden which features the grace of shrubs allowed to be themselves. Between quarry and sheep, under the trees, lies an old grassed lane providing access from the village road. I followed the lane, turned a corner and was stopped short by a pink flowering currant backlit by afternoon sun.

Sue Lindley

Yorkshire Gardens Trust AGM

Masham Town Hall, Saturday 18 March 2017

Val Hepworth welcomed 59 members to the YGT AGM, thanking all those who had made the event possible. Nick Lane Fox, the Chair for the morning's proceedings, noted that by making the AGM papers available on the YGT website, a saving of over £200 had been made by not posting hard copies to those members who have email.

In his final role as outgoing Honorary Treasurer, David Tiptaft presented the Annual Report and highlighted four items of particular note which have made a substantial contribution to YGT funds and which may not be obvious from the accounts: over £4000 has been received via subscriptions; events made a £4142 surplus; the Northumberland tour made a £1083 surplus and the Capability Brown celebrations raised a £5145 surplus. Karen Lynch was recognised for her high profile in the latter exercise and tribute was paid to Val Hepworth, who has steered the Trust to the success it now has. David also thanked Louise Amende for looking after both membership subscriptions and events bookings. UHY Calvert Smith was duly reappointed as independent examiner.

In her Chairman's Report, Val Hepworth noted that the Trust has been very busy in its 20th birthday year, not least because of the Capability Brown 300th anniversary and the Harrogate exhibition, a first for the Trust. Thanks were given to Karen Lynch for her intensive work on the exhibition and the accompanying book, to Lady Legard for sourcing funding and to YGT members who helped to host the exhibition at the Mercer Art Gallery.

To the dismay of us all, Val made it known that she is intending to retire as Chair, as she wants someone new at the helm to take the Trust forward with new ideas. She reflected on how refreshing and invigorating it is to meet new people and see new places and what a fantastic charity the Trust is, with a great membership. Val hopes that someone will come forward to volunteer for the role.

Following the new regime of digital access via the website, only 70 sets of paperwork have had to be distributed as opposed to *c.* 300. Members are invited to send in comments on this new system as feedback is appreciated.

A number of brief reports from YGT Groups were presented, displaying the wealth of activities with which the Trust is involved. These are only listed here as they are more fully described in the 2016 Annual Report and/or Spring 2017 Newsletter (no. 40): Sue Lindley – Schools Education; Louise Amende – Membership; Malcolm Barnett – Pippa Rakusen Bequest and Penelope Dawson-Brown – York Civic Trust plaque for James Backhouse; Louise Wickham – Research & Recording; Tony Cleaver – Newsletter; Jane Furse – Wentworth Castle; Val Hepworth & Ray Blyth – Conservation & Small Grants Scheme; Nigel Tooze – Finance & Governance.

YGT Members are encouraged to join the sub-committees and lend their support to the activities of the Trust. The Conservation sub-committee in particular is looking for new members, as is Research and Recording.

There followed the election of new Trustees and officers, after which a small presentation was made to retiring Trustee David Tiptaft and his wife Jenny, with grateful thanks for his years of service.

Mickle dynasty talk – Simon Warwick

Following the AGM, Simon Warwick was our Guest Speaker, giving a fascinating presentation on his research into the Mickle Dynasty of Georgian landscapers, twenty years after he wrote an article on the subject for the first YGT Newsletter.

We were introduced to the fact that there is still confusion as to how many Adam Mickles there are! There are at least three: Adam 1 (1713-*c.*1780); Adam 2 (1747-1811) and Adam 3 (1781-1827), and an earlier fourth: identified by Simon as 'Adam zz' (b.1690). Simon's talk mainly concentrated on Adam 2, who worked on many country estates, particularly in Yorkshire.

Adam Meikle (aka Adam zz), b. 1690, was a professional gardener who moved from Lothian to Heddon on the Wall in Northumberland. His first son, Adam (1) was baptised on 30 August 1713.

On the same day three years later, on 30 August 1716, Lancelot Brown was baptised and Simon postulated that it is tempting to think that they might have been colleagues.

Thirty years later, 1743-1757, Adam (1) was head gardener to the Duke of Beaufort at Badminton House, Gloucestershire, working under the guidance of William Kent (1685-1748) and Thomas Wright (1711-1786) and, after Kent's death, under Lancelot Brown until the death of the Duke of Beaufort.

