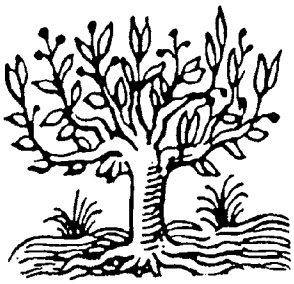
YORKSHIRE GARDENS TRUST



NEWSLETTER

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People and Gardens: The Yorkshire Connection

Throughout history, Yorkshire and its people have contributed enormously to our country's garden development and heritage, providing us with fine gardens, nurseries, designers, plantsmen and plant collectors.

The county supports a wonderful range of gardens covering most of the design periods. Newby Hall in North Yorkshire had a fine seventeenth century formal garden designed by Peter Aram, a disciple of the Le Notre style. It presented a simple arrangement of grass plots and several avenues, one of which still survives today. At Bramham Park, Robert Benson, the first Lord Bingley, had the gardens laid out in an equally formal style, making wonderful use of radiating Beech hedged avenues and flat formal sheets of water.

The eighteenth century saw the development of gardens in the more informal *English Landscape Style*; the only style it seems, that we have ever exported abroad. This county is particularly well endowed, with an early example found at Studley Royal near Ripon. Here, John Aislabie, the then discredited Chancellor of the Exchequer, had the valley of the River Skell flattened to incorporate a water parterre. Its still reflective waters mirror the classical style of the Temple of Piety, a garden building indicative of the Palladian style of architecture so popular in gardens of this period. Castle Howard, Duncombe Park, Rievaulx Terrace also have their Temples and Rotundas, but here they are set in much more informal landscapes, those at Castle Howard being the product of the renowned designer Sir John Vanbrugh.

The Yorkshire man William Kent, born in Bridlington, was another notable designer of the early part of this period. He laid out some important landscapes at Chiswick House for Lord Burlington and Stowe Gardens in Buckinghamshire for Lord Cobham. He chose to use many buildings to ornament his gardens, thus creating a series of three-dimensional pictures, which unfolded as the garden visitor followed a *serpentine* route.

The *Landscape Style*, can be seen at its most natural in the parklands surrounding Harewood House, Ripley Castle, Temple Newsam and several others which bear the signature of Lancelot 'Capability' Brown and his followers. They created pieces of the English countryside, with their sparkling lakes, serpentine rivers, swathes of lawn and clumps and belts of trees.

One of the first important 'informal flower gardens' laid out in the 1770's and 80's was Nuneham Courtney in Oxfordshire, designed by the Rev.William Mason, born in Hull in 1725. He became the Canon and Precentor of York between 1757-72 and had many accomplishments including music, writing and painting. He advised William Weddell at Newby Hall on the gardens there in 1782. Weddell was famous for his collection of antique sculpture, which he formed on his Grand Tour in 1765-66 and for the special gallery he had built for it, together with other conversions, by Robert Adam.

Of course we will always be indebted to the efforts of Captain James Cook with his Staithes and Whitby connection. His first voyage of exploration in the Whitby 'cat' the Endeavour, took him to the South Seas from 1768-1777. He had on board, the young Joseph Banks and a team of botanists and scientists. They were able to collect previously

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People and Gardens: The Yorkshire Connection cont

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unseen plant material from New Zealand and Australia. So productive was a visit after weighing anchor at a bay on the Australian coast, that Cook was prompted to rename it 'Botanists or Botany Bay'.

Whilst new plants were being introduced, old favourites were being saved and brought to new standards of perfection by a notable Florist Society in York. Florists met to show their choice blooms at the 'Florists' Feasts' in the inns and public houses of York. The Ancient Society of York Florists was founded in 1768 and is the oldest surviving society of its kind and in many ways the precursor to the horticultural shows with which we are all familiar today.

York was also the home to one of the most famous nurseries in the country, the Telford and then Backhouse nurseries, founded in 1660 and existing till the 1950's. They were particularly noted for their rock garden constructions, and the Victorian plantswoman Ellen Willmott of Warley Place, Essex, used them on her own estate and notably at Newby Hall. Here, she was commissioned to oversee the design of its rock garden which remains to this day as a wonderful period piece.

Rock gardens were of particular interest to the Yorkshire plant collector Reginald Farrer, born at Ingleborough Hall in the Yorkshire Dales. In the early 1900's he went on plant hunting expeditions to China and Burma and enhanced our gardens with many new species such as *Buddleia alternifolia* and *Viburnum farreri*. The late Hon. Robert James sponsored two other notable plant collectors, George Forrest and Frank Kingdon Ward who added greatly to the delights of his garden at St. Nicholas, Richmond.

Other legends of the horticultural world have their Yorkshire connection. The Harkness nursery, famed for its development in roses, first established itself at Leeming Bar and the diligent George Russell of Stillington eventually dazzled the gardening world with his 'Russell Lupin' in 1937.

In 1946, the establishment of the Northern Horticultural Society and its gardens at Harlow Carr, Harrogate, furthered our gardening expertise and showcased our gardening history, with the formation of the Museum of Gardening, the inspiration of the late Pippa Rakusen.

The establishment of the Yorkshire Gardens Trust in 1997 reflected a growing national interest in our gardening heritage, and today the formation of the Parks and Gardens UK Project, based in York, is aiming to provide a national information Web resource on historic parks and gardens from contributions countrywide.

