



## Evening Reception at Harewood House - Thursday 14 July 2022



*Harewood House – South Front and Parterre  
(Image © Gail Falkingham.)*

‘Been there, done that!’ might have occurred to a couple of Yorkshire Gardens Trust members as we gathered on the spreading terrace of Harewood House to celebrate twenty-five years of the YGT. The society was launched here at Harewood in June 1997, but a good few of the original members were still around to enjoy a kind of replay. The terrace is quite some venue, overlooking the beautifully planted parterre, resplendent in minute clipped box, low lavender and stripy salvia.

This evening, we were welcomed with a small glass of Prosecco, neither very chilled nor very effervescent, as the drinks had been laid out well before the YGT bunch showed up. Twenty-five years ago, I read in the Newsletter Issue Number One, the YGTers were greeted with ‘delicious canapés and glasses of wine’ - note the plural. Moreover, some one hundred guests, back then, stayed on for a ‘delicious’ (again) ‘supper, and much talk about gardens and gardening.’ Obviously, rather more of a do than the quarter-century celebration, but it was the beginning of something big, after all and it was raining. In 2022, the sun shone, the breeze whispered around us and everyone was happy.

In the Terrace Gallery (and out of that breeze) we were welcomed by Chris Webb, the current Chair. He promised us a 45-minute peroration, but it was soon apparent that was a joke. ‘Really, I won’t talk for more than five minutes. First, he introduced our hostess and the President of the YGT, Diane, Countess of Harewood, who took over the post from her father-in-law on his death in 2011. She is clearly a woman of passion and ideas, who has created and fostered a culture of creativity, aided now and then by her husband, the Eighth Earl,

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David Lascelles. A man of purpose, David: he recently met, in a Channel 5 documentary, the well-known Homeland actor David Harewood, who is descended from two of the 3,000 slaves owned by the Harewood estates. It was common practice for slaves to be given the family name of their owners, proof of purchase, as it were. The West Indian sugar, rum and tobacco trade paid for the building of Harewood House in the mid-18th century, under the guidance of Robert Adam and John Carr. The current earl has also built a Buddhist retreat in his thousand-acre grounds, of which around 100 acres are open to the public. Many of the projects are joint efforts between husband and wife: the Himalayan Garden, which we were to visit later, is perhaps their greatest innovation, with a little help, admittedly, from Trevor Nicholson, the Head Gardener, who even visited Nepal in 2006 on a Banksian plant hunt.



*David, Trevor, Chris and Diane*  
(Image © Gail Falkingham)

Next it was Trevor's turn, our guest speaker and guide for the evening, and Trevor was just that, new to the job, a quarter of a century ago. So, with his army of volunteers to help him realise his imagination, he knows his Harewood. Lancelot "Capability" Brown, who designed the landscape (and obligatory lake) beyond the terrace, would be proud of him.

He too remembered the rain back in 1997, and the sorry state of the parterre before the box arabesques and yew cones were shaved of any five o'clock shadow and infilled with salvias and, I think he said, heliotropes. He is not keen, he told us, on twice annual bedding plants: not environmentally friendly with their plethora of plastic pots, not cheap, and altogether too municipal in appearance. Trevor, these days, has introduced very contemporary ideas on gardening: no digging, no chemicals and much mulching and feeding of the soil, 'not the plants, but the soil', with home-produced manure. He has

even tested his home-grown against commercial alternatives and found the latter wanting. Additionally, his stuff comes free, if you don't count the labour. He waxed lyrical about his teacher at agricultural college, 'the ring of the spade in the earth, that's what I need to hear!' but for Trevor, gardening has moved on. He told us about the Walled Garden and its sorry state of decline, leading him to grub up all the 20-foot-high roses and produce, as he said, a wasted space not unlike Elland Road, home of Leeds United. But, as we were to discover later, it is now flourishing in every way.

Then came Chris's turn to thank everyone and make a few remarks. (His promised five minutes stretched a little, partly due to his inability to disentangle his notes on his smartphone. I felt some sympathy with him on that). He promised a rosy future for the YGT, despite the abundance of pessimistic signs, the cost of transport for the various visits, climate change, the insect apocalypse and more. "But we shall come through. Like a garden, we are in constant flux - no garden can stay the same. We, the members, will work to enhance the future!" (Some of the older members, the vast majority, it has to be said, might have wondered where, and for how long, they fitted in).



*South Front – herbaceous border*  
(Image © Gail Falkingham)

## Tour of the Gardens

Formalities over we followed Trevor out into a perfect, sunny summer evening to enjoy a guided tour of the gardens, taking in the more conventionally planted border parterre before descending the steps to the lower terrace, the Archery Border, with its exotic planting. Full of yuccas in full bloom with spikes of white bells, fremontondendrons, the huge, lovely, heart shaped leaves of *Paulownia tomentosa* and the palmate ones of *Tetrapanax papyrifera*, such an exuberant surprise after the calm formality of the upper terrace.



From there Trevor led us at a smart trot down the hill past the lake, where unfortunately the ferry, *The*



*Parterre from the terrace looking south*  
(Image © Gail Falkingham)

*Capability Brown* was unable to take us on the short cut to the walled garden on the other side as the water level in the lake was too low. The walled garden was built in the 1750's and was fully operational as a kitchen garden by the time the house was completed in 1771. It is a huge space, even now only partially filled with rows of vegetables and flowers for cutting, all neatly labelled with the variety and destined for Harewood's cafes and restaurants, although the glasshouses are heavily in need of renovation.



*The Glasshouse*  
(Photo © Chris Beevers)

Unfortunately, by hurrying after Trevor, we had missed the Himalayan Garden completely, but the fitter, younger members who still had plenty of energy would detour there on the way back from the walled garden. The Himalayan Garden was once the Rock Garden which had been nurtured by David Lascelles' grandparents Princess Mary and her husband, the Sixth Earl of Harewood. Entry is by a narrow path cut through rocks, like entering into a Himalayan valley where a stream flows from the lake, through a garden where over fifty varieties of rhododendron, candelabra primulas, meconopsis and Cobra lilies grow and flower in the appropriate season. It is an area where Trevor has plans to add more plants native to the Himalayas. Near the lake, a sudden surprise, a real Buddhist stupa, complete with prayer flags, built in 2004 by a group of monks from Bhutan, to symbolise the path to enlightenment. For all of us the visit ended with the steep climb up the hill to the car park.



*The Himalayan Garden*  
(Image © Chris Beevers)

We must thank our hosts David and Diane, and Trevor for creating a truly memorable evening and a fitting way to celebrate 25 years of the Yorkshire Gardens Trust and we look forward to many more years in the future.

***Mark Anderson with a few additions by Vicky Price***



# Notes from the Editor

As we breathe a sigh of relief that the weather appears to have reverted to its seasonal normality and our water butts are almost full again, we can look forward to a cooler and fresher Autumn.

We have had a bounteous Spring and Summer of excellent visits and the Events team are to be congratulated on their sheer variety and interest, with all four Yorkshire counties having received at least one visit from us.

We begin with a report by Alison Brayshaw at p.5 of our visit to Renishaw Hall in Derbyshire in late April. The gardens were looking resplendent in their Spring colours and there were so many interesting features to see. The day was topped off by having a tour round the house and seeing the famous John Piper paintings. A wonderful visit!

Our first trip in May was to Aldborough Roman Site in North Yorkshire which was surprisingly large and very interesting. A group of volunteers are currently creating a Roman garden within the walls of one of the several villas which have been excavated there. Gail Falkingham has provided a comprehensive report for us at page 8.

In June the much-postponed Lotherton Study Day, organised by Val Hepworth in association with Leeds City Council and Lotherton Hall took place. It was a hugely successful day including large numbers of local authority representatives. Gillian Parker has produced a detailed review of the day for us at p.11.

In July, we were kindly invited by our President, the Countess of Harewood, to an evening reception to celebrate our launch at Harewood House 25 years ago. It included an exclusive tour round the estate and gardens led by Trevor Nicholson, the Head Gardener. Mark Anderson has kindly written the evening up at p.1.

I owe particular thanks to three of our members, who have between them contributed a large proportion of the material in this Newsletter. They are Chris Beevers, Gail Falkingham and Gillian Parker. Chris has contributed the Bursary Report, the Brodsworth Report together with Gail. Additionally, Chris organised the excellent visit to Renishaw Hall in the Spring. Gail has reported on the visit to Aldborough Roman Town, the review of the Thomas White book and jointly with Chris the report of Brodsworth Study Day. Gillian has written the excellent and detailed report of the Lotherton Study Day.

We have reports from the Conservation and Planning Committee, the Research and Recording Group (The Brodsworth Study Day), the Schools Committee, the Bursary Team and the Events Team who have provided a taste of the delights to come in 2023.

*Christine Miskin*  
*Editor*

## A plea to our members to keep in touch with us

It would be really helpful if you could let us know when you change any of your contact details and especially if you either change your email address or newly acquire one. This is because we are now emailing more material than previously including the e-Bulletins and we are finding that many are being “bounced” back to us as we have an incorrect email address.

If you need to contact us, please do so via: [secretary@yorkshiregardenstrust.org.uk](mailto:secretary@yorkshiregardenstrust.org.uk)

Thanks very much.