His son, Adam (2), born in 1747, first emerges in 1763 as an apprentice to the Worshipful Company of Tylers and Bricklayers in London, taken on by Cornelius Holland on 14 December 1763. He married Ann Joanes in July 1771, although in May-June 1776 he found himself in debtors' jail. His lack of funds was probably due to the 4th Earl of Scarborough, for whom he had been working, failing to pay his bills, a situation which seems to continue for the next few years.

Father and son worked together and both appear in the accounts of Lancelot Brown, spanning periods of time between 1757 and 1779 (Adam 1) and 1768-1777 (Adam 2). However, they were probably doing freelance work for others, as well as working for Brown.

Following the death of his father, Adam (2) moved to Little Ouseburn in North Yorkshire (1781-8?) where his son Adam (3) was born on 4 March 1781. By June 1783, Adam (2) had five children and was still writing to the Earl of Scarborough regarding unpaid bills. After 1792, the family moved to Rand Grange, Bedale.

Simon gave us an illustrated tour through many of the country estates on which Adam (2) worked. Some have good archival evidence of before and after maps and plans, such as at Newby Park, now known as Baldersby Park, the home of Queen Mary's School. Others, such as Thorp Perrow, near Bedale (1793-97), were unfinished projects due to lack of funds.

Adam (2) also worked on a number of John Carr's houses, including Kirby Hall. Other associations include Ripley Castle (?1784), Mulgrave Castle (1784-5), Thirkleby Hall/Place (1785), Copgrove Hall (1786), Kippax Park (1787), Tredegar House, Wales (1787-92), Cannon Hall and Harewood House (1790-95). Designs were also made for Swinton Castle (1796-1810), Walkington Lodge, East Yorks (1803) and Wood End, Thornton-le-Street (1809).

Less is known about Adam (3), who first appears working with Adam (2) at Esholt Hall (1802-06). By 1811, Adam (2) is taken ill and dies at Bedale. Adam (3) dies in 1827.

In conclusion, Simon felt that there was still a lot more to learn about Adam (2). He was ambitious and, in the words of the Duke of Beaufort to the Duke of Rutland: "He is an honest man, but rather a tough diamond".

What makes a Mickle? Simon summarised the characteristics of a Mickle design as a more open and naturalistic landscape, with gentle curves and semi-circular plantations of trees, especially on junctions; clumps of trees for mystery and delight, a breaking up of lines, an opening out, allowing the light to come in. Water is used in seamless, gentle lines with rustic bridges and naturalistic waterfalls, using rock to break up landscapes. Overall, the Mickles created forward thinking landscapes and played an important role in the landscape parks and gardens of Georgian Britain, particularly here in Yorkshire.

After lunch there was a choice of visits to either the Druids' Temple with Ray Blyth, or a tour of Masham.

Gail Falkingham

Druids' Temple, Ilton; visit led by Ray Blyth.

After a break for lunch, we made our way to the Druids' Temple, a short 4-mile drive to Ilton, south-west of Masham, to continue our Adam Mickle theme. Fortunately, the rain held off and a group of about 20 of us assembled in the car park for a brief introduction from Ray, who explained that the site we were about to visit was unique; called a stone circle, it was better described as a stone complex.

A short walk led us to the Temple which sits within woodland, surrounded by a number of other standing stones. Sideways on, it appears somewhat boat-shaped, as if built into the sloping hillside; certainly not a replica of Stonehenge! Constructed from huge stones brought from Ilton Moor, two miles

away, the enclosure surrounds an altar stone, a large stone table and a small, dark, damp cave at the rear. The complex has never been surveyed in detail.

William Danby II inherited the Swinton Estate in 1781, two years before the death of Capability Brown on 6 February 1783. Ray explained that at that time, Brown's landscapes were becoming somewhat passé. The English landscape movement, which had been inspired by the paintings of Claude Lorrain and Nicolas Poussin, was being criticised by writers such as Uvedale Price and Richard Payne Knight who favoured the Picturesque, arguing instead for a less formal interpretation of nature, such as in the paintings of Salvator Rosa. Danby would have been inspired by this; he was a great collector and patron of the arts, and owned artwork by Rosa and books by Price and Knight. Danby was also a man of science and learning and went on the Grand Tour with his wife from 1786-90. He was interested in the Gothic, and ancient sites and may have been influenced by the stone circles of Brittany. He also visited the Lake District in the 1790s and was friendly with the Romantic crowd and the poet Robert Southey.