The list goes on of the remarkable achievements of gardening exploits in Yorkshire, and this country owes much to its endeavours.

Marilyn A Elm

View of Bramham Park taken from one of the water cascades that will be the subject of a forthcoming visit see p20 for more details

Chairman's Letter January 2008

First let me wish you all a very happy and peaceful New Year and thank you for your continued support. The passing year has been a good one for the Yorkshire Gardens Trust attracting new members whom I especially want to welcome. Some I hope may wish to become more actively involved with the Trust offering their skills in specific fields; if so I urge them to contact me. As we grow so does our administration and I am well aware that fellow council members are fully stretched. I particularly want to thank them for giving up so much of their time.

Yorkshire Parks and Gardens are what we are all about but it is the former I should like to focus on in this letter. Last year, through our small grant scheme the Trust was able to fund a number of worthy projects specific to public parks, something we are extremely proud of. With this strong commitment I am therefore delighted that this year's AGM will be held at Cannon Hall, near Barnsley, a much loved local park rich in garden history which includes a fine Pinery built in the 1760's for the then owner John Spencer to grow pineapples. The day will include a talk by our Vice-President Martin Page entitled 'How Valuable are our Parks and Green Spaces?' and believe me, Martin should know for he has spent all of his working life at Sheffield City Council 'Parks and Green Spaces'. His career began as a horticultural apprentice in 1966 and ended prestigiously as Head of Service for Parks, Woodlands, and Countryside. Since his retirement in 2006 he remains deeply committed to the Yorkshire Gardens Trust and many other organizations including GreenSpace (a charity formed in 1999 dedicated to parks and green space) where he holds the position of Chair of the Trustees.

In the last issue of London Landscapes, newsletter of the London Parks and Gardens Trust, Chris Sumner, its newly appointed Chairman, wrote about the therapeutic value of parks and gardens and the solace gained from working in one's own garden. After the death of his father he spoke of the need for space and a feeling of connection to the natural world. He pointed out that Victorian philanthropists and politicians understood the importance of public parks especially for the poor who used them as an escape from the squalor and drudgery of that era. Thankfully those bleak times have gone but today our public parks remain as vital to the urban population as they ever did. It is the green space where a child lets off steam and the young mother pushes her pram; where the office worker chills out during his lunch break and the pensioner finds joy in feeding the birds. Ecologically it is a unique biosphere where wildlife flourishes within the frenzied turmoil of modern city life.

While in Rome in late spring last year with my seven year old grandson I realized first hand the importance of green space in a city. My grandson Archie was desperate to kick his football so we sought a small park where beautiful trees grew and the grass was well kept. As he practiced in his newly acquired Roma Football Club t-shirt I watched an elegant Italian lady of mature years pluck flowers from a noble lime tree. Spellbound by the ritual, I observed her joy while filling her small wicker basket with their fragrant blossoms: then, with an air of immense satisfaction, she returned to a nearby block of sterile looking flats where, presumably, she would delight in preparing an infusion from the flowers (those of Tilia x europea contain many medicinal properties and are known to cure insomnia and headaches) - what better example of connecting to the natural world?

Thanks to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) many of our public parks, including Sheffield Botanical Gardens, have been transformed. Indeed, over £400 million has been given towards their regeneration since 1994 when the National Lottery was set up. Most importantly this has helped rekindle civic pride, something that prevailed during the mid-to late-nineteenth century. We owe it to the great landscape designers of that era, such as Sir Joseph Pax-ton and John Claudius Loudon, who were commissioned to lay out new parks, to cherish and preserve them for the well being of our nation.

Penelope Dawson-Brown

Kiplin Hall - 1 March 2007

March was showing all signs of coming in like a lion on the morning we arrived at Kiplin Hall, but as the morning progressed the weather calmed and dried. The morning was given over to a tour of the house. The initial house at Kiplin was instigated by George Calvert, 1st Lord Baltimore, in the fashionable early 17th century style of decorative brick and towered buildings. George Calvert, as a reward for services to the crown, was granted land in America by King James I and in 1632 founded the colony of Maryland. The inside of the house has developed and changed over the following centuries as it has grown due the building projects of successive owners.

The house and estate has had varying fortune over the centuries being owned by succession of four families: namely Calvert, Crowe, Carpenter and finally Talbot. The house was due at one point in the late 20th century to be demolished. However due to the energetic work of Bridget Talbot, a Trust was set up in the 1970s which has enabled extensive restoration work to be carried out. The Trust gained grants from many agencies including English Heritage, the Lottery and because of the American link, funding from the Maryland Historical Society. There is an active relationship between Maryland and Kiplin with the formation of a Study

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Kiplin Hall cont

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centre in the Hall grounds for the use of American students. The rooms in the house are steadily being restored and filled with artefacts that reflect the history of the house.

After lunch we began our walk of discovery through the grounds of the Hall led by Val Hepworth who has done a great deal of research into the development and changes in the landscape at Kiplin. Much of the original landscaping has disappeared during the last century. However with the aid of 19th century ordnance survey plans we identified the landscaping of parkland and tree planting together with fashionable bed plantings that reflected the developments of English estate gardens over the 18th and 19th centuries.