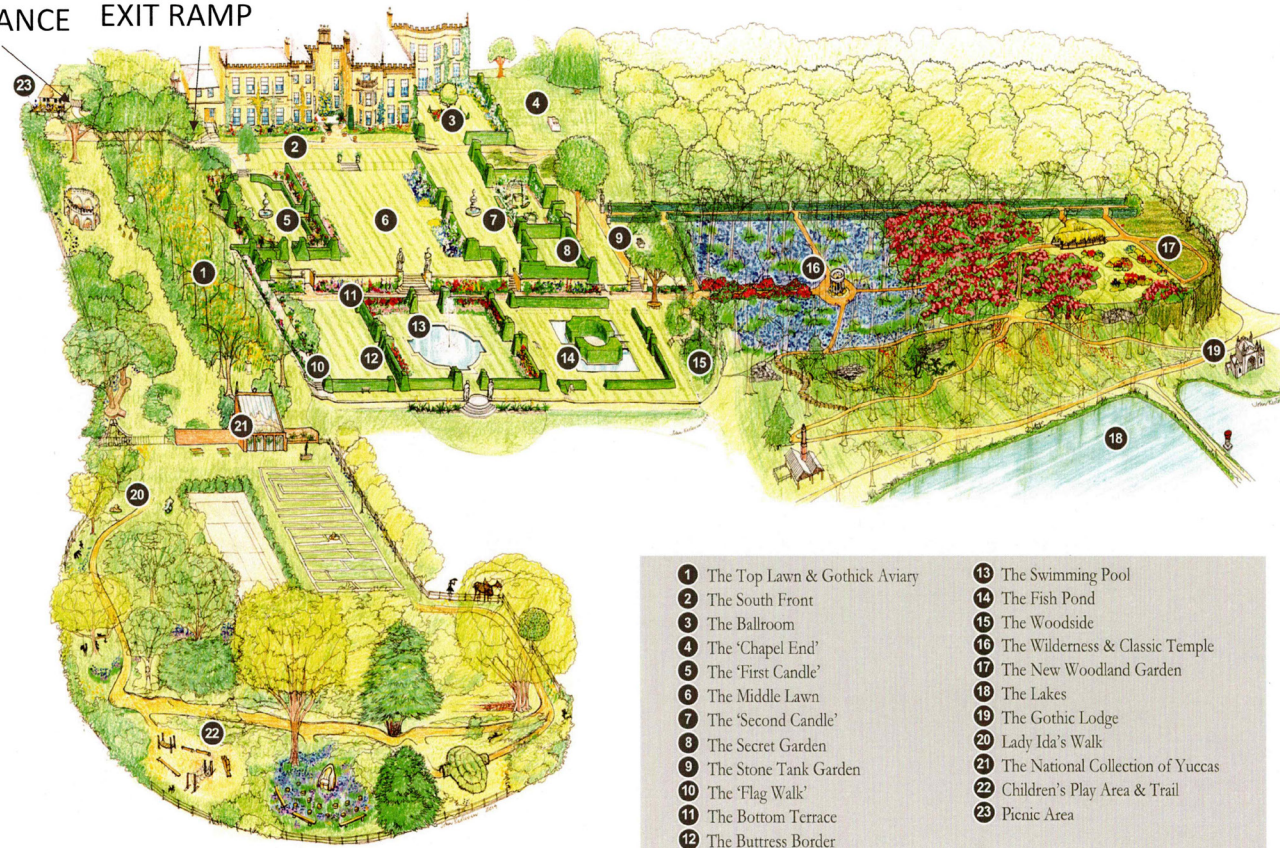


# Renishaw Hall and Gardens, Derbyshire

Wednesday 27 April 2022

## Renishaw Hall and Gardens and Woodland Map

ENTRANCE EXIT RAMP



*Excellent map of the estate drawn by John Kesteven*

### Introduction

I clearly remember the last YGT visit to Renishaw Hall Gardens and Grounds over 20 years ago, on 29th September 2001, led by Jane Furse. However, it was not until Chris Beevers asked if I would write a *Newsletter* report of the current visit, as I had written the first report, that I thought perhaps that was why I remembered it so well. I think David Rhodes and I were the only two on today's visit who had been there in 2001, and we have both been since, but again in September. April proved a fantastic month to visit, even on a day somewhat lacking in sunshine.

Chris had equipped us with some good historical information beforehand and there is an excellent museum, mainly devoted to the Sitwell family, in the outer courtyard of the stable block, which intriguingly has a second courtyard where we found the welcoming room for coffee. Chris has been very involved with archive research since 2007. She is curator, archivist, event organiser, designer of art work for display panels and generally in charge of these areas for the present family, headed by Alexandra Sitwell, daughter of Sir Reresby Sitwell, 7th Baronet. She welcomed us on behalf of Alexandra, who was not able to be at home, and introduced us to the

Head Gardener, David Kesteven, who has been at the gardens for 25 years, and would lead us on our tour.

### Tour of the gardens

We started by the *Quercus coccinea*, the scarlet oak he planted when he first started here as gardener.



*David Kesteven at the Gothick Temple*

(Image © Gail Falkingham)

He told us that in winter we would be able to see Yorkshire through the trees! He has three other gardeners and a team of volunteers and some trainees. He has many stories to tell of the Sitwells and the



growth of the gardens. Their wealth derived from coal mining and the last coal mined was actually under the gardens. The Gothic Temple, near the Quercus, was originally built to house exotic plants and apparently a golden eagle, and became the family pet cemetery, mostly for dearly departed dachshunds and Alsations.

The 1815 Waterloo Oak was planted when Frank Elliott was a gardener here. He was interviewed by the 4th Baronet, Sir George, about the history of the gardens, and he worked at Renishaw for 70 years.

It was the 4th baronet, Sir George Sitwell, who was responsible for the present layout of the gardens in the Italianate fashion in the late 1800's, following his tour of Italy. He researched much earlier gardens at Renishaw and discovered foundations which he was able to use in his layout, which is complex and not easy to describe. An earlier Sir George, the 2nd baronet, was himself a keen botanist and in contact with eminent people like Sir Joseph Paxton, and he introduced many rare plants into a varied and impressive plant collection. After the death of Sir George there was a period of decline and the estate was very nearly sold in 1854; gardeners were kept on for the Kitchen Garden produce, the then Head Gardener Ernest de Taeye had the delightful cottage behind the stables, near to the Kitchen Garden which some of us saw with Chris at the end of the day, where there are three Foster and Pearson/Richardson glasshouses c. 1911 all still currently in use.



*Start of group tour at South Front of house*

The main gardens are overlooked by the house and David led us on a tour of the different areas, all bounded by the yew hedging and box pyramids, which are cut to shape over winter and then left as a backdrop to the border flowers for the rest of the year. There is no grand entrance to the gardens which were accessed through the house by the doors in the 'Middle House' of 1625, under the old Wisteria and the Rosa banksia 'Lutea' both looking fabulous today.

The gardens are divided into rooms, all with their own names, such as The Ballroom, The First Candle, The Secret Garden. They appear to be perfect squares but

are not in fact, as the perspective has been played with to make them appear squares. The eye is led away from the house down The Middle Lawn towards the fountain playing in what was originally a swimming pool, the steps flanked by the massive statues looking outwards towards nature.

The garden borders were everywhere a profusion of colour, the beds surrounding the fountain containing roses of different colours, The Middle Lawn borders were recently re-designed by Arne Maynard (based in Bath) with a profusion of stunning varieties of tulips which were just beginning to go over on our visit.

Visit his website for some stunning photographs taken at a later time of year with a wealth of fabulous planting - <https://arnemaynard.com/gardens/renishaw-hall-borders/>

To borrow his words on his planting plan

Designing the borders at the centre of the garden of Renishaw Hall was a rare commission for us, where we were concentrating solely on the planting plan. Using a very fresh palette of colour, we wanted to conjure a light frothiness to stand out against the wonderful velvety yew hedges which form the fabulous structure of the garden and the backdrop to the borders. The estate colour on the trelliswork obelisks which hold the roses and clematis, was another element to incorporate as we gradually refined our plant choices, blending the colours, forms and textures to create borders with combinations that delivered the atmosphere we wanted. We worked closely with the head gardener and the client on the final plan, ensuring that the plants would perform well for the site, and combine to form a really magical display for the long period over which the garden is open to the public.



*Tulip Border*

The lower areas of the garden look towards the massive lakes in the distance, reputedly dug out by fishermen which Sir George brought from



Scarborough in 1892. A gap has been made in the hedges below The Fish Pond garden to give a view of the Lakes from upstairs windows. The Fish Pond with hidden island is reached by a wrought iron footbridge, all dwarfed by the tall yew hedges.

The Sitwells spent time in Scarborough and more grandly in their Italian castle in Tuscany, Montegufoni. Sir Osbert 5th Baronet, who lived in London, was responsible for keeping the gardens going during the early 20th century, a difficult time to maintain gardens. He brought the 'Angel of Fame' statue to the garden along with many new plants, especially from friends such as Lady Aberconway of Bodnant.

This was also the time when John Piper recorded the gardens in paintings, which are hanging in the house. The Angel of Fame, originally on top of Poets Fountain in London, stands near the entrance to the old Orangery which is now home to the National Collection of Yuccas.

After this excellent tour with David we repaired to the Stables for lunch where Win Derbyshire thanked him for his enthusiasm and knowledge shared with us during our tour.



*Angel of Fame*



*The Old Orangery*



*The Stables*

## Tour of the House

After lunch Chris took us on the House Tour and I can only recommend that our readers visit themselves, buy a copy of the really marvellous guidebook and enjoys the fascinating Hall - a perfect day out.

Our tour ended with a Garden History Exhibition that Chris had arranged, full of fascinating information, old photographs, drawings, prints, plans, George Sitwell's plant catalogue of 1823 and other archival records.

After the tour of the house there was time for further exploration of the gardens and the landscape not visited with David, including the Woodside, guarded by Warrior and Amazon, the lovely Wilderness full of bluebells, the Camellia Avenue to the Classic Temple, and the Gothic Lodge which was probably the original entrance before the coming of the railway, and of course the Lakes.



*Camellia Walk*



*Gothic Lodge*

Thank you to Christine Beevers for an excellent event. Thank you also to Gail Falkingham for her photographs.

***Alison Brayshaw***



# The Antiquarian Garden at Aldborough Roman Town Saturday 14 May 2022

Created in the 1850s by Andrew Lawson of Aldborough Manor, you would not believe that this tranquil, verdant, tree-lined walk around the Roman ruins is a stone's throw from the modern A1 motorway! This Victorian arboretum contains a collection of North American pine trees planted amongst the archaeological remains.



*View westwards along the foundations of the red sandstone Aldborough Roman town defences, planted with North American pine trees in the 19th century to create a Victorian garden walk amongst the ruins*

In the 19th century, visitors would have descended into the Roman quarry, climbed up the adjacent viewing mound and walked through the pinetum viewing excavated Roman buildings and sections of the town defences. At the end of their walk, a purpose-built museum displayed Roman artefacts and is one of the earliest private museums in the country, established in 1863.

For our tour of the site, we were split into three groups. Mine began with Sir Andrew Lawson-Tancred at the English Heritage museum, with an introduction to the site and an opportunity to view many of the objects that have been found during excavations from the 19th century to the present day. This includes domestic and personal items, such as pottery, metalwork, jewellery, fragments of wall plaster and a section of the Helicon mosaic.



*Inside the English Heritage on-site museum at Aldborough Roman Town*

Back in the Roman period, Aldborough (aka *Isurium Brigantum*) lay adjacent to Dere Street, the Roman road heading north to Hadrian's Wall. Situated to the south of the River Ure, which would have been navigable at the time, transport by river would have been just as important as by road. With origins in the first century AD, by the second century, the town had become a site of some significance, a *civitas capital*, the administrative centre for a large part of northern England.

Home to a cosmopolitan population of local people who had prospered under Roman rule, the town was carefully planned over a series of terraces due to the sloping topography. Rectangular in shape, defined by a circuit of defensive red sandstone walls and outer ditches, there was a regular street grid and a forum or civic centre at the centre, under what is now the site of St Andrew's Church. Entry to the town was controlled through a series of four gateways to the north, south, east and west. Inhabitants lived in Mediterranean-style urban villas, richly decorated with colourful wall paintings and mosaics. Entertainment was provided at the amphitheatre, an oval-shaped structure surviving as an earthwork outside the south-east corner of the defences. Evidence for industrial activity has been discovered in the northern part of the town and extensive cemeteries lined the roads outside the walls.