The popular view of the Druids' Temple is that it was built in 1820, either by soldiers returning from the Napoleonic Wars, or by unemployed locals as a job creation scheme. However, to Ray, this is nonsense. He explained that at this time, there was extensive work being carried out across the Estate, repairs to houses and wall to such an extent that there was too much work for the locals to undertake, so no need for job creation.

Ray suggests instead, that the structure was built c. 1800, for it certainly existed in 1803 when it is first recorded. In 1798, there is a record about the cost of a build and a payment to Adam Mickle (2) of £36.15. This is a significant sum, and Ray believes this was spent on the construction of the Druids' Temple. William Danby was certainly paying Adam, in the archive there are a series of fortnightly letters written by John Shields, the Estate foreman, who records much detail, including the three pints of beer which were provided daily for the workmen.



The Druids' Temple. *Image: Gail Falkingham*

A number of Irish Georgian coins were passed around, these having been collected by Ray's son, including a number of half pennies found locally. One of these is a druidical penny or token of 1791 from Anglesey, issued by the Parys Mining Co. These were only tradeable in Liverpool or London and Ray sees these as evidence of an Irish workforce who had come, via the Anglesey copper mines, to be billeted at Fearby to work on the Swinton Estate and most likely the Temple.

Ray feels that the complex is the start of Adam Mickle (2) at work on the Swinton Estate, a masterpiece of superb engineering. It must certainly have been constructed by a skilled workforce, using a variety of skills. Most likely it was commissioned by Danby as something Romantic and unexpected in his Estate landscape. After his death, his widow remarried and her new husband Vice Admiral Harcourt, being the son of the Archbishop of York, may not have had respect for Druids. Such buildings became unfashionable and it was common to attribute them to the land-owner's altruism of providing employment.

We then continued along the path down the hill, past other groupings of stones, to the edge of the woodland where there was a magnificent view across the fields down to Leighton Reservoir. Before returning home, there was opportunity to stop off at the nearby Bivouac Cafe for refreshments.

Gail Falkingham

Richmond Georgefest 2017

Saturday 12 to Saturday 26 August

Members may be interested in the opportunity to visit two Landmark Trust properties located in historic designed landscapes.

The first is Culloden Tower (10.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. on 12 and 13 August) in the Temple Grounds, Richmond. Built in 1746 to celebrate the defeat of Bonnie Prince Charlie at the battle of Culloden, it served as an "eye-catcher" and affords stunning views across to Richmond. The two main rooms at the top of the tower contain a rich mix of Gothic and Classical carving and plasterwork.

The Tower is opening as part of Richmond's GeorgeFest 2017 which runs from 12 to 26 August and has a number of other events which may interest members including:

a tour of Temple Grounds led by Val Hepworth on 15 August; of particular interest to those who missed the Midsummer Picnic in 2015 (full report in Newsletter No. 39).

the opening of Mr Yorke's Walled Garden (owned by YGT members Dennis & Marcia McLuckie) on 13 August.

a talk by the Landmark Trust's Caroline Stanford entitled, *Political Meaning or Pure Folly? Culloden Tower and Other Georgian Landmarks* on 16 August.

Details of all these events should be available at www.richmond.org or please contact me for a brochure (email: nigel2z@yahoo.co.uk)

The Landmark Trust is also opening The Ruin at Hackfall, Grewelthorpe (10.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. on 9 and 10 September) in association with Heritage Open Days. This little banqueting house is perched dramatically above a steep wooded gorge with far reaching views across the Vale of Mowbray; it is one of a number of listed follies in the landscape conceived and created by the Aislabies between 1749 and 1767, and restored by The Woodland Trust and The Hackfall Trust.

Details of both Landmark Trust properties can be found at www.landmarktrust.org.uk

Nigel Tooze

Celebrating Humphry Repton

1752-1818

In 2018 we shall be marking the 200th anniversary of Humphry Repton's death; he was born in 1752. Repton is regarded as the last great landscape designer of the 18th century and was determined to succeed 'Capability' Brown. Fortunately, the YGT AGM has been arranged for Saturday 24 March, the very date on which he died and it will be held at Rudding Park, near Harrogate. In 1790, Repton created one of his famous Red Books for Rudding, after Lord Loughborough had invited him to put forward suggestions for the redesigning of the garden and park, though we do not know how many of his suggestions were implemented. The talk that day will be given by Professor Stephen Daniels, author of *Humphry Repton, Landscape Gardening and the Geography of Georgian England* and the leading Repton scholar.

Later, in May, Dr Patrick Eyres is giving the Yorkshire Gardens Trust / Yorkshire Philosophical Society lecture with help from Karen Lynch, with the provisional title, *Humphry Repton, landscape gardener (1752 -1818) and his Yorkshire commissions*.