There was evidence of work done as pleasure gardens, woodland walks, and fishponds. Two of the most fundamental changes to the parkland being the diversion of the road to Northallerton away from the front of the house in the 18th century and the enlargement of the Kiplin Beck to provide a serpentine water feature with a Gothic building in the background. Later work done in the 19th century placed the more formal planting of hedged beds closer to the Hall reflecting the typical gardens of the original 17th century building. We enjoyed our guided walk enabling us to speculate on what changes and growth might have been done over the centuries by the owners who in turn were inspired by the work of the great English landscape architects.

Rosalind Earl

Gilly Drummond DL, OBE

President of the Association of Gardens Trusts

Think of supreme energy, passion and commitment to parks, gardens and green spaces; a veritable champion for more than twenty years with an ability to network positively for the cause on a grand scale, and you have Gilly. It gives me immeasurable pleasure to congratulate her on being awarded an OBE in the New Year Honours List for services to the environment. There isn't a more worthy recipient.

In 1983 Hampshire County Council arranged a conference in response to their concern for the future of the county's areas of high landscape value and historic parks and gardens as development pressures gathered pace. The visionary proposal was to form the Hampshire Gardens Trust. Gilly was at that conference and took on the role of setting up and shaping this new organisation of volunteers serving as chairman for 12 years and subsequently becoming the first chairman and then president of the Association of Gardens Trusts when it was formed in 1992.

I first met Gilly in 1992. She came to the King's Manor, York University to speak on parks and gardens to the MA Conservation Studies students. She was an inspiration! When we embarked on setting up the Yorkshire Gardens Trust in 1995/6, Gilly came to Bramham Park for our pre-launch meeting and spoke passionately of our great park and garden heritage and its importance for the future. We enrolled approaching 100 members that day! The Yorkshire Gardens Trust was in business and she's been an enthusiastic supporter ever since. If we ever need an advocate for parks and gardens, Gilly is there.

Gilly's commitment to our cause is vast. A management committee member of the Sir Harold Hillier Gardens since 1989, and a trustee of the Learning Through Landscape Trust since 1991, in 1996 Gilly was awarded the Gold Veitch Memorial Medal from the Royal Horticultural Society. Gilly became a patron of the Folly Fellowship in 2001, GreenSpace in 2002 and a Commissioner for English Heritage. At Priestlands School, Hampshire she has been instrumental in helping them to secure a Heritage Lottery Fund grant to develop heritage elements in the curriculum for pupils aged 5 to 16 and then in reclaiming the grade II listed Victorian walled garden. This is used by the pupils for growing fruit and vegetables and keeping pigs and has engaged the whole school community including those at serious risk of social and educational exclusion. She has also been a long-time member of the Black Environment Network (BEN).

Gilly makes a difference. Her enthusiasm, commitment and knowledge have resulted in the appreciation of designed landscape as an important element in our national heritage. Her work both at grass roots level and as an EH commissioner has raised the understanding that green space and historic parks and gardens make a vital contribution to our wellbeing and are socially inclusive. Very well done, Gilly, your honour is richly deserved.

Val Hepworth

Gilly Drummond OBE

The gardens at Middlethorpe Hall, York in the Eighteenth Century

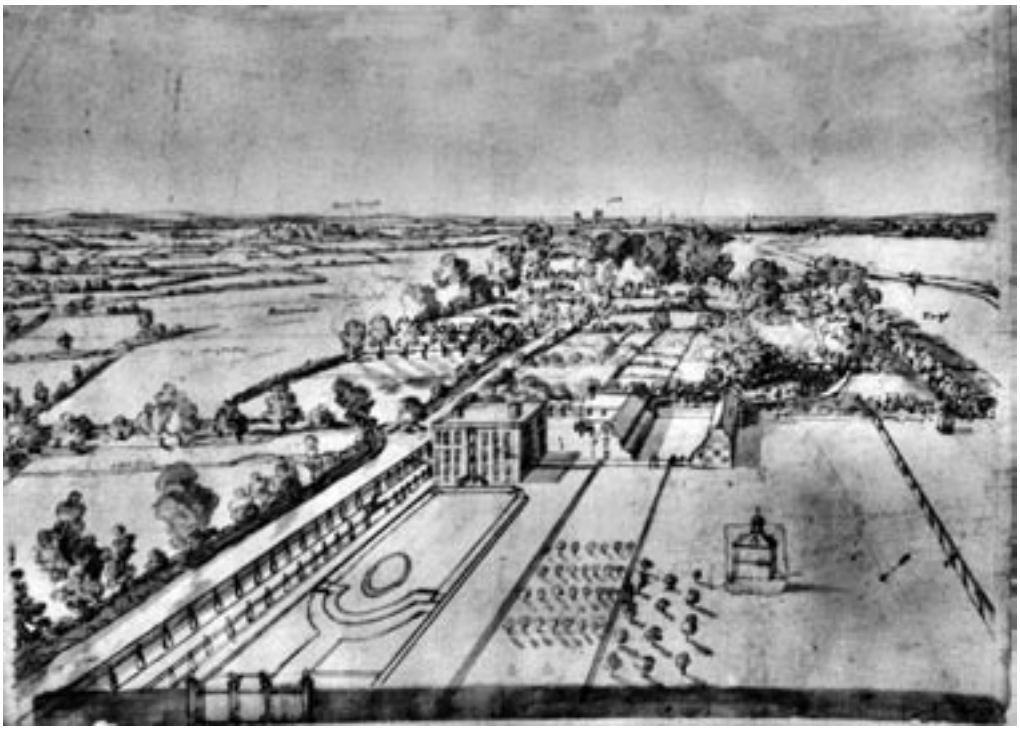
Middlethorpe Hall was built *c.*1699-1701 by Thomas Barlow of Leeds, a member of an old established Sheffield family, on the property bought in 1698. Although it was only just south of York, it was an impressive country house, aiding the transition of Barlow's branch of the family from industrialists to the ranks of the landed gentry. In 1690 Barlow had inherited the bulk of the large fortune of his uncle, Francis Barlow, a prominent iron master. The following year Thomas sought a grant of arms, citing his family connection with the Barlows of Barlow, Lancashire. His claim was admitted and the Barlow family crest, the eagle, was prominently displayed on the south garden gates of Middlethorpe. The move to York derived from a combination of the attractions of its social and intellectual life and the desire to distance himself from the iron works.