The modern village of Aldborough lies within the outline of the walls of the Roman town, which enclose



an area of 22 hectares. The foundations of sections of the walls are on display, along with the Star and Lion mosaics and a small museum is sited in the south-west corner of the village.

Large areas of the Roman town remain under grass, protected from development by their designation as a scheduled monument of national archaeological importance. These areas reveal hidden clues as to the remains that lie beneath through the earthwork banks and ditches that survive above ground and the cropmarks that have been spotted by aerial photography. More recently, since 2009, a programme of archaeological investigation by the Aldborough Town Project, led by Professor Martin Millett of the University of Cambridge and Dr Rose Ferraby, has revealed a significant amount of new information about the town through extensive geophysical survey and targeted excavations each summer. For those of you wanting to know more, the lavishly illustrated English Heritage guidebook has recently been updated in light of these new discoveries, and the results of ten years of research were published in 2020 by the Society of Antiquaries in a fantastic volume entitled: *Isurium Brigantum: an Archaeological Survey of Roman Aldborough*.



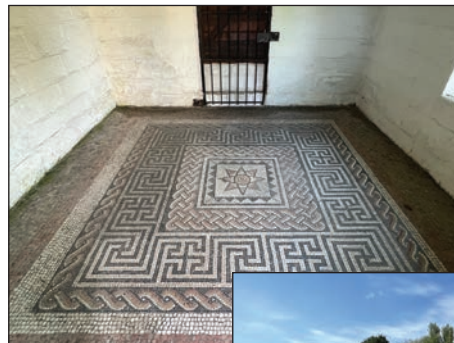
*The pinetum walk approaching the Roman quarry and the adjacent viewing mound*

After visiting the museum, we proceeded westwards along the garden walk and pinetum, past a section of the red sandstone foundations of the 2nd/3rd century southern town wall and associated rampart. Further down, past the south-west corner tower foundations, outside the defences, we reached the former Roman quarry that had been modified to become part of the 19th century garden. We were told that the quarry, the source of the red sandstone out of which much of the town and defences were built, has paths and steps within, and niches cut into the sides of the rock that once housed fragments of sculpture. These were, as the guidebook says, “to create a picturesque, mysterious atmosphere”. We could only imagine how wonderful this must once have been, having to stay well back and look over the fence for health and safety reasons. It was a similar situation with the associated belvedere, or viewing mound that lies nearby.



*A FORA volunteer, hard at work on the Roman garden they are recreating*

Turning the corner, we approached an area where volunteers from the Friends of Roman Aldborough (aka FORA) are creating their own area of Roman garden close to the remains of a Roman house excavated in the 19th century. YGT gifted FORA some rosemary officinalis plants to add to this garden. From here, we walked eastwards to view the famous Star and Lion mosaics discovered by the Victorians and displayed in situ beneath the structures built to protect them.



*The Star mosaic, one of the famous Aldborough mosaics and the 19th century buildings which protect them*

After a wonderful, sunny afternoon, we headed to The Shed (literally a converted shed) in the grounds of Aldborough Manor for some much-needed refreshment of tea and cake, kindly provided by the FORA volunteers.

Huge thanks to Sir Andrew Lawson-Tancred and his wife Julia, to the volunteers from FORA and English Heritage, for our guided tours and such a fantastic visit! To see more of this beautiful Victorian pinetum, head over to our Instagram post for more photos and to watch a short reel of the visit to the Roman ruins: @yorkshiregardenstrust.



To find out more about FORA and their programme of events, see their website at:

<https://romanaaldborough.co.uk/>

For additional information about the history of the site, view highlights of the archaeological collection, to check opening times and to purchase the wonderful guide book to Aldborough Roman Site, see the English Heritage website at: <https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/aldborough-roman-site/>

Another excellent 19th century publication about the

archaeological remains and history of Aldborough, which can be accessed online as an e-Book is:

Henry Ecroyd Smith, 1852 *Reliquiae Isurianae: The remains of the Roman Isurium, (now Aldborough, near Boroughbridge, Yorkshire)*. Illustrated

See online at: <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/010248899>

**Gail Falkingham**

Photos © Gail Falkingham

## Schools Report

### A Year with our Member Schools

The school year 2021/22 has been a busy year for the Schools Group which now supports 54 member schools. To encourage them to engage with fruit and veg growing, which is our theme this year, we organised five offers, awarded Grounds Development Awards to four schools, and gave all our schools sunflower seed. Proceeds from any profit the seed company made from the sale of the seeds to the YGT were sent to the Ukraine Red Cross and Unicef appeals.

Our first offer was an apple tree chosen with help from Rogers of Pickering to suit the individual schools' areas. Eleven schools applied, their trees were delivered by the nursery, and we sent an informative leaflet to them written by one of our members. Twenty-five schools applied for, and received, a copy of Dawn Issac's *Gardening for Kids*, a book the Schools Group chose after careful research because we felt it offered both imaginative and practical support. Ingleby Greenhow was the lucky recipient of funding to pay for a workshop given by Wack's Wicked Plants, who specialise in carnivorous plants, a popular topic with children! Increased funding meant that we were able to send to eight member schools 12 Gorilla Tubs (trugs) each, and to 11 member schools sets of five children's tools each. Tools are always very popular.

Finally, our Grounds Development Awards went to four schools, Ravensthorpe Junior, Dewsbury; St. Joseph's Catholic Primary, Keighley; Pye Bank Primary, Sheffield and Osbaldwick Primary, York. They were all very pleased to have received our contribution to their school gardening. Here's a quote from one of them: "Thank you so much for granting Osbaldwick Primary School the YGT Grounds Development Award! We are thrilled...we are so excited to get underway with our KS1 outdoor area!"

We are looking forward to our new school year with its theme of *Recycle in your Garden!*

**Sue Lindley**



*Apple tree planting*



*Ingleby Greenhow Wacks Wicked Plants Workshop*



*Young gardener tool set*



# Valuing Our Historic Gardens Heritage: Lotherton Edwardian Gardens: Report of Study Day Friday 17 June 2022

## Introduction and Welcome

It was well worth the wait for the twice-postponed study day at Lotherton Hall, run jointly between YGT, Lotherton Hall and Leeds City Council. Over 50 garden history enthusiasts, professional gardeners, horticultural students and managers of historic landscapes and gardens relished the opportunity, at last, to meet and discuss garden history. We were doubly blessed with interesting speakers and tours of the gardens in glorious June weather.

After coffee and biscuits in the Hall, we were welcomed by Adam Toole, Curator for Lotherton and Temple Newsam, who reminded us that, with the pandemic intervening, the event had been four years in the making. David Hope, Head of Service at Leeds Museums and Galleries, then briefly outlined how the hall had been gifted to Leeds by the Gascoigne family in 1968 and run, initially, as a public park. More recently, there had been increased interaction between the Museums and Galleries branch and the Parks and Countryside branch of the Council's activities, bringing a welcome, renewed focus on the history of the hall's garden and the wider landscape around it. This had led to the development of an almost finished Conservation Management Plan, which drew on original research by Mette Eggen, as well as that carried out subsequently by YGT's Val Hepworth and Jane Furse. Maria Akers, Senior Estates Manager for Lotherton and Temple Newsam, rounded off the introductory session by encouraging us to contribute to the action plan that would be a result of the study day and which, it was hoped, would maintain the momentum for restoration and maintenance of the gardens.



*View down the formal garden at Lotherton Hall*

## The Wider World Context of the later 19th century

Mette Eggen, a Norwegian garden historian and landscape architect, spoke about the wider context within which the Lotherton gardens had been developed in the late 19th and early 20th century and some of the leading garden design figures of the period. Mette's knowledge of Lotherton derives from her time as a Master's student at the Institute of Advanced Architectural Studies at the University of York in the late 1980s, when she researched Lotherton for her dissertation.

She ran through some of the key defining features of an Edwardian garden, clipped hedges, garden rooms with different themes, profuse planting within a formal structure, and historical revivalism, but encouraged us to think that there is no one, comprehensive, definition. This is, in part, because key players of the period had differing views, or at least did so on the surface. Mette pointed out that while William Robinson was opposed to the historical revivalism of Reginald Blomfield and Inigo Thomas and its emphasis on formal structure, he actually used his 'wild garden' planting within formal frameworks. Edwardian stars were mentioned including Edwin Lutyens, Gertrude Jekyll, Ellen Willmott and, coming slightly later, Lawrence Johnson and Harold Peto. William Goldring, who designed at least part of the Lotherton gardens (see below), was also very active in this period, although is less well known to garden history.



*Mette Eggen guiding her group around Lotherton Hall gardens*

Of course, William Robinson wrote many of his influential books as a Victorian (albeit as a reaction to late 19th century planting fashions) and 'Edwardian' gardens continued to be designed well into the reign of George V, as at Goddards, in York. Further, the convention of formality close to the house, with increasing informality as one moves away, until something relatively wild is encountered in the furthest part of the garden is something that would



not have surprised a 16th century Italian. And, as Mette pointed out, there were movements in mainland Europe and Scandinavia that echoed those in Britain. Overall, Arts and Crafts and its mainland European language equivalents might be a more helpful label for the types of gardens we were focussing on; indeed, modern gardens continue to be designed following Arts and Crafts principles.

### **The Impact of the Discovery and Introduction of Hardy Plants from Asia on Gardens and Gardening**

After this introduction to the overall theme, John Grimshaw, Director of the Yorkshire Arboretum, gave us a Cook's tour of plant introductions that provided the palette for the Edwardian garden. He took us back to the first introductions from Asia and provided many illustrations of lovely plants. Of course, not all that was introduced survived, while some survived rather too well; *Rhododendron ponticum* and *Reynoutria japonica* (Japanese knotweed) have, perhaps, outstayed their welcome. Introductions that became mainstays of Victorian and Edwardian planting relied on plant hunters, for example, Fortune, Siebold and John Gould Veitch and those who were in the East because of their occupation, such as Père Delavay and Augustine Henry, and, crucially, on the links between them and the nurseries who brought the plants into commercial production. John has analysed the plants recorded in Curtis's *Botanical Magazine* and showed us how later hunters, including George Forrest and Ernest Henry Wilson, whose introductions included *Primula viallii*, *Acer griseum*, *Cornus kousa* var. *chinensis* and *Lilium regale*, contributed to a significant increase in introductions from Asia in the Edwardian period.