Patrick and Karen are also writing a book about Repton focusing on Yorkshire. The aim is that the book will be a resource that will appropriately mark Repton's bicentenary, with the intention of including all his landscaping proposals for places in the county, and we hope to launch the book at one of our events. Karen is also encouraging public and private owners of Repton's Yorkshire Red Books to display them for us to see.

As one of the highlights on our Events Programme next year, we hope to visit Mulgrave Castle near Whitby, where some of Repton's proposals in the Red Book he prepared for Mulgrave were carried out, and it will be interesting to see what traces remain in the landscape.

We also hope to arrange a visit to Gotts Park/Armley House near Leeds which, although now a golf course, as a garden and park in the late 18th century was partially redesigned by Repton for Benjamin Gott. Garland (the Garden and Landscape Heritage Trust) and Peter Goodchild are arranging a mobile exhibition about Repton which will be launched at the Harrogate Spring Flower Show in April (see opposite page).

Nationally there will be Repton celebrations, with the Gardens Trust holding a conference at Sheringham in Norfolk in June and many of the county gardens trusts publishing new research about Repton sites in their counties. Hopefully we will be able to build on the success of the Capability Brown festival last year. There will be an update about all things Repton 2018 in the Spring Newsletter.

Vicky Price

Forthcoming Visit to Kirkleatham Estate

Wednesday 20 September 2017



At one time Kirkleatham Park extended all the way to the North Sea but now little bastions on the ha ha, like sandcastles defying a tidal wave, are holding back the tide of industrial sprawl and housing. At present Kirkleatham plays an important role in providing local needs with a museum, owl centre, arts and entertainment facility, café, playground and other amenities.

The old Kirkleatham is fractured, but our guide for the visit will be Stewart Ramsdale of Tees Heritage Trust who will piece it together again for us as he did on our visit back in 2005. Any member who attended that visit will know what a treat is in store. Please use the booking form enclosed, or emailed to you, to secure your place on this fascinating visit.

Humphry Repton, Landscape Gardener

Exhibition in 2018

Following on from the 'Capability' Brown Festival which was held in 2016, a number of organizations, including county garden trusts such as YGT, are planning events for 2018 to celebrate the life and work of Brown's professional successor, Humphry Repton (1752-1818).

Repton designed gardens as well as landscapes, being equally interested in both. Unlike Brown, he wrote extensively about the theory and practice of landscape gardening and much more is known about him as a person and his wider interests. Repton is often remembered for the illustrated reports or 'Red Books', that he prepared for his clients to set out and explain his proposals. These included views, which by means of a flap (he called it a 'slide'), showed scenes at the place in question, with and without his suggested improvements.

During Repton's lifetime a fashion developed for the gardens between a mansion and its park to be replaced by plain lawns. The purpose of this was to emphasize the link between the mansion and the wider landscape and make it look as if the mansion was situated directly in the landscape without an intervening garden. By bringing the ornamental garden back to this prominent location between the mansion and the landscape, Repton reestablished the idea of the garden being an important extension of the domestic realm of the house and a transitional area between home life and the wider landscape.

GARLAND (The Garden and Landscape Heritage Trust) which is an independent organization, based in York, has been asked by The North of England Horticultural Society (organizers of the Harrogate Spring and Autumn flower shows) to prepare an exhibition about Repton with special reference to Yorkshire and The North. The idea is that it will be shown first at the Harrogate Spring Flower Show in April 2018 and thereafter at other locations during the year.

I am currently planning this exhibition and would be both delighted and grateful to hear from anyone who might be interested in helping with it on a shoestring budget. My contact details are given at the end of this notice.

The 3 main periods during which help is needed are:

- o From September 2017 to March 2018.
- o During April 2018.
- o From May to November 2018.

The different kinds of help are that needed are in connection with the following:

From September 2017 - March 2018:

- collecting images for incorporation into the exhibition*.
- organizing power-point presentations relating to the exhibition.

* This might include such things as:

- taking digital images of items for the exhibition.
- locating and ordering copies of digital images for the exhibition.
- obtaining, where necessary, permissions to reproduce images and copyright permissions.

During April 2018:

- setting up the exhibition at the Harrogate Spring Flower Show in April.
- being an attendant while the exhibition is on display at the Flower Show.
- taking down the exhibition and taking it to temporary storage.
- organizing and helping to host a reception at the Harrogate Spring Flower Show.