No building accounts survive, and the architect and builder are unknown. The design of some of the external features of Middlethorpe Hall resemble those of Newby Hall, near Ripon by John Etty. Barlow's new house was three storeys high and originally had a flat roof with surrounding balustrade, only seen at Newby. This design was sufficiently remarkable for Ralph Thoresby, to note in his diary for 17 September 1702: 'Received a visit from Mr. Barlow, of Middlethorp, near York, which very curious house he built after the Italian mode he had observed in his travels to Rome; showing the collection of Roman coins, which, he says, are rare to be got in Italy, that are genuine'. A few years later, *c.*1705, the house and grounds were sketched by Francis Place (1647-1728), the York-based artist, engraver and potter.

Although it has some inaccuracies and ambiguities, Place's birdseye drawing of 1705 clearly shows the early days of house and garden. Doubt as to its credibility lies especially in the front of house layout. Place appears to have sketched an oval basin set in a rectangular, sunken parterre surrounded by borders, but it is unclear what was either side. The area to the west of the house would have been wider than indicated on the drawing as the artist has miscalculated the position of the building and placed it too close to the York to Bishopthorpe Road.

Greater credibility can be accorded to the terraces on the western side and the wall and gates at the southern end of the garden. Place shows two terraced walks edged by pyramidal trees running parallel to the western boundary wall. Remains of these terraced walks may still be clearly seen close to the west end of the house, but those to the south are no longer so obvious. The strong directional axis of the garden is emphasized by the wide central path that leads to the gate or *clairvoie* set in the southern garden wall. This gate and grille, with the Barlow eagles on the central piers and stone flames on the outer ones, framed the vista from the house, through the garden, to continue onto the parkland beyond. The drawing shows a narrow, rectangular, walled enclosure to the southeast of the house containing an orchard, while further to the east is a second, larger, walled garden with a dovecote. This small, square building with cupola belonged to the earlier house on the site.

This earlier house had been bought by Sir Henry Thompson, for £1550 in 1666. Sir Henry recorded in 1681 the costs of building the 'Dove=coat' as £115. The stable block, with its Dutch gable and outbuildings to the northeast of the house, appears, like the dovecote itself, to have been part of Thompson's mid-seventeenth-century property. Barlow retained all the earlier service buildings, leaving his new house and gardens to make the statement of his family's enhanced status. The carefully designed dovecote, predictably stood as a prominent status symbol quite close to the main house within a walled garden. Apart from a small grove of trees, Place does not show any other garden planting in this enclosure, although he does show that there was a building, possibly a covered garden seat, on the west wall.



Francis Place's sketch of Middlethorpe Hall and Gardens c1705

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Middlethorpe Hall Gardens cont