### **Lotherton Gardens and Parkland: Creation and Layout 1898-1949**

We broke for coffee (and rather nice biscuits) after John's presentation and then regrouped for the second of Mette's contributions. Here she gave details of the history of the Lotherton gardens, based on her research, first explaining something of the Gascoigne family history and the role of Lady Gwendoline Gascoigne (1859-1949) in the garden development in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. William Goldring was involved at Lotherton, but the only remaining hard evidence of this is his 1906 plan for the new entrance gate. Given that he was a prolific garden designer, he must have been involved in other aspects too.

It is also suggested that the Rock Garden was designed by Goldring but, for me, this was less convincing. There is a plan of it, drawn retrospectively by the Gascoigne's land agent, which shows planting, and Mette drew parallels with the rock garden at Kew

and with Ellen Willmott's gorge at Warley. The latter, of course, was designed by Richard Potter of the Backhouse Nursery of York and, given Willmott's friendship with Lady Gwendoline, it seemed to me just as likely that the Lotherton rock garden was by Backhouses, perhaps being one of the two listed as carried out in the vicinity of Tadcaster around 1906. Ellen Willmott and her putative involvement may, as in her own rockwork, and at Scampston Hall, have had more to do with the planting than with the structure.

Lady Gwendoline also had a house and garden at Craigneish in Scotland and was a friend of Osgood Mackenzie, the presiding genius of Inverewe. Mette felt that this friendship and Lady Gwendoline's love of Scotland was reflected in the Chusan palms and bamboos in the Lotherton shrubbery (there is the famous 'Bambooselem' at Inverewe), and in the use of heathers (probably *Ericas* rather than *Calunas*, given that the garden is on magnesian limestone) in the formal garden. Whether the heather planting seen in relatively modern photographs of the formal garden was contemporary with the Edwardian garden or added later is unknown.

The Gascoigne family also owned Parlington and at some point, a Coadestone portico was removed and re-erected at Lotherton, providing a focal point for a pleached avenue leading from the William and Mary or Pond Garden. The garden as a whole originally had much more in the way of ornament but repeated burglary has left many plinths and nooks empty, as we saw only too clearly when we toured the gardens later on.



*One of the sadly empty plinths in the Lotherton Hall grounds*

### **A unique Edwardian Garden – Recent Developments**

The final session of the morning took us up to the present, as Jane Furse, landscape architect and historic



parks and garden specialist, outlined more recently discovered information about the garden's history and its later development. The last family owners of the garden, Alvary and Lorna Gascoigne, had met in Japan and their experience of gardens there influenced the way in which they decorated Lotherton when they returned to England after the Second World War.

After being gifted to Leeds, the change of Lotherton's use to a public park brought both benefits and challenges. Play areas for children, a large apple orchard planted in an area of low horticultural interest, and a boundary trail had all widened the appeal of the gardens and landscape. However, while the bird garden had proved a great draw for visitors, its subsequent extension had an impact on the William and Mary garden. There is no longer a view of the garden from the house and no obvious views to the house from the garden. Other challenges have come with time; the Edwardian garden is more shaded than it was when originally developed. Should one fell trees or change the planting to something that is shade tolerant? As with every garden in the world, adapting to a changed climate makes restoration to some notion of an imagined past problematic. Jane felt that restoring the ha-ha would not only be true to the landscape's history but also improve security, which remains a challenge at Lotherton, despite having staff who live on site and electronic security systems. While some refurbishment of the Edwardian parts of the garden have been achieved, Jane's overall conclusion was that any further work needed to be informed by specialist historic garden advice.



*View across the 'William and Mary' Garden*

A Question and Answer session concluded the morning, with the speakers fielding questions about:

- the listing status of the Hall - Grade II
- the evidence for Goldring's involvement - no single plan has been found
- whether any original plant lists survive – no, although there is a planting plan for the rock garden

- similarities with other Yorkshire gardens, such as Sewerby, which also function as a public parks - a useful thought
- whether the gardens had increased in popularity - the bird garden is still the main attraction; it was not felt that the gardens were in a state currently to become the foremost attraction; it is always easier to secure funds for family-oriented developments
- whether there was a Head Gardener - no; responsibility for what happened outside the house was shared between the general manager and the estates manager; there were vacant posts for other gardener roles. The next stage in the garden's development was to create a practical plan for its management, to which the day's discussion would contribute.

### **Challenges and Successes of Historic Garden restoration – an inspirational story**

After a very pleasant lunch in the Stableyard Café and courtyard, we reassembled to hear Chris Flynn, Head Gardener at National Trust Wales's Dyffryn, talk about the challenges and successes of historic garden restoration. Dyffryn was bought in 1891 by a wealthy industrialist, John Cory, whose son, Reginald, was a keen amateur horticulturalist. In 1906 landscape designer Thomas Mawson devised an overall plan for the landscape that incorporated the 18th century walled garden and the existing trees. In true Edwardian fashion, it created separate gardens which served as homes for Reginald's plant collections. The garden continued to be developed up to 1930, using the Mawson plan as a guide.

The National Trust took on the lease of Dyffryn in 2013 and adopted a strategy of 'Research, Interpret, Restore' in relation to the garden and landscape. A Conservation Management Plan determined that the Cory period of ownership was the most important and identified a rich watercolour and photographic record. There was some written archival material as well, but most of Reginald's correspondence was apparently burned when he died. Articles in the Gardeners' Chronicle, Mawson's own book, and some material at the Lindley Library were also important sources. The main focus of the restoration was on Mawson's plan, with planting informed by Reginald's known interests, all brought together into a ten-year management plan. However, as is often the way for the plans of mice and men, larger forces intervened and during the period of furlough in the pandemic the usual garden staff of 16 was reduced to four. This brought Chris into much closer connection with the garden, during which he realised that it had become too dependent on high input/high resource gardening and the display of annuals. A revised management plan emerged from



this challenging time which maintains the Edwardian blueprint but also looks more to sustainability. The quieter time in the garden also revealed more about its other inhabitants including kingfishers, otters and solitary bees, and this has led to development of a biodiversity plan.

While Chris talked about 'getting to the garden we know lies underneath' by undoing things done in the past and being aligned to the Mawson plan, he gave examples of the successes of the restoration that were actually about re-imagining. The high-maintenance lawned area was now managed as meadow and had seen the return of orchids and other unusual native plants (as had also happened at Lotherton); tussocks were allowed to grow at the field edges which had seen an increase in the vole population and, thereby, barn owl activity; the pond was now being managed to encourage wildlife; and there are plans to replant the long double border with nature in mind. But these changes also must be managed for the visiting public: charting the pandemic-influenced renovation and its impact on biodiversity can help to increase visitor investment in the process, but the garden team has also had to learn to ride out criticism of the changes. Chris's final contribution was to talk about the economic case for renovation and renewal. Historic places that depend on visitor numbers have to offer different things over time to ensure repeat visits. Chris suggested that gardens are the main stimulus to this, simply by virtue of their inevitable development over the seasons and from year to year. Building rapport with visitors could lead not only to increased understanding of, but also increased connection with, a place and, thereby, to gifts and legacies for use in the garden.

The number and range of questions that Chris's session prompted was testament to its interest for the audience. Among other issues, he was asked about how the balance between the original plan, support for the environment and climate change was struck. His response, that the change in planting is done within

the original framework but supports the second and responds to the third, was, perhaps, the take-away point of the day.

After this final session we assembled in pre-arranged groups and embarked on exploring what we had heard so much about during the morning. Different groups had different leaders and it was clear from the conversations over the final cups of tea and cake that each had seen a different garden, which is just as it should be. It was a wonderful event and many thanks go to Val Hepworth for organising it, Leeds City Council for their support, Lotherton Hall for hosting the day and providing some very good food, and all the speakers who threw such interesting light onto restoring/renovating/re-imagining our historic garden heritage.

- i. Mette Eggen, 'The Edwardian Garden at Lotherton', Leeds Art Calendar, 104 (1989), pp. 2-24.
- ii. <https://www.yorkshiregardenstrust.org.uk/research/sites/goddards#info>
- iii. <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1001223?section=official-list-entry>
- iv. Concerning Artificial Rock Gardens and What to Grow in Them (York: James Backhouse and Son, 1906)
- v. J E Robson, Inverewe, (Edinburgh: National Trust for Scotland, 1988)
- vi. Thomas H Mawson, The Art and Craft of Garden Making (Batsford: London, 1900)

**Gillian Parker**

**Images © Gillian Parker**

## Erratum

Val Hepworth has kindly pointed out the error in our report of the AGM in the Spring Issue of the *Newsletter* at p.2. We state that "we heard about a Historic England/Gardens Trust study day coming to Lotherton Hall in June".

This should of course have said "a Yorkshire Gardens Trust working with Leeds City Council and Lotherton Hall Study Day". Our apologies to Val and her team of helpers who worked extremely hard to set up the Study Day after it was cancelled several times. There is a detailed report of the day by Gillian Parker at page 11 of this *Newsletter*.



# A Brief History of Yorkshire Gardens Trust Events: Part 2

## Introduction

This second part of Vicky Price's history of our events covers the years from 2011 to date. The first part was published in the Spring 2022 *Newsletter* at p.16.

## Part 3. 2011 - 2019

### Restoration of another public park ...

#### Roberts Park, Saltaire, 2011



"The £4.5 million restoration of the Park was completed earlier this year, after a slight delay due to our long winter. The Park had been designed by William Gay in 1870. Though the bandstand was shown on the original plan it was not erected by the time of its official opening the following year. During the WWII it was demolished.

HTLA [Hilary Taylor Landscape Architects] worked closely with the local people during the consultation phase, resulting in a modern design being chosen for the proposed new bandstand, with its roof shape echoing the dome of the Congregational church (but not its elegant finial). Its chosen theme was to be "Saltaire Flower & Musical Delights". The children of Saltaire Primary School "conceived the idea of combining musical instruments with the park's foliage" resulting in a "horn that blew flowers & leaves in place of notes". The new bandstand, which is significantly higher than the original, was built by Chris Topp's Wrought Ironworks Company, Carlton Husthwaite, Thirsk. Chris Topp developed this theme and the children's ideas, resulting in four different capitals, "Horns & Saxifrage, Violins & Maple, Cymbals & (blue) Bells and Harps & Shamrocks".