May to November 2018:

- transporting and setting up the exhibition at other locations.
- dismantling and taking the exhibition back to temporary storage or on to the next location.

My contact details are:

Peter Goodchild, 14 Buckingham Court, Bishophill Senior, York YO1 6EQ

E-mail: peter.goodchild@yahoo.co.uk Tel: 01904 654 678

Research and Recording Group

Spreading the word...

As members of the Yorkshire Gardens Trust you are no doubt familiar with our aim 'to conserve and foster this county's garden heritage for the benefit of present and future generations'. However, across Yorkshire there are many people who have never heard of us, or know what we do. So the Research and Recording team have been seeking opportunities to engage with wider audiences, both professionals and the general public, and spread the word. We have also been sharing our methodology and good practice with other County Gardens Trusts by contributing to The Gardens Trust Historic Landscape Project workshops and training sessions. Our work in the East Riding of Yorkshire and the Selby and Hambleton districts of North Yorkshire is progressing well and we were pleased to be featured on the front cover of the YGT Annual Report!

At the beginning of December last year, the team attended the Gardens Trust Regional Forum in York and contributed to the afternoon session discussing the best way to run research and recording projects. One of the key messages was the importance of engagement with the site owners. Some are very private, but being able to visit the site is crucial to determining what historic features survive. There was no definitive answer in how to engage successfully but it was agreed that persistence was key by enabling the owners to understand what we were doing and why.

We attended two further Gardens Trust events but this time as speakers. Yvonne went to Birmingham in January where members from fifteen County Gardens Trusts met to share experiences of setting up and running research projects. At the end of February, Louise talked about how to engage volunteers to a group comprising other garden trusts, interested heritage professionals and local council officers.

Building on the success of recruiting volunteers from local history and archaeology societies to work with us on researching Yorkshire's parks and gardens, we presented aspects of it to a number of societies. This is part of our overall aim to make our research as widely known as possible, to maximise its usefulness and perhaps encourage a few more volunteers!

In February, Mary went to talk to the Selby Civic Society, highlighted as the first talk of their 2017 programme *Historic Parks and Gardens in the Selby District*, where she focused on Carlton Towers. Mary explained how we use a combination of archive research, historic maps and recording of features on the ground to bring the history of the gardens to life. The talk was well received by an audience of about 50 local people with much discussion of garden features and local memories of Carlton.

Also in February, Yvonne took on the challenge of speaking at the Council for British Archaeology (CBA) Yorkshire Annual Symposium in York; it is their main event in the year, attracting an audience of over 100, ranging from professionals working in the historic environment to the general public. It provides a forum to get an

up-to-date overview of investigation and research being carried out by individuals, local societies, academic and commercial bodies into Yorkshire's archaeology. The thirty-minute talk entitled *Researching and Recording Yorkshire's Designed Landscapes* first gave a brief overview of what the Yorkshire Gardens Trust does; it then showed how we undertake documentary research and site recording and how our work can contribute to the conservation and protection of these important historic landscapes.



Fully excavated ice well at Carlton Towers, looking south.

Image: Ed Dennison

In April, there was a further opportunity to talk to a smaller group, the Scarborough Archaeological and Historical Society. With a whole hour on offer it was possible to talk in more detail about *The Work of the Yorkshire Gardens Trust* on conservation, grants, education, events and publication. An opportunity to highlight the successful exhibition at the Mercer Art Gallery, *Noble Prospects: Capability Brown and the Yorkshire Landscape* and sell a few copies of the book. Then time for a more in depth look at some sites, in particular Healaugh Park and Manor from our Selby district project and Kilnwick Percy from the East Riding project. Both reports can be found on the YGT R&R web pages.

Also in April, Louise was invited by the Riccall Historical Society to talk about Escrick Park, which is part of their neighbouring landscape. The designed landscape was developed by the Thompson/Forbes Adam family over the last 300 years. The Hall and surrounding gardens are now owned by Queen Margaret's School but the rest of the estate was retained by the Forbes Adam family. In the packed audience were present and former employees of the school, residents of the estate village of Escrick and three generations of the Forbes Adam family.

While many knew the site well, there was genuine interest in the research we have uncovered. One area of discussion was the various entrances and approaches that changed over time depending on the mode of travel from coach, to train and then car. Charlie Forbes Adam told me that part of the deal his ancestor, Lord Wenlock, struck with the railway company who wanted to put a line through his land, was that they had to build a station so that trains could stop there when he requested it!