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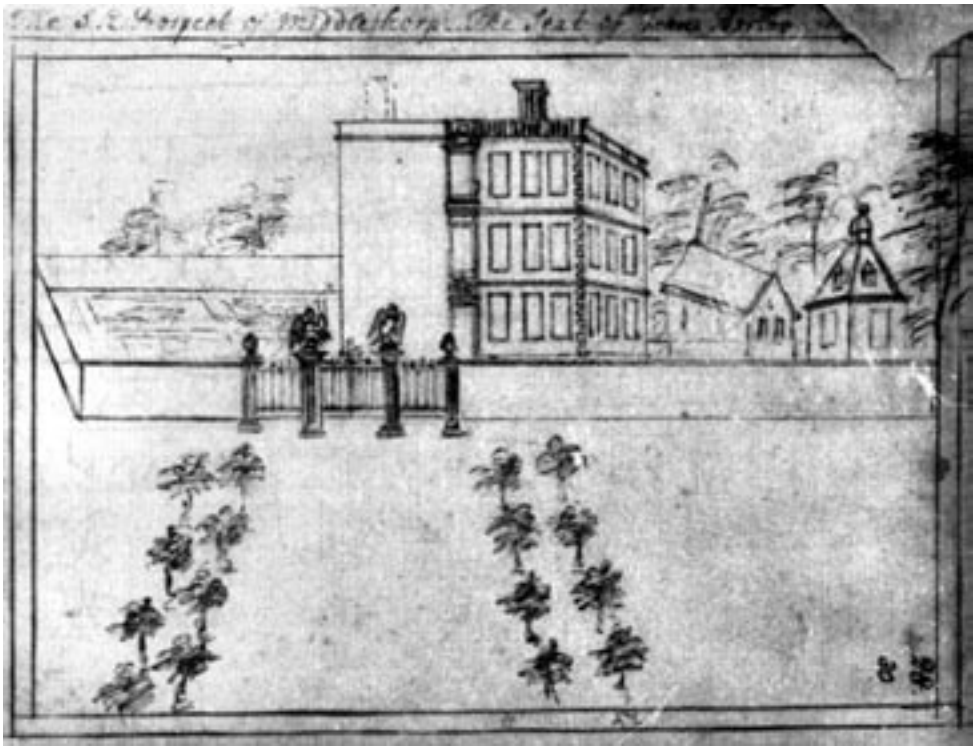
Barlow may have wished to emulate the gardens at Newby Hall. Alternatively, in planning the garden to complement his Italian-style house, Barlow may have hoped to recall memories of Roman gardens and make 'Yorkshire speak with an Italian accent'. Unfortunately, the flat terrain precluded the building of terraces on a large scale, while the grottoes, statues and waterworks, are markedly absent from Place's drawing. However, the formal gardens in front of the house, the topiary-lined terrace walks, steps, walled enclosure with its small grove of trees, and views onto the wider landscape evoke, on a modest scale, elements of Italian gardens.

In 1713 Thomas Barlow died in France. Prior to his final journey, he rented out Middlethorpe Hall. The tenancy was taken by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu in that August. She had written to her husband about Middlethorpe in July: 'I have often heard of it as a pritty place well furnish'd, and he (Mr Banks) said it will be let cheap, for Mr. Barlow is gone to France'. After she viewed the house, Lady Mary perceived some of its faults, writing to her husband: 'I believe we shall be much in the wrong if we misse Mr. Barlow's, but great Allowances should be made for the deffect of furniture and people's living in the house'. Regrettably, although Lady Mary wrote copious entertaining letters from Middlethorpe Hall to her husband, she does not mention the gardens. She wrote to her husband in December 1714 that Mr. (Francis) Barlow wished to return to the house.

Francis Barlow, on his return to England, quickly established himself as a landowner and a prominent member of York society. In 1716 he sold part of his shares in iron works in South Yorkshire and purchased land in the East Riding and in Dringhouses, close to Middlethorpe Hall. In 1719 he bought further land around the house and, in 1732, leased Crown land in Middlethorpe and Dringhouses. He became High Sheriff of Yorkshire in 1735, thus completing the family transition from trade to gentry. Although he was the most substantial landowner in the area, Francis Drake's *Eboracum* (London, 1736) records the Barlow's ownership of the Manor of Middlethorpe as in dispute.

Between 1719 and 1723, Samuel Buck (1696-1779) travelled through Yorkshire sketching the houses of the nobility and gentry. He had been commissioned by John Warburton (1661/62-1759) to produce illustrations for an abortive county history of Yorkshire. Although Buck's sketches appear superficially to be rapid and careless, he draws the most important features meticulously. His sketch of *c.*1720 of Middlethorpe Hall shows the balustered parapet and coat of arms over the south entrance. The angles of the garden walls have been distorted to show a view of the formal gardens to the west of the house, which were laid out in four rectangular parterres. The stone flame finials and Barlow eagles, depicted in the drawing by Place, are prominently displayed by Buck on the gates, which open onto a double avenue of trees in parkland, leading the eye towards the River Ouse and Bishopthorpe.

As Place's drawing ends at the eagle gates, it is impossible to establish whether the avenue in the park already existed in 1705 or was planted subsequently. The dovecote of 1681 to the south-east of the house is drawn by Buck with large first-floor windows, as if it were a summer house. From Buck's sketch it appears that in 1720 the gardens had altered little since Thomas Barlow's time, Middlethorpe Hall retaining, like many other Yorkshire houses, its elaborate gates, geometric parterres and walled gardens. The building of the new York racecourse on the adjacent Knavesmire in August 1731 was on very boggy ground. John Telford's draining and levelling work would have affected the watercourse in the grounds. This increased flow of water may led to the creation of three linked ponds. Probably in the mid-eighteenth century, major changes were made to Middlethorpe Hall in order to provide more rooms for entertaining: two single-storey, three-bay wings were added to the east and



Samuel Buck's sketch of Middlethorpe c1720

west sides of the house. The gardens were altered: the walls and gates on the south end of the garden were certainly removed and replaced by a curving 6-foot-high brick ha-ha, which permitted an open unrestricted view onto the parkland. The formal gardens on the west side of the house, which had been shown in Buck's sketch, were destroyed when the extension was added as were paths, pool and parterre on the south front, leaving the garden front much as it is today with sweeping lawns, bordered with trees, running down to the ha-ha and continuing as parkland down to its boundary close to Bishopthorpe Palace. A rather indistinct watercolour of the 1830s seems to suggest that this layout has altered little since the early nineteenth century. Despite this disappearance of external walls and their replacement by the ha-ha, the Barlow family, like many of the gentry, retained the convenience of the walled garden and the dovecote rather than adopting the sweeping landscape style popular in contemporary elite gardens. Two stone eagles, possibly from the garden gate, were later erected on the north and south parapets of the roof of the house, where they remain to this day, and two others, no longer *in situ*, decorated the gate piers of the entrance to the stable courtyard.