**Anne Tupholme.** *Newsletter No 28. Winter 2011*

## Sometimes the report's author includes reminiscences...

### Summer Picnic at St Nicholas, 2012

"When the garden was at its height with four full-time gardeners and Bobbie James

at the helm, the edges were crisper and planting clearer: Bobbie James lived there for 60 years until his death. However, Lady Serena's 40 years there on her own, is I suggest, an important part of the garden's history and clearly one which many people have come to enjoy, and indeed many have never known it otherwise. In the end she lived there for 77 years. With reduced labour, the edges became softened and blurred, but still captured and contained by Bobbie James's architectural layout of hedges and paths. St Nicholas assumed a mantle of mystery and romance, brought about by necessity. I can remember my first visit to St Nicholas and one of the first things Lady Serena James said to me, prodding an enormous *Senecio greyii* in the corner of the forecourt, which actually was taking up about a quarter of it: 'Now the National Trust would never allow that!'. I notice in deference to Lady Serena that the *Senecio* still sprawls. She could be direct and many of her comments ring in my ears still. On asking her what style she thought the garden was, she said without having to think 'It's an Edwardian garden, it's all straight lines'. Quite correct of course, although there are other layers and influences. In an effort to find out who their gardening friends were I once enquired whether they knew Ellen Wilmott to which she replied 'oh that funny old stick' and that was all I got".

**Caroline Kernan.** *Newsletter No 30. Winter 2012*

## Our most recent visits

### Risby, 2013

"On a glorious autumnal morning some 25 members braved rural East Yorkshire and found their way to Risby near Walkington. A feast, in several respects, was fully in store. The park and archaeological remains there are a delight and provide an all too rare insight into features and chronologies which visibly lead us right back to the Middle Ages. The parkland is Registered Grade II whilst important earthworks are scheduled and a beautiful brick folly listed Grade II. Today the site is owned by Albanwise, a large Norfolk-based agri-business. Part of the site is managed by them directly, but the majority is tenanted by the Clappison family who have been there since the 1930's... John [Clappison] is primarily an arable



farmer and one of the leading national producers of Brussels sprouts. Recently he has produced around 4% of the national crop on some 200 acres and is a leading supplier, mainly to Morrisons but also most of the other national supermarkets.

Entering the controlled environment of the packing shed, high tech equipment takes 6 digital photographs of each individual sprout allowing fully computerised quality control. The whole process is so efficient that the sprouts arrive on supermarket shelves only hours after being picked. John's passion for getting the very best product to the customer is infectious and I, for one, will always see the humble sprout in another light! Whilst arable production is king across the holding, both John and Albanwise have entered into a wide range of conservation measures including extensive hedgerow restorations. From our perspective, it is important for us to understand the major economic drivers for the business which helps support the surrounding parkland".

**Dr Margaret Nieke.** *Newsletter No 32. Winter 2013*

### **Duncombe Park, 2013**



"The tour started in the forecourt to the house, itself the central feature of the designed park, and now flanked by the 2 square wings. Peter [Goodchild] explained how the design carefully fits the natural landform and is in a style influenced by Bridgeman. The layout was compared to "a plan of his Grace the Duke of Queensberry's seat at Ambresbury in Wiltshire by Ch. Bridgeman 1738". Although we entered the garden through the north wing and then round to the east front, Peter explained further how moving through the house from west to east the whole was conceived as a series of spaces of different proportions. This rhythm continues to the east of the house with the bowling green with raised grassed surround, flanked by yew hedges before crossing the grassed terrace and opening further to the view across the Rye valley. These views were designed like theatre sets and Peter was able to show us pictures of examples by Inigo Jones from *Britannia Triumphans*, *Luminalia* and others. There are also parallels with crescents such as the Grand Crescent at Bath".

**Michael Horsley.** *Newsletter No 33. Summer 2013*

### **Beacon Hill House, 2015**

"Beacon Hill House is a 7¼ acre garden situated 4 miles outside Ilkley, only 300

feet below the summit of Beamsley Beacon. The southern perimeter of the garden is at 900 feet and the northern perimeter is at 1000 feet, making the gradient of the garden 1 in 6! [The] House was built in 1848 by Benjamin Briggs Popplewell, a Bradford wine merchant, who made a fortune with railway shares. He built the property because his son had consumption and it was hoped that living at this height would help to ease his condition. Approaching the northern perimeter of the garden we could see the dry-stone wall which surrounds the property and the cairn on the top of Beamsley Beacon just beyond.

Here the most astonishing part of the garden appears – a lawned orchard at 1000 feet above sea level. Running along the inside of the dry-stone wall is a high red brick wall with a stove and flues which would have kept the orchard wall-fruit frost free when the Brigg Popplewells lived here and employed six gardeners. A former gardener recently visited Beacon Hill again and told Humphrey about digging out a very old root in the orchard and finding it surrounded by apricot kernels. Apricots at 1000 feet above sea level!"

**Fiona Barlow.** *Newsletter No 37. Autumn 2015*

### **Wressle, 2016**

"Clutching our generous handouts, reproducing material from Natural England display boards that have been erected on the site, and maps and plans from Ed [Dennison's] report, we set off for the tour. Heads down, picking our way across the pasture with clumps of tufty grass, the magnificent south façade of the stone castle came into view. Ed stopped to give us some pointers on the lie of the land and features. So much for my landscape interpretation skills: we had actually walked over some of the former medieval village and garden earthworks. As we moved a little closer and stood on the raised platform of the castle moat, looking south across the 'subtle' earthworks of former gardens and fishponds beyond, the scale of the once walled one-acre Old Garden could be appreciated, as Ed pointed out lone trees and hedge lines as markers. All the structures and buildings associated with these gardens (enclosing garden wall, laundry and banqueting house/bathing house) are demolished. So again it was left to our imagination about the two-storey banqueting/bathing house at the corner of the moat. Did bathing take place within the privacy of the building, or in the moat itself? At least it seems the moat was kept clean, as in 1579 a boat was built and 12 days a year spent on the task".

**Yvonne Boutwood.** *Newsletter No 40. Spring 2017*



## Dalton Hall, 2017

“Now came the sight I had been eagerly awaiting: the Garden Pavilion. This is approached respectfully up a long tapering ride edged with woodland including beech, chestnut and sycamore. It is one of the earliest features, dating to 1733 and pre-dating the construction of the Hall. The Pavilion is built of Roche Abbey stone with a pedimented façade decorated by a band of Greek key and supported by four attached columns adorned with vermiculated rustication (less technically described as wormcast texture). The design is thought to be inspired by the York Walk Gate in London, reminiscent of Colen Campbell’s gateway to Burlington House. Certainly there were family connections between the Hothams and the Burlington family with the latter’s Londesborough estate only a stone’s throw from South Dalton. But despite this exalted pedigree, the impression is not one of elevated grandeur but a rather more cosy piece in ‘gingerbread classical’ mode, with side and rear walls in workaday brick”.

**Helen Caffrey.** *Newsletter No 42. Spring 2018*

## Musgrave Castle Estate, 2018

“We crossed an elegant early C19th bridge and turned uphill changing direction once more to arrive at a brick lined tunnel. Although straight, the curving drive means that the exit is not immediately apparent and there is a frisson of uncertainty until the dark is passed and travellers emerge once more into the light. This is just what Repton had advocated all those years ago, suggesting the tunnel venture into the dark below the Rig, a steep ridge between the stream valleys. This, he suggested would give ‘that magic of effect which always attends the emergence from darkness into light by a subterranean passage in romantic scenery’. Our group then arrived at the rear of the Old Castle and made our way to the Bailey past the restored walls and bastion restored in 2000. Once inside, the views back to the house were dramatic and the true scale of the wooded valleys apparent. Nowadays, the house is visible only in part with one tower and the flag fluttering above the trees, so it is actually the wide lawns to the south of the house which mark its presence for strangers”.

**Jane Furze.** *Newsletter No 44. Spring 2019*

## Aldby Park, 2019

Peter Goodchild outlined for us the history of the garden, much of which is undocumented.

However, evidence of the earlier house on the site exists in a Buck drawing circa. 1720. More significant is the existence of a 1633 plan by George Osborne of

Hull which shows the early house, closer to the Castle Mound than the present house, with the layout of circular paths on the Mound still evident today. The



*Aldby Park: East lawn with YGT members*

mill stream was diverted in a loop from the River Derwent at the time, to drive a corn mill and to bring water closer to the early house.

The present grand garden with its terraces and walks dates from the mid-eighteenth century, following on, no doubt, from the building of the new house. The terraced lawns lead down to the steep bank to the Derwent below and create a formal setting to the garden side of the house. A surviving bill of 1746 shows that Lord Burlington’s gardener Knowlton was responsible for the layout – “levelling, making and forming” – as well as planting, and uniting the earlier Castle Mound in the scheme. The final documented chapter in the garden’s history was in the 1950s when Jim Russell advised on planting after the demolition of the wings. Peter brought copies of the project, although it is uncertain how much was in fact executed. Russell’s papers are preserved in the Borthwick Institute.

**Catherine Thompson-McCausland.** *Newsletter No 45. Autumn 2019*

## Conclusion

A final thank you must be given to all those people who, having paid for their ticket for an event, were asked if they could write a visit report for the *Newsletter*. The breadth of information that has been included in these reports, covering both historical detail and personal impressions, is astonishing. I do apologise to all those whose reports I have not been able to include, but they would constitute a whole book!

**Vicky Price**

# News From the Events Team

We hope that those of you who have joined an event this year have enjoyed it. As ever we have tried to spread the events out geographically through Yorkshire, from Boynton and Thwaite Gardens in the East Riding; St Mary's Garden at Lastingham on the North York Moors; Waterton near Wakefield in West Yorkshire to Cannon Hall, near Barnsley in South Yorkshire. We also organised a 25th Anniversary celebratory evening at Harewood when we were able to enjoy the gardens with exclusive access.

For 2023, our events are falling into place. Although there are still a few unknowns to be confirmed, there are already dates to put in your diaries. For our visit to see snowdrops in February, we will be joining Michael Myers, self-confessed galanthophile, in his garden at Summerbridge near Harrogate on the 25th of February.

In March, Maddy has organised five weekly Zoom talks on Wednesdays with the Gardens Trust on subjects ranging from Patrick Eyres talking about Naumachia to Trevor Nicholson sharing over twenty-five years of expertise as the Head Gardener at Harewood. No doubt you are wondering what Naumachia means and we hope you will join us in March to find out. The AGM will be held on Saturday 25th March at Sledmere, where we are fortunate that David Neave has agreed to give the talk before lunch and also to lead a tour of the garden.

David and Susan had already agreed to lead a visit to Londesborough, the Yorkshire estate of Lord

Burlington after Easter, before the AGM at Sledmere was arranged, so we are doubly thankful to them both.



*View at Londesborough*

In early May there will be a Study Day at Burnby Hall Gardens, in Pocklington where the garden was created by Katherine and Percy Stewart with an extensive rock garden designed by the Backhouse Nursery of York and a national collection of waterlilies in the Upper and Lower Lakes.

Our Summer Evening Party will be held at Sion Hill Hall near Thirsk, when we hope the roses will be in full bloom and our Summer Picnic will be at Jervaulx Hall near Masham.

In September there will be a visit to Brodsworth, near Doncaster. The Events Committee is delighted to welcome Gail Falkingham to the team, but we would be very happy if anyone else would like to join us.