An example of the relevance of our work came with the excavation of the 18th century icehouse at Carlton Towers. This was unknown to the owner, Lord Gerald Fitzalan Howard, until we pointed it out on a 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1849. Documents in the archives showed that it dated from at least 1771. Shaun Richardson of Ed Dennison Archaeological Services Ltd., together with the estate gardener Simon Gash, excavated the remains buried below ground and found an intact brick-lined chamber (see photo). The report is on the YGT website on the Carlton Towers page (in *Selby District Research and Recording Project* section).

Finally, we are very grateful to Helen who has joined our team as Editor. We want to ensure that our reports are of the highest professional standard and Helen's guidance has been invaluable.

Helen writes:

I had been interested previously in what I'd heard of the project in the East Riding, but as I live on the westernmost edge of the West Riding, I didn't see this as something for me. That changed at the last AGM when Louise mentioned that a volunteer with some editorial experience was needed. This sounded like an attractive version of armchair gardening!

Having been provided with some background by Yvonne on the destination and potential readership of the reports, I was ready to start. I see my role as having three parts. First, I check reports technically, for instance looking at consistency in the form of names and measurements, and eliminating any stray typos. I also read from the perspective of future users, including both planners and conservation officers, and members of local communities concerned in all aspects of the history – as well as present and future – of their patch. This necessitates a balance of detailed and referenced description, clearly related maps and other illustrations, and some explanation of unusual or particularly significant features. The third strand is that I have the pleasure of reading the reports, learning about parks, gardens and history unfamiliar to me, whilst contributing to the success of the project. This is not something I had expected to come my way, so perhaps there is a role awaiting you too!

Researching and Recording Team

(Yvonne Boutwood, Helen Caffrey, Mary Ratcliffe and Louise Wickham)

Visit to Auckland Castle Park

Saturday 20 May 2017

An enthusiastic group of Northumberland Gardens Trust and Yorkshire Gardens Trust members gathered outside the impressive entrance to Auckland Castle, a grade 1 listed clock tower, where we were met by Harry Beamish, Tony Smith and Linda Drury who led us around the park while imparting a mass of information on its history and development.

First, a potted history. The park originated as a deer park in the 11th and 12th century for the Prince Bishopric of Durham, the hunting lodge being later converted into a castle; this was largely demolished in 1646 after being sold to Sir Arthur Hazelrigg and he built a mansion. After the Restoration, Prince Bishop John Cosin in turn demolished Hazelrigg's mansion and rebuilt the castle. Bishop Cosin also restocked the trees and renewed the fishponds between 1660 and 1671. In 1750 Bishop Butler described the park as being "too bare of trees" and he extended the park to over 800 acres, renewing the pale and planting, but he died two years later. His successor, Bishop Trevor, continued the work from 1752-1771. A map of the castle and park by Jeremiah Dixon for Bishop Egerton in 1772 shows the area almost as seen now, apart from the creation of a golf course in 1894. There were however some alterations under Bishop Shute Barrington who employed the architect James Wyatt (1791-1826) to do work including a new garden screen.

In 2001, the Church Commissioners announced plans to sell the collection of twelve 17th century paintings by Francisco de Zurbaran, worth £20m, which have hung in the Long Dining Room for 250 years. They later relented following a donation of £15m by an investment manager and philanthropist, Jonathan Ruffer, who established the Auckland Castle Trust in 2012; he took ownership and ensured the survival of the buildings and park. The castle is closed at present but will re-open after restoration.

The park is open to the public but we were also able to go into the garden area. Arriving through the entrance gateway with its adjacent lodge, we went into a courtyard where we saw the foundations of ancient buildings and a medieval gateway, but these are to disappear under a new building which will help invigorate the local economy as well being a centre for arts, faith and heritage. The surrounding old blocks will be retained.

Back to the drive along the south of the buildings, a view point allowed us to see the walled kitchen gardens sloping down to the River Gaunless which flows through the park to join the River Wear. There



Deer house built 1767. *Image: Win Derbyshire*

are three compartments divided by brick walls with the footings of innovative glass hot houses commissioned by Bishop Cosin. They were one of the first of their type in the north of England and produced vegetables, fruit, flowers and even pineapples. The garden is shown in a painting of 1680 and on Buck's view of 1728. The 18th century steps down are to be restored and a new restaurant is to be built in the upper garden, using produce grown on the lower levels.