When Francis Barlow died in 1771, the bulk of his property went to his eldest son, Samuel, but noted in his will that 'my wife shall Enjoy my Mansion and House with all its Priviledges and Appurtances Gardens Dovehouse Groves South Field and East Toft … for her life'. This suggests that despite the representations of it by Buck and Haynes, the dovecote had retained its original function. Samuel Barlow continued to live at Middlethorpe Hall until he died in 1800, as did Andrew, the last of his surviving seven sons, on whose death in 1824 the direct male line ended.

Although there are no surviving estate maps Robert Cooper's 'Survey of York' (1830-31) gives a good impression of what the gardens and grounds of Middlethorpe Hall must have looked like in Andrew Barlow's time. The garden south of the house then merged into the tree planted parkland. The Knavesmire Beck had been dammed to form three irregularly shaped ponds in the centre of the park. Cooper's map shows what appears to have been a walk from the house, passing the lakes, to the southern boundary and the River Ouse. However, the map has to be treated with some caution as the dovecote is incorrectly positioned in the north west corner of the walled garden rather that in its correct position in its centre. Nevertheless the gardens at Middlethorpe Hall seem to have had many features in common with other gentry properties in Yorkshire of that period with ha-ha, specimen trees, irregular lakes and perimeter planting.

During much of the nineteenth century the house was tenanted and, at one time, was a boarding school. After many changes of ownership it was sold, in 1946, to Frank Terry, the owner of the nearby chocolate factory, who converted Middlethorpe Hall into three flats. During this period, from the evidence of contemporary photographs, the gardens were well maintained. In 1972 the Terry family sold the property to a company which ran the Hall as a night club. Subsequently, in 1980, it was bought by Historic Houses Hotels Ltd which also managed to buy back much of the original gardens and grounds. This company has restored these then much neglected grounds sympathetically and has rebuilt the derelict dovecot. The A64 York bypass and York City Crematorium now lie on the site of the southern part of the original park. Despite these twentieth century encroachments, although the gardens no longer retain the formality of Thomas Barlow's time, much of the layout established by his descendants in the mid eighteenth century survives.

Moira Fulton

Editor's Note
This is an edited version of a paper written by Moira and Helen Lazenby in *Garden History* (2006), 34:1, pp. 112-131

Duncombe Park 26th April 2007

After a morning spent at the House at Duncombe Park, Tim Tollis, the head forester, led the thirty-six Trust members around the terraces and parkland in the afternoon. It was a glorious spring afternoon for us to see the trees for which Duncombe Park is so justly well known. The oaks had just flushed and the fresh leaves and catkins were that almost luminescent lime-green we associate with many woodland plants as they come into their new spring foliage. Tim informed us that the onset of bud break in oaks was responding to warmer spring weather and came earlier, while leaf flush in ash was controlled by day length and did not respond to temperature. He told us that the oaks at Duncombe Park were *Quercus robor*, the pedunculate oak, that has acorns with noticeable stalks. Many of the oaks are up to eight hundred years old and we saw many gloriously gnarled specimens. Oaks this old constitute a marvellous ecosystem in themselves, as they are home to a very diverse multitude of invertebrates. The trees are not aged with a core but a good estimate of the age is achieved by measuring the girth of the trunk at about 1.5 metres and applying a formula which takes into account their situation and competition from adjacent trees.

The woodlands of Duncombe Park are a National Nature Reserve and Natural England is closely involved with the management alongside the Duncombe Park Estate. When work is required it is decided upon by Natural England and performed by their contractors. Tim Tollis told us that the woodland areas were designated to high, medium and low risk zones with respect to the decisions made about what tree work was required from the safety point of view. Areas close to the car parking and the Parkland Visitor Centre of course are considered high-risk areas. Where practicable fallen dead wood is left

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Duncombe Park cont

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Part of the terrace at Duncombe, looking towards the Doric Temple

around to provide food and shelter for the range of invertebrate fauna found in the parkland. Besides pedunculate oak, other trees in the parkland include hawthorn, horse chestnut, elder and sycamore as well as an interesting old apple tree. These other species are important nectar sources for insects.

We moved into the woodland proper that is noted for some very tall trees including an ash that measured 45 metres in height and is probably the tallest in England. This is a very free draining site that allows trees to grow tall. We discussed the role of sycamore at Duncombe where it is welcomed as an important species for the ecosystem providing as it does large amounts of nectar, dead wood that rots down quickly and large leaves which fall to leave conditions favoured by slugs and snails many of which are rare species. Sycamore does not take over at Duncombe as there is very little sycamore regeneration: conversely ash regenerates well and the site suits it so it predominates here. This was a very interesting visit and we were very lucky to have chosen such a pleasant spring afternoon.