*Vicky Price*

## DATES FOR THE 2023 CALENDAR (NOT YET COMPLETE)

<b>February</b>	Saturday 25th	<i>Snowdrop visit to Michael Myers' Garden</i>
<b>March</b>	Wednesday evenings Saturday 25th	<i>Zoom talks with Gardens Trust AGM at Sledmere East Yorkshire</i>
<b>April</b>	Saturday 15th	<i>Londesborough</i>
<b>May</b>	Wednesday 3rd Thursday 18th	<i>Third Study Day at Burnby Hall Gardens Thirsk Hall. Half-day visit</i>
<b>June</b>	Wednesday 7th	<i>Sion Hill Hall Summer Evening Party</i>
<b>July</b>	Monday 3rd Wednesday 19th	<i>Morning visit to Bowcliffe Hall Summer picnic at Jervaulx Hall</i>
<b>September</b>	Wednesday 20th	<i>Brodsworth Hall</i>



# York Museum Gardens: A Tale of Three Trees

## Introduction

Yorkshire Gardens Trust members who braved the rain for a tour of the Museum Gardens a little while ago will remember some rather splendid trees. This article tells the story of three of the most interesting.

The Gardens – “a treasure ... a glorious place...” were created in 1829 by the fledgling Yorkshire Philosophical Society as a Botanic Garden and a setting for the Remains of Antiquity. Previously, the land had been variously occupied by the Roman army, a Benedictine monastery, the King’s Council in the North, and Lord Grantham (the *real* Lord G., not the Downton Abbey one); had witnessed floods, riots, explosions, balloon flights, tennis, and a spectacularly incompetent Civil War battle; and had been visited by, among many others, Henry VIII, Robin Hood (allegedly) and Dick Turpin (possibly).

The Yorkshire Philosophical Society took possession of their first 4 acres and began the conversion into a garden fit for philosophers. A key figure here is Henry Baines. Baines was born in 1793 ‘in a small cottage over the cloisters of St Leonard’s Hospital then occupied by Mr Suttle as a wine merchant’s vault’ immediately outside the Garden perimeter; at the age of 12, he first ‘put a spade into the ground’ immediately inside the grounds. After a stint as foreman of the famous Backhouse Nurseries, he was headhunted by the YPS, laid out the early gardens, and then lived and worked in them until his death in 1878.

In 1836 the Society obtained a second tranche of land, extending down to the river and, once the assorted boat yards, coal yards and other sitting tenants had been removed, they called on Sir John Murray Naesmyth to come up with a design to pull it all together. Sir John duly walked the grounds: (with Henry Baines at his side) and produced a plan. No documentary evidence has survived, but this seems to have included an elevated walkway along the foot of the gardens (roughly along the line of the present Flood Prevention bank) and terracing down from the Museum. Although the Philosophical Society appear to have been happy with the proposal, others were not, the *Yorkshire Gazette*, grumbling about ‘the insane project’. Sir John was asked to think again, and this time came up with a more acceptable design. To one prominent member of the Society, however, the solecism of a gravel path through the west door of St Mary’s Abbey indicated that Sir John was ‘nothing else but a Scotch Presbyterian – a true descendant of John Knox’. Despite such theological objections, the second Naesmyth plan was implemented. Often described as ‘gardenesque’, albeit not by either

Naesmyth or the Philosophical Society, it is the basis of the gardens as we see them today.

One of John Claudius Loudon’s various descriptions of ‘Gardenesque’ was that it ‘*must consist of trees which do not touch each other, and which only become groups by being as near together as is practicable without touching, and by being apart from larger masses ...*’. Many of the trees in the present Museum Gardens comply with this stricture, particularly those which may plausibly have been planted around the time of the Naesmyth plan.

The gardens of today contain more than 200 trees, including half a dozen County Champions and many unusual specimens. Three stand out: each, besides being rare, derived from a single, unique, historically identifiable progenitor.

## Pear-barked Beech

The first of the trio is a fine **Pear-barked Beech** (*Fagus sylvatica miltonensis*) which stands close to the Yorkshire Museum Building. As its common name suggests, this resembles a normal beech, but with rough bark resembling that of a pear tree.



*Pear-barked Beech*



*... and its Cambridge twin*

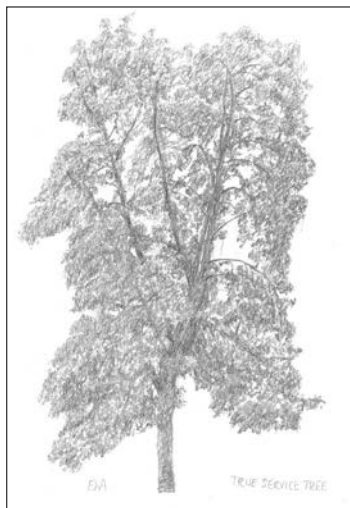
The York tree has a graft line at about head height, indicating that a Pear-barked scion was grafted onto smooth-barked rootstock, standard practice in rapidly producing multiple 'copies' of a rare, or particularly desirable, variety.

Some time in the 1830s, an unusual rough-barked pendent beech was spotted in the grounds of Milton Hall, near Peterborough. Soon, '*Mr. Henderson, the very intelligent gardener ... propagated it by grafts*' which started to spread from Lord Milton's estate. In 1846 one such arrived in the Cambridge University Botanic Garden, where it still stands today, a virtual twin of the York tree.

So how did the YPS acquire its tree? Although there is no documentary evidence whatsoever, the following circumstances are relevant. Lord Milton was the heir to the title, and estates, of Earl Fitzwilliam. The Fitzwilliams held land in Yorkshire, some not far from York. Lord Milton (latterly Earl Fitzwilliam) became Patron and President of the fledgling Society. It is not difficult to see how a very rare and curious tree could find its way from one garden to the other: both gardens being, in a sense, under the aegis of Lord Milton or Earl Fitzwilliam.

Alternatively, of course the tree may have travelled informally through the not-to-be-underestimated Head Gardeners' network. In 1850, for example Henry Baines acquired a giant Amazonian Water Lily (*Victoria regia* or *V. amazonica*) from Joseph Paxton, at a time when the only specimens in Britain were at Chatsworth and Kew. Either way, we can be (almost!) certain that the York *miltonensis* was grafted by the very intelligent Mr Henderson, transferred to York, and planted – in person – by our own very intelligent Mr Baines, only a few yards from the spot where the 12-year-old Baines sank his first spade.

## True Service Tree



*True Service Tree*

The second of our trio is the **True Service Tree**, *Sorbus domestica* var. *pyrifera*), which has been described

as '*the rarest (native) tree in England*'. The York specimen grows, uncomfortably, on the river side of the Flood Prevention Embankment. Recently the Environment Agency decided that it was necessary to raise the height of the embankment, which would have entailed broadening its base, obliterating the True Service Tree in the process. All credit to the Environment Agency: when this was pointed out during the public consultation prior to planning permission being granted, they very rapidly agreed to re-engineer the embankment in such a way as to avoid the tree. Thanks, by the way, to the Yorkshire Gardens Trust for their part in this, as statutory consultee in gardens-related planning applications.

The York True Service Tree was saved, and now seems to be in good health. Meanwhile, a small 'lifeboat' population had been propagated, from suckers, in case things went pear-shaped – sorry, those with a good knowledge of botanical Latin might appreciate the sadly irresistible pun – and it may be that a small number of these will find their way into other gardens, the informal Head Gardeners' network possibly still being in good working order.

The first True Service Tree known in England was a single specimen, discovered in the Wyre Forest in 1677. In 1862 this tree, by now elderly and infirm, was burnt down by a vagrant who was, apparently, transported to Australia for his pains. Between these two dates attempts were made to propagate the tree, which started to appear in botanic gardens and the like. As for the origins of this unique individual, Giraldus Cambrensis describes something similar in Wales in the 12th century: and that was virtually the sum total of knowledge, until the recent discovery of small (in every sense) wild populations in Bristol & Avon, Glamorgan, and Cornwall.

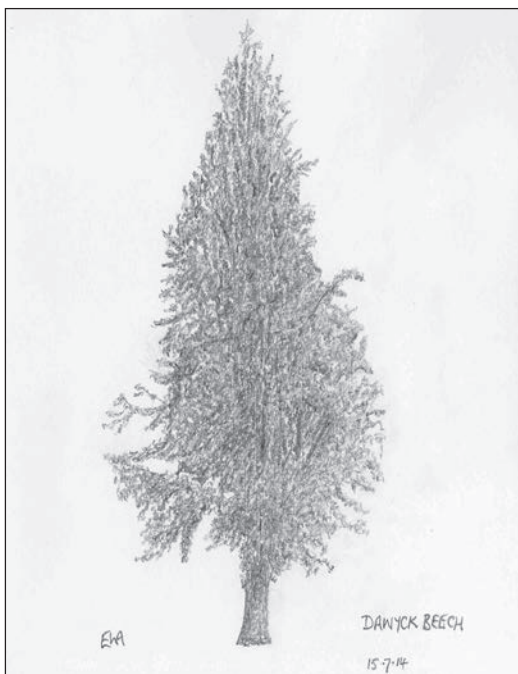
This rather spoils the fun, but *Sorbus domestica pyrifera* remains exceedingly rare. In Yorkshire, the only known specimen, apart from the York tree, is at Thorp Perrow: if any member of the YGT knows otherwise, please let me know!

How did such a rarity come to be in York? The only evidence in the archives of the Philosophical Society is that it is recorded in a tree inventory of 1932 as having been planted before 1913. Assuming that it was of significant size in 1913, the planting date might have been several decades earlier. I like to think that this tree, too, could have been planted by Henry Baines, but perhaps that stretches supposition a little too far...

## Dawyck Beech

The final member of our trio is a fine **Dawyck Beech**, *Fagus sylvatica* '*Dawyck*', growing near the entrance to the Museum Gardens. This is a fastigate form of the common beech, supposedly derived, once again,





*Dawyck Beech*

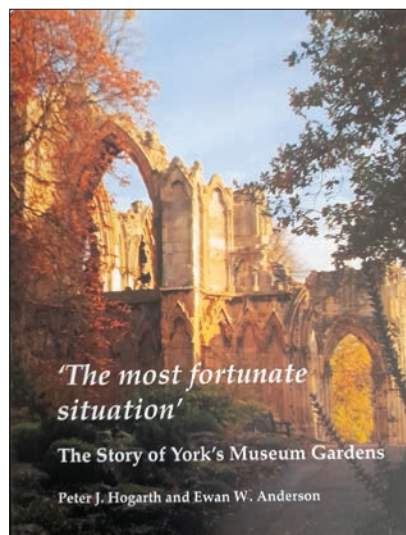
from a single progenitor sapling, discovered by Sir John Murray Naesmyth in 1860, on his Dawyck estate: this tree resonates with the history of the YPS and its gardens.