To the north of the drive, a battlemented screen wall by James Wyatt in 1795 has a canted entrance with turrets leading to the formal castle area; it is flanked by open pointed stone arches with railings in the openings. It was suggested that after the original wall was demolished to open up views, the bishops were then disturbed by the general public who had access, so the new ornamental wall was built, but it is a striking addition. We were allowed through the gateway into an area in front of the castle, with steps up to a viewing platform at the end to look out over the adjoining Binchester estate. Much interest was also taken in a wheelbarrow moulding above one of the castle windows – gardening was obviously always taken seriously! To the east there is a sunken lawn, a former bowling green, with a raised walk round it and flank walls, and at one stage a gazebo. It formed a “safe” area when constructed, with views over the “wild” park, but now it forms a pleasant garden with trees and herbaceous borders round the edges.

Next we walked out into the Inner Park, with its grass and trees sloping down towards the River Wear to the west, and the River Gaunless coming in from the southeast. Leaving the main path we descended down to the old fishponds, restored by Bishop Cosin but now dry apart from one small hidden area. Harry took time to explain the features of the park, how it was partly commercial, producing rabbits in the early days, then deer for the bishops' tables, and also an income from lettings. The accounts for these transactions still exist, in Latin. The original herd of wild white cattle disappeared during the Commonwealth period and were not replaced. Bishop Cosin also managed to prevent a coal mine from destroying the setting of the park. A temporary modern intrusion is a reinforced track for construction traffic unable to get in through the old main gateway.

In the 18th century, Bishop Butler extended the park but Bishop Trevor's improvements created the park as seen today. His canon, Spence, seems to have had a flair for design, which helped. Not much is documented, although a painting of 1680 still exists, and Trevor's successor, Bishop Egerton, commissioned a plan from Jeremiah Dixon (an interesting surveyor and explorer) in 1772. The western boundary was formed by a wall and planting along the line of the River Wear, and showed on his plan. The Rt Rev'd Dr John Habgood, later Archbishop of York, replanted this edge while Bishop of Durham.



Bishop Trevor's Bridge, 1759. Image: *Win Derbyshire*

The area has numerous hawthorns, not part of the original planting, and in 1998, a maintenance plan by Tony Smith, then countryside officer for the county, proposed removing them, but Brenda Turnbull, wife of Bishop Michael Turnbull, Bishop of Durham at that time, vetoed the idea as they helped the wildlife, and Tony now seems happy to see them still flourishing.

Moving on, we came to a fine bridge over the River Gaunless with a stone arch inscribed with 1757, very convenient for dating as Harry pointed out. Numerous molehills stimulated discussion on their control. In the Middle Ages they interrupted the lines of scythers, so were flattened during the Winter, and this apparently kept the soil level as well.

Continuing over the bridge we came to one of a series of mini bridges over the Coundon Burn, where Dixon noted a wilderness area. The bridge may be on the line of the Roman Dere Street but no-one is sure. Some of us scrambled up a bank to see the remains of an old ice house. We also viewed the many ancient sweet chestnuts and noted the clumps of beeches, which were originally intended to be thinned to a single central tree as the trees matured and the outer protection was no longer needed.

The group then split with the “intellectual” group going further into the High Park with Harry to see the northern entrance and small pyramid, probably a well head. The feebler members, the “anecdotal” group (Tony’s classification), looked at the approaching rain, and took a shorter route alongside the Gaunless, stopping to look at Bishop Barrington’s oaks, planted in 1794. Here Tony recounted the story of Peggy Wickes, a caring lady who lived in one of the grace and favour flats. Peggy reported to Tony that someone was poisoning one of the oaks by spreading a powder round it; it was collected and analysed and found to be human ashes, so Tony had to replace it, avoiding a grieving relative.

The next stop was the magnificent Grade I deer house built in 1767. It is rectangular with a pinnacled viewing tower, central space and arcaded outer sides. There is no documentation of the architect; it is a unique building, well worth visiting, standing up on a ridge with views around.

By this time we were beginning to flag, so we returned to the main entrance, looking over briefly to the golf course on the High Plain, and the site of a demolished temple. A tearoom in the Market Square formed a suitable place to await the rather wet “intellectual” group.

Thanks are due to our excellent and informative guides.

Win Derbyshire

YGT Small Grants Scheme 2017

We now run the scheme as a rolling programme with a £2,000 annual budget for the next five years from Pippa Rakusen’s legacy and we have decided to keep the requirement for 50% match funding from the applicant. However, depending on the application, YGT Conservation Committee might consider a discretionary rate of a lower percentage of matched funding. The form is available on our website and we are very keen to hear from community groups, charities and organisations that we might be able to help.