Mike Ashford

Sheffield Botanical Gardens - new booklet

A new history booklet, entitled '*Sheffield Botanical Gardens: People, Plants & Pavilions'* by R. Alison Hunter, was launched in June 2007, by the Friends of the Botanical Gardens, Sheffield (FOBS). FOBS gratefully acknowledge the grant of £500 provided by the Yorkshire Gardens Trust, towards the costs incurred in the publication of the booklet.

The Gardens opened in 1836 to shareholders of the Sheffield Botanical and Horticultural Society and their families and friends. The public were only allowed entry on four gala days a year. A second Society was formed in 1844, and continued, through various trials and triumphs, until financial collapse in 1897. The Sheffield Town Trust came to the rescue, opened the Gardens free of charge to everyone, and was directly responsible for management from 1898 to 1951. However, the inability of the Trust to afford necessary repairs after World War II, led to Sheffield City Council taking over as managers in 1951. The pavilions were repaired, and the Gardens enjoyed something of a renaissance. Unfortunately, budget cuts led to dereliction and the need for the Lottery funding by 1997. The booklet ends with the Restoration Project, a brief description of the present Gardens and possible future plans.

Copies of the booklet will be available at YGT events and the AGM. They can also be obtained from the Gatehouse gift shop in the Gardens, the Tourist Information Centre (Norfolk Row, Sheffield), at FOBS meetings and local outlets for £4-95. Mail-order copies may be obtained directly from Alison Hunter for £4-95 plus £1 p&p. Cheques should be made payable to **"Friends of the Botanical Gardens, Sheffield"**.

Profits from the book sales will all go towards supporting the work of FOBS and the Sheffield Botanical Gardens Trust in the Gardens.

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Going Beyond First Impressions .. a personal experience

What is so intriguing about landscapes, is that you can just sit and stare and enjoy the aesthetic pleasure of a first impression or, you can begin to ask questions as to why, how, when and by whom. For me, most designed landscapes always have questions I want answering, and over the years the bits of information I have gleaned have given greater depth to my appreciation.

But where do you go to get the information you may seek? There are strict historical based courses by correspondence - none of which are cheap or local. A relatively new course at Bristol has just begun - too far - and Rewley House, Oxford run one-off courses but again not that accessible. Marilyn Elm at Harlow Carr has run a course on garden history which is a definite good start and is relatively close. Joining the YGT is definitely a good first step - there are members with such knowledge and a willingness to share opinions as well as facts. It makes the interest for me far more sociable.

The Garden History Society has an excellent yet more academic approach, and is nation if not worldwide - so not covering topics necessarily close to home. However, by looking over the garden gate you can see how our own home turf has been shaped.

In 2004 I began searching for routes to follow which could bring together my interest in garden history, the wider perspective of how the garden has and still influences us, and the opportunity to meet and discuss with likeminded people. I ended up at the Architectural Association in Bedford Square one day a week working towards a Postgrad Dip in Conservation of Historic Landscapes (read gardens mainly) - not accessible and not cheap!

Perhaps I should mention before anyone gets too interested and considers my route, that the course is at present abandoned and I am the last student! What I wish to share is the benefit I gained from the topics covered and how valuable the wider perspective can prove.

As could be guessed, we looked at the historical development of gardens - the design changes, the main design makers, the characteristics and detailing that denoted particular eras. From Moghul gardens, through the ages, spending time with Brown of course, and on to the present day. Although much of this information can be gleaned from some very good textbooks, we were able to visit sites and start to try to recognize vestiges of the inspired past designs. Experienced first hand, seen through 21st century eyes, but with information and plans in hand from the original intention. The subtleties of the design, and the alterations over time - trees growing up where they were not deliberately intended and now obscure the vital view - gave me plenty more questions to ask - if only 'what is it I am looking at?' - and if public money is poured into its restoration 'what will I see?'

From this beginning, the rest of the course spearheaded the recognition for sustainability and the need to see gardens in a wider context. This is where it differed from much of the strictly 'historical' defined references.

I was shown the relevance of the archaeologist to the surveying and research of a garden site, especially where you would imagine not much remains! We visited sites - such as the Privy Garden Hampton Court with the archaeologist that worked on its excavation, and was shown how his information patched into the whole process. How information was recorded and buried, recorded and restored, recorded and conserved, recorded and interpreted. It clearly demonstrated to us the many layers that build up over the years, and the decisions taken on what to keep and what not.

We looked at the assessment and recording of gardens for registering and listing which led onto the politics, and how the 'assessments' are recognized by the National Trust, English Heritage, and how they can determine whether a garden is restoration is funded or its recognition is not achieved. You can imagine that there was plenty to debate on this topic - if only whether all garden are deserving?

Along with our visits we had visiting speakers giving first hand accounts of their experiences with restoration - and how intentions vary, are tempered by circumstances, and are finally presented. Conservation Management Plans are now integral to any application / proposal -this was not always the case and the lessons learned were highlighted - the increasing importance was never underestimated - and they can be a good source of reference if you can find the copy for your garden as they are poorly archived!

Alongside all the discussion and debating around our English designed landscapes, we examined World Heritage Sites and the cultural references to landscapes. We had two American women, one Japanese gardener, on Australian landscape architect, an archivist from the Bodleian, a cemetery manager and a garden designer on my course, with a vast breadth of experience and appreciation. The discussions often continued into the bar while we waited to catch our trains home.