Sadly, our specimen's credentials are suspect. Other varieties of fastigate beech exist and are likely to have been confused with true 'Dawyck'. Any direct link

with Sir John Murray Naesmyth, who died in 1876, is ruled out by the planting date. This particular tree was planted in 1932, in memory of Charles Allen, a recently-deceased Curator of Botany. There is no indication in the archives that the Society was aware of any link between the tree and Naesmyth; and Charles Allen, who may well have known of the significance of 'Dawyck' was in no position to inform them. The presence of a 'Dawyck' tree in the Gardens may be fortuitous.

***Peter Hogarth***

*Drawings by Ewan Anderson*



## Louise Amende – an Appreciation of her work for YGT

The Yorkshire Gardens Trust had been established for fourteen years and run entirely by volunteers when it became apparent in c.2010 that we needed some part-time paid administrative help as a mainstay for the volunteer effort. Louise answered the call and was appointed. She immediately made such a difference for the trustees and quickly became a lynch pin in the organisation taking on tasks where we couldn't get volunteers or where our digital skills were lacking and always being very willing and prepared to be flexible with her hours.

Louise's official title was YGT Administrator, and she became responsible for membership renewals, new members joining and general correspondence, events mailing and booking monies and sending tickets, taking minutes at Council of Management Meetings and co-ordinating with the Chairman. Louise was very much a welcoming figure at YGT liaising with our new members. She took on various ad hoc jobs for YGT too, such as helping with the mailing for the Annual Report. I remember how good she was when we were in the thick of the celebrations for 'Capability' Brown in 2016 helping me as Chairman. Later, Louise took on the job of typesetting the printed Newsletter, having it printed and sending it out.

She started YGT's first tentative steps into social media setting up and running our Twitter account. As an example of Louise's work beyond the call of duty, last year when we had a stand at Brodsworth, as part of the Gardens Trust and English Heritage initiative, Louise arrived with unasked and beautiful landscape design sheets for children, free pencils with our name on and stickers carrying our logo, plus two lovely mugs, one of which we gave to the Head Gardener.

Louise also makes very good cakes, a skill highlighted by the scrummy macaroons that she produced for our Council meetings when we had a trustee who is a coeliac.

During my years as Chairman, I always knew that I could rely on Louise for any help that I needed and to suggest new ideas. She was an essential part of the YGT team for about twelve years and we are very grateful for all that she did, thank her very much and wish her well in her new full-time position... but Louise, do come to see us at a YGT event when you can!

***Val Hepworth with help from Win Derbyshire***

# Conservation and Planning

The Conservation and Planning Committee remains active on several fronts:

## Planning responses

As statutory consultees YGT continues to be consulted by planning authorities. We have researched and responded to 38 planning applications across Yorkshire between the beginning of May and the end of August, which is an average of more than two every week!

## Edwardian Gardens Conference, 22 June 2022

We initiated and organised a day conference at Lotherton Hall, attended by over 60 attendees including several planning/landscape officers from Leeds City Council. This included papers about the history and heritage of Lotherton Hall; the dates, during the Edwardian era, of the introduction of numerous, foreign (now common) exotic plant species; experiences from another Edwardian garden at Dyffryn (Thomas Mawson 1906); and the day was concluded by a walk around the extant Lotherton estate during which opportunities and threats were discussed “hands on”! A full report of this study day by Gillian Parker appears at page 11 of this *Newsletter*.

## Global warming

Global warming unexpectedly reared its ugly head during our walk round the Lotherton estate. As we looked up the gardens from the south, we could see the house settled in its mantle of silhouetted mature trees. But what is that? A Eucalyptus rising above its “native English” neighbours! It happened that a member of the party was Dr John Grimshaw, director of the Yorkshire Arboretum and one of the country’s leading experts on the impact of global warming on trees. “Don’t be shocked, plant more of them!” he challenged. He took the opportunity to flag up the fragility of much of England’s native tree stock in the face of global warming and perhaps eucalypts might have an important role to play in resilient tree planting.

The Committee recognises the need to address the challenge of global warming in the context of conserving our numerous designed, and often historic, landscapes across Yorkshire. We sought the advice of Jenifer White, Historic England, and her most useful response I quote below:

*“I think this is where conservation management plans have a role. In these plans we should now be identifying climate change risks and impacts and planning next steps. It is very difficult to provide generic advice as each site is individual, but the CMP approach could help tease out the roles of tree features (e.g., architectural,*

*framing, focal points, colour/texture, shelterbelts, screening, specimens etc) and scope out potential successor species if trees need to be replaced and plan when.*

*There are various online tools <https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/fthr/climate-matching-tool/>, - guidance*

*[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/872285/Climate\\_Change\\_Full\\_Guide.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/872285/Climate_Change_Full_Guide.pdf) - and research and trials underway looking at non-native species.*

*I do need to add the caveat that with good management, many trees can still thrive and after all that’s the skill of horticulturalists and landscape managers to manipulate microclimates. Mature trees are incredibly valuable, and we shouldn’t jump too soon in replacing them and some, like veteran trees or specimens, will not be replaceable.*

*Drought is a serious threat and one of the issues is that the effects often don’t show for years as we know post 1976.*

*Storm damage can also be an issue. The Institute of Chartered Foresters is planning a meeting in the north of England to review Storm Arwen in the autumn which might be of interest.*

*The other big challenge is the ongoing avalanche of new pests and diseases threatening treescapes and the need to develop resilience through greater genetic diversity and mixed planting. Researchers are interested in historic gardens and arboreta as a resource to understand how non-native species perform in the UK.*

*The Forestry Commission lead on climate change and trees and we collaborate on amenity trees and treescapes of ornamental and recreational landscapes. Organisations like English Heritage and National Trust are developing strategies for their own trees and woodlands.”*

*...and I can assure you that the two links in the above texts are extremely informative.*

## Finally...

*As a matter of interest, did you notice (*The Times* 15 Aug 2022) that the EU has granted 288 million euros to refurbish 134 historic gardens across Italy, including the royal palace at Caserta which might have been inspired by Andre LeNotre’s Versailles?*

**Roger Lambert**



# YGT Student Bursary Scheme Update

It has been a busy and exciting few months for YGT's Student Bursary Scheme. After a concerted publicity drive earlier in the year three applications were submitted, all of which fulfilled the scheme criteria but in very different and interesting ways. One applicant no longer needed the bursary support but has promised to share her research.

Here are the two students YGT has been delighted to support together with a brief introduction to their projects.

## 1. Emma Hill

Emma is Head Gardener at the National Trust property Hare Hill, near Macclesfield, Cheshire and is in year 3 of a 3 -year project restoring/reimagining James Russell's work there. In 2017 she completed the MHort course, with her final dissertation focussing on restoring Russell's work, and how best to do it.

She is now studying for an MA at the University of London, and her dissertation is researching the significance of James Russell in Yorkshire. Her proposal focusses on:

- The scope of James Russell's work in Yorkshire.
- The influence his work is still having on the gardens he worked in, especially at the Yorkshire Arboretum

During the summer Emma has worked at the Borthwick Institute accessing the James Russell Archive collection which the YGT worked tirelessly to secure for the Borthwick. This was followed by an intensive and brilliantly organised programme of visits to a significant number of James Russell gardens in Yorkshire. She is now busy writing up her dissertation, which is almost completed.



Emma and Head Gardener Dan at Hovingham Hall, dwarfed by one of its gigantic yew hedges

I was able to join her on her visits to Hovingham Hall (see below) and Settrington House near Malton, which proved to be a memorable day for us both. It was fascinating for Dan, Hovingham's new Head Gardener and myself to learn so much about James Russell from Emma, who will be sharing her research in a later YGT Newsletter and as part of the YGT 2023 lecture programme.

## 2. Camellia Hayes

Camellia has just completed the first year of her master's degree in Landscape Architecture at Sheffield University. Since living in Sheffield, she has volunteered at Sheffield Botanical Gardens, working with FOBS (Friends of Sheffield Botanical Gardens) and James Hitchmough to maintain and develop the prairie garden.

She won a place at this year's RHS Flower Show Tatton Park for her community border 'The Healing Garden' which she designed on the following principles:

*"The Healing Garden aims to inspire people to create a space that benefits the environment and their mental health. Within the border, there are two main sustainable elements: naturalistic planting and a rain garden. Naturalistic planting is low maintenance, needing little weeding and cutting back only in March, and encourages high biodiversity as the undisturbed plants provide shelter for insects and wildlife. Grasses provide texture and a soothing sound when they move in wind. A recycled water trough contains a rain garden, capturing rainwater instead of wasting it as runoff and using it for water-loving plants which adds to a sense of calm. A predominately pale colour palette of pinks, purples, neutrals and greens further enhances the calm space....."*



Camellia with her RHS Silver-Gilt Award for the Healing Garden

I had a wonderful but rather soggy visit to RHS Tatton to meet Camellia and see her lovely show garden which attracted a lot of interest from visitors. The weather certainly did not dampen Camellia's delight in being awarded a Silver-Gilt medal for her very first show garden. RHS Tatton has been an invaluable learning experience for her, which she will explain in detail in a later feature for the YGT Newsletter.

Being able to meet the Bursary Scheme students was invaluable and hopefully that personal connection will maintain their links with YGT in the future. More information about the Student Bursary Scheme is available on the website. Please spread the word and encourage any potential applicants to apply, in order to maintain the momentum for fulfilling the charitable objectives of YGT.

**Chris Beevers Images ©. Chris Beevers**

# Research and Recording Group Report

## Brodsworth Hall and Gardens near Doncaster

### Introduction

On June 21st members of YGT's Research and Recording group travelled to South Yorkshire for an excellent training day at Brodsworth Hall and Gardens organised by Louise Wickham, the group's chair, and led by Michael Klemperer, Senior Gardens Advisor at English Heritage, and Daniel Hale Brodsworth's Head Gardener.

The purpose of the visit was to use Brodsworth as an example to researchers to define what an historic designed landscape is, identify boundaries, establish a chronology, and particularly to pinpoint hidden features using historic documents and site surveys.

### Brodsworth's History

In the morning, Michael gave a wonderful talk on the history of the gardens pre- and post-1861, looking at the boundaries of the estate and the sources of evidence for the variety of historic garden features within. We considered the palimpsest of features from different periods, both within and beyond the current English Heritage site. Michael also provided an insight into managing and caring for the landscape as a 21st century visitor attraction, as well as the challenges of the complex ownership and custodial issues of the site. English Heritage now manage 12-14 acres of the gardens on behalf of Historic England whilst most of the land remains in private ownership.