We have paid the grant to Ripon Walled Garden for the signage and are awaiting their design plans for the weather garden. We have had a further two enquiries but so far no applications.

Val Hepworth

**Find out more about the YGT Small Grants Scheme at
www.yorkshiregardenstrust.org.uk/conservation**

**To discuss a prospective application please email Ray:
rayblyth689@btinternet.com**

Visit to Taylors Clematis, Askern

Friday 28 April 2017

We were consuming a hasty sandwich in the sunny car park at Taylors Clematis when we were summoned to tea and cakes in the nursery workroom cum conservatory. A good turnout of about 20 enjoyed the ample and varied supplies while Derek gave an introduction to the visit and an overture concerning the virtues of a “big hole”. It was to be an opera in three acts and, after the overture, Chris assumed the leading role and a second leitmotif emerged as ‘a time for pruning’. He escorted us, act by act, to various tunnels where the clematis plants are classified by their pruning status. The first act, Group 1, concerned plants that flower on last season’s growth and no pruning is required. Next, the plants of Group 2 have large flowers, flowering either all Summer or even twice a season. These can be cut back halfway after their first flush and then lightly pruned in early March. Group 3s are to be pruned hard back in early March every year as they only flower on new growth.

For clematis beginners like ourselves, (we have the humble if vigorous *Montana*), it was amazing to discover the vast number of varieties available and the great variations of habit. Chris was extremely well organised, taking us through the vast range of plants, keeping us focussed on pruning and fielding tricky questions left and right. This was a very enjoyable visit with YGT members clutching their many purchases as they departed.

Taylors Clematis was established 1982 and, as a nursery rather than a garden centre, specialises in clematis. They have over 400 different varieties and have been awarded several RHS golds for their plants, including plant of the year 2016 for *Clematis Amber*. Their plants are mature at two years old and come in two litre pots with a one metre cane. Find them online at taylorsclematis.co.uk

Jim Godfrey.



Pots and pots of clematis.

Image: Jim Godfrey

Your YGT Needs You – Please Can You Help?

A number of self contained but interesting volunteering roles have become available; they would suit people wishing to contribute a small amount of time to YGT. Please can you help?

YGT Schools Administration Roles – 3 roles requiring minimal part time hours

- taking minutes of meetings three times a year; a straightforward role in pleasant surroundings. These morning meetings currently take place over coffee at the Carpenter's Arms pub, Felixkirk but a new venue could be found if more convenient for those involved.
- looking after the list of schools – currently we have 42 YGT Schools – a manageable but vital task
- managing the small budget and communicating with the YGT Education team.

Over many years our YGT Schools volunteers Nicola, Sue and Lucy have worked to develop YGT's objective of cultivating both children's interests in horticulture and their schools' grounds; knowledge has been shared and delicious food grown. This very successful and rewarding work continues but some help with administration would be appreciated.

Individually, the tasks above are small and most of the work can be done from home, at a time to suit you. Sue and Val hope to hear from you; to discover more please use the contact details below.

Sue : 01904 643898 or 07779 13759 email: sue@gardensgreen.co.uk

Val : 01748 822617 email: val@hepworthskeeby.co.uk

YGT Events Administration—1 role requiring 2 hours a week at peak times

- To receive events cheques from members and post events tickets to them, then to bank the cheques, keeping a tally of who has booked; perfect for somebody living near a branch of Yorkshire Bank.

Our paid administrator, Louise Amende, now has additional employment elsewhere and wishes to reduce her YGT hours; regaining a volunteer for this small events role would conserve YGT funds.

Louise and Val hope to hear from you; to discover more please use the contact details below.

Val: 01748 822617, email: val@hepworthskeeby.co.uk

Louise: 01904 347056, email: secretary@yorkshiregardenstrust.org.uk

Late Summer 2017 Events

Wednesday 6 September, 2.00 pm Barnville - Garden visit

Thursday 7 September: Whitley Beaumont - landscape walk, postponed from June.
Everybody welcome: those who booked for the June visit and any others too.

Wednesday 20 September Day visit to Kirkleatham Estate near Redcar—still in Yorkshire!

To book: YGT members should post payment and the YGT Events Booking Form (enclosed with this newsletter or sent by email) to the Events Secretary or request a form by emailing secretary@yorkshiregardenstrust.co.uk

Not a member? Find out more at www.yorkshiregardenstrust.org.uk/join_us

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Editor: Tony Cleaver tonycyork@hotmail.com