*Brodsworth Hall 1758-1777: Private collection*

The Old Manor Hall at Brodsworth was remodelled and re-built by the Earls of Kintoul 1758-1777 (above) with pleasure grounds and a landscape park. This house was demolished in 1850 for a new house to be built some distance from the Old Hall's original site, for the immensely wealthy Charles Sabine Thellusson in 1861, and surrounded by pleasure gardens, an elaborate Victorian formal landscape and extended parkland. Stone and tiles from the demolished Georgian house were used in the construction of

features in the new Victorian garden design.

### Garden Tour

The gardens were looking spectacular in the afternoon sunshine as we were taken by Head Gardener Dan Hale and Michael on a tour around the grounds, discussing the challenges of managing the gardens, which were given to English Heritage in 1990. Here is a selection of the many highlights we enjoyed.

Our first port of call was to the Woodland Garden, a relatively quiet section of the gardens, formerly part of the 18th century Old Hall pleasure grounds. Restoration continues with specimen trees and shrubs being added to provide form, colour, texture, and what Dan called "pops of interest". The key guiding principle for plant selection is being period correct.



*The garden tour begins*  
(Image © Gail Falkingham)



*An eye-catching Calycanthus specimen (of the magnolia family) was just beginning to flower in the Woodland garden. This was one of the first "horticultural novelties" to be introduced from America in the 1620s-1680s.*

We heard about a new plant records system, which aids the management of the various areas of garden



across the site by continuous and rigorous recording of plants planted, moved etc and the tagging and numbering of trees which will be an invaluable tool for future researchers.

The eastern boundary of the estate just beyond the Woodland Garden was particularly relevant to the research group's interest in interpreting features in the landscape.



1890 25" OS map National Library for Scotland

(arrow showing kitchen garden in northeast corner of the estate)

An ancient sycamore which pre-dates the earlier house still survives. A line of trees denotes the original carriageway shown on the 1848-9 OS map and the "lumps and bumps" of the platform of the old Hall were visible, providing comfortable cushioning for the cows. A glimpse of the north-eastern corner of the estate revealed the distant Kitchen Garden (in private ownership) sadly barely visible from the main site. The 1892 OS map was a safer option to identify its position in relation to the Old Hall and the 1861 mansion.

Passing through the Edwardian Sun Dial Garden (earmarked for restoration) via remnants of the original criss-crossing tarmac walkways we arrived at the south side of the 1861 house, with views across the parkland to where the once ancient Great Brodsworth Wood stood until World War I when it was felled for timber.

In stark contrast to the open spaces of the parkland, two of Brodsworth's "WOW factor" garden features suddenly hove into view, the topiary, and the formal Victorian bedding borders, both on a breath-taking scale.

The Italianate Garden topiary contains over 1,000 specimens of original taxus, holly and laurel specimens with Sarcococca a later addition. The intensive labour required to maintain the superbly manicured topiary and intricate bedding originally required a team of 28 gardeners. It is now achieved with a team of six gardeners and 50 volunteers. The work is never-ending!



Italianate garden (Image c. Gail Falkingham)

Against the background of the evergreen topiary the formally planted geometric borders are planted out twice a year after rigorous ground preparation and the propagation of 24,000 bedding plants. The whole process needs an intensive three weeks for each turn round.

The strident colours of salvias, begonias etc, together with the architectural 'dot' plants including cannas and banana plants provide an authentic representation of high Victorian gardening at its best.

The high temperatures we 'enjoyed' on the day of our visit does raise questions regarding the challenges which this labour-intensive style of gardening on a grand scale will have to address in terms of future resources and sustainability.

We saw the results of recent projects undertaken by the garden team and their wonderful volunteers to enhance the gardens and restore their Victorian splendour. Bethan explained the work involved in the restoration and replanting of the alpine bed.

After a period of archive research, the alpine bed was totally emptied, with 80% of the plants being re-used. The soil was improved, with existing rocks re-used as each section of the bed was re-built.

One section is linked to the history of the Thellusson family and their love of sailing. The central section flows down with matt-forming plants, like the sea with edging formed by rocks on either side.





*The Alpine Bed*

(Image © Chris Beevers)

We also saw Georgina, the garden supervisor, and colleagues hard at work in the Grotto/Quarry garden, with its verdant ferns and backdrop of the classical Summerhouse and the Eyecatcher (created from reused features from the old house). The recent discovery of gas pipework during the restoration and clearance of overgrowth has revealed how these areas would once have been gas-lit in the evenings; it must have been a magical experience for the Victorians to enjoy the gardens in this way.



*The classical Summerhouse and the recently restored Eyecatcher .*

(Image: © Gail Falkingham)

Other recent works include the reconstructed low stone walling bounding the archery range and the restored target house at its northern end, with its mix of Swiss cottage style and classical detailing.

The archery range is 160 metres long. For the beds arranged along the west side of the Target Garden, 12-14,000 plants are raised from seed, to create a calming muted, naturalistic palette, in contrast to the vibrant colours and constrained high Victorian designs.

Since its restoration the Target Garden's popularity with Brodsworth's increased visitor numbers, now at more than 100,000, is becoming problematic in managing damage to the fabric of the garden here and elsewhere across the site.



*The Grotto/Quarry Garden* (Image © Chris Beevers)



*The Target Garden Picture* (Image © Chris Beevers)

Our tour concluded with a fragrant walk through the Rose Garden and the peaceful Rose Dell renovated in 2022 with 250 roses planted in the winter of 2021.

In addition to the formal gardens, there are areas of woodland and meadow. Brodsworth has the only example of undisturbed Magnesium Limestone grassland in Doncaster Borough Council's ownership. What was formerly a double Victorian border is now a wildflower meadow where yellow rattle and bee orchids are thriving. This led to an interesting discussion about the importance of the curatorial role in historic landscapes.

What has been achieved by the team at Brodsworth is impressive. YGT's Research and Recording group were grateful to Michael, Dan and his team for sharing their valuable time and knowledge with us, and for those of us who are on Brodsworth's doorstep, return visits are definitely guaranteed.

## References

National Library for Scotland – maps

Klemperer, M (2015) *Style and Social Competition in the Large Scale Ornamental Landscapes of the Doncaster District of South Yorkshire, c.1680-1840* (511) (British Archaeological Reports British Series)

**Chris Beevers**  
**Gail Falkingham**

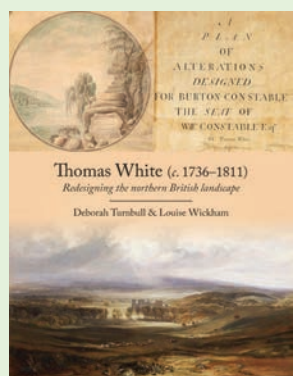


## **Thomas White (c. 1736-1811): Redesigning the Northern British Landscape**

**Deborah Turnbull and Louise Wickham**

Oxford: Windgather Press, 2022, Paperback, 272 pages, b/w and colour illustrations

ISBN: 978-1-91442-700-8, £39.99



For anyone interested in 18th century landscape design, this book is a must! It is co-authored by Louise Wickham, head of YGT's Research and Recording Group, and Dr Deborah Turnbull, who completed her PhD on Thomas White at the University of Hull in 1990 and out of which this publication has developed.

Whilst most of us will be familiar with the names of Brown and Repton, few may have heard of Thomas White. The back cover blurb states that the book aims to restore his reputation, and it does just that. Having previously been seen as a mere follower of Brown, for whom White worked at the beginning of his career from 1759-1765, Chapter 1 sets White in context and re-examines his role as an 18th century landscape designer and keen arboriculturalist in his own right from 1765 onwards, in light of new evidence born out of recent research and the discovery of additional surviving plans.

Chapters 2 to 5 follow White's career from the early days with Brown through to 1803. The book mostly concentrates on his sites in northern England, whilst Chapter 10, contributed by Christopher Dingwall, features White's work in Scotland, where he worked with his son Thomas White junior. These, and indeed later chapters, make extensive use of original archive material, featuring extracts and quotes from contemporary correspondence, including letters from White, his foreman Stones and clients, where these survive.

Such evidence is also used in Chapter 6 Getting the Commission, which explores White's relationships with his clients as well as financial and practical matters. His association with architects is discussed and, interestingly, attention is drawn to the fact that over two thirds of the sites where White is known to have worked in England are also associated with the architect John Carr of York (see Table 6.1). The authors note that although there is no direct evidence for this, their paths must have crossed.

Chapter 7 provides a detailed analysis and comparison of White's plans, discussing his cartographic style, as well as his use of water, trees, layout, buildings, and kitchen gardens. This raises the important question of how far these plans were implemented and to what extent can this be seen on

the ground? Further investigation is needed to help answer this. Chapter 8 follows with a discussion of his working methods, using evidence from surviving contract documents and correspondence. This chapter also considers those with whom White worked on site, his foremen and labourers, as well as the nurserymen and nurseries from whom he sourced his plants. Arboricultural activities are the focus of Chapter 9, looking at White's planting at his own Durham estate at Buttsfield, aka Woodlands in the 1770s, for which he received a number of medals from the Society of Arts in London.

Thanks to financial assistance from YGT and others, the book is lavishly illustrated. Colour plates of White's improvement plans accompany the gazetteer of his 32 known English sites in Chapter 11, to which a third of the book is dedicated. Many other plans and engravings are also included throughout the publication to further illustrate the subject matter.

The gazetteer demonstrates the depth of the research undertaken, providing details of each site location, client, whether a plan survives and of what date, along with any other related archive material, references, and its location. A summary of White's involvement with the site completes each entry. It may surprise many to know that several of Thomas White's commissions were for sites where other designers worked, such as Capability Brown and Humphry Repton. They include many of Yorkshire's most well-known landscapes, Harewood, Sledmere, Burton Constable and Newby Hall, as well as sites in Cumbria, Durham and Lancashire.

As Gillian Parker concluded in her write up of Louise Wickham's talk on Thomas White for the YGT/YPS Joint Lecture in York in May (see YGT e-Bulletin Issue 8, August 2022), the subject of garden history seems all too often to be dominated by London and the south-east. By focussing attention on White and his work in northern England, and in Yorkshire in particular, this book redresses the imbalance somewhat.

The attention given to the commercial side of White's practice (see also Louise's blog on the Oxbow Books website via this link:

<https://www.oxbowbooks.com/oxbow/blog/2021/11/17/running-an-18th-century-landscaping-business/>), will be of interest not only to garden historians, but also to those concerned with 18th century business in general. As with most good research, which raises questions as well as providing answers, Louise and Deborah's work identifies avenues for further research, for example White's relationship with architects such as John Carr, and the extent to which his designs were implemented on the ground.

Surely now, Thomas White can emerge from the shadows and take his rightful place alongside his hitherto better-known contemporaries.

**Gail Falkingham**

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