History alone is fascinating facts, but lacks context when applied to gardens, unless the need to support the best designed gardens for future generations, in a way they can appreciate, is recognized. I am no longer so naïve as to assume that a restored garden is back EXACTLY to where it was when for example, Brown was around - that is impossible. It will be a 21st century interpretation - the degree of accuracy authenticity and consideration is now part of an emerging art form in itself!

Communication is the most important element of any garden experience; whether it is through the design, or an information board detailing the restoration process, or in leaflet describing

(Continued on page 10)

Going Beyond First Impressions .. a personal experience cont.

(Continued from page 9)

detailed historical references .. all this gives me an enhanced quality to my garden visit - and I can gauge the relevance of the restoration accuracy for myself. Or whether the dialogue is between visitors, the garden experience shared.

Please don't assume that the AA course leaves me unable to just stroll, sit and chat to a fellow YGT visitor - without people the garden is too static an art form for me.

As a postscript I would like to encourage YGT members who would like to know more about the areas I have mentioned to contact me either by email on eastgatehouse@uwclub.net or by snail mail Eastgate House, 32 Eastgate, North Newbald, East Yorkshire, YO43 4SD. Or if you want to chat then phone 01430 828430.

Perhaps if there is sufficient interest we could provide a workshop on a topic such as restoration or listing (going through a few changes at present), or reading the landscape and maybe combine this with a visit .. I can't be the only member out there with a need to share their knowledge beyond the first impression?

Jenni Howard

Visit to Brodsworth Hall for Iranians, July 2007

A visit to Brodsworth Hall and gardens, South Yorkshire, was arranged in conjunction with the Persian Association of Leeds. YGT members acted as hosts and guides to some 18 Iranians, both adults and children, some recent, and some longestablished refugees to this country. We were lucky to escape the torrential rain of much of June and July, seeing the garden under blue skies, and benefited from the fact that it was Wimbledon finals, so that we almost had Brodsworth to ourselves.

The formal Victorian gardens were looking magnificent, and provided a perfect contrast in style to the eighteenth-century gardens at Studley Royal and at Newby that we had visited in previous years. The monkey puzzle trees puzzled some of the Iranians; others found the pet cemetery of particular interest (and something of an eccentricity, it must be admitted). Explaining the concept of an 'eyecatcher' or a 'summerhouse' tested the linguistic and cultural resources of one YGT member; and one Iranian lady thought the Target House (the rustic garden building in the Swiss style at the end of the Target Range) would make an ideal home! The croquet being played on the lawns provided an unusual insight into the sort of activities that the Thellusson family would have enjoyed here in the 1860s.

The exhibition of photos in the Target House, showing the gardens as they were in their Victorian and Edwardian heyday, and recording the recent impressive EH restoration, which transformed the gardens from their state of dereliction and neglect in the early 1990s, was an eye-opener to some of the Iranians. And this display presented that heritage buzz-word 'interpretation' in a novel light, with the more proficient English speakers among the Iranians acting as interpreters for those with more limited command of the language, translating the EH text and the additional explanations from YGT members.

The restored Fern Dell at Brodsworth Hall

English Heritage gave the group free entry to house and gardens, and EH staff made the Iranians feel very welcome. For all those who are involved in these visits, it is a pleasure, and sometimes a revelation, to see our houses and gardens through different eyes.

Susan Kellerman

Otterington Hall 8 September 2007

Otterington Hall is a large Georgian house three miles south of Northallerton, renowned for its beautiful topiary gardens. The house has had a number of owners over the years, most notably the Furness family who built large ships on the Tees for many generations and still live and farm locally. They bought Otterington in 1918 following years of neglect during the First World War. In the early 1920s, Eleanor, Lady Furness and her son Stephen started laying out the design that broadly remains today.

We visited on a typical soft September day, crisp, calm and sunny. After a whimsical circuit "here we go round the mulberry bush" - a large and healthy 'Morus nigra' dripping with luscious fruit - we admired the old 'shell pond', its borders and old magnolias before visiting the fruit gardens.

Topiary gallery at Otteringham Hall

The Furness family inherited a tradition of growing a wide range of fruit trees over a large and formal area. We were able to pore over the old plans for these and indeed the gardens themselves, with all plantings named. Although fruit trees from the nineteenth century do still remain, most have now gone. The formal area has been halved and also accommodates a burgeoning vegetable and soft fruit section. Despite this the gardens still produce a considerable surfeit of apples, pears, quince, plums and gages.

Nearby, the rose gardens were planted, unusually, with China roses. Two years ago it was decided to remove the exhausted plants and soil. Lots of 'muck', fresh soil and a wide range of new roses from both Peter Beales and David Austin have been brought in. Seventeen weeping standards - 'Félicité-Perpetué', 'Excelsa' and 'Minnehaha' now give the garden a strong structure. The gardens have been transformed into a beautiful kaleidoscope of colour and fragrance, self evidently lasting well into September.

Moving through the Millennium gate to the south west of the house we encounter the frog pond and its surrounding borders. Again these have been cleared, refreshed and replanted with bold architectural plants to a palette of purples, deep blues, pinks and whites. A framework of clean and simple metalwork soaring amongst the plantings gives support and structure to stunning effect. Adjacent to the frog pond is a large yew archway planted in 1926 and effectively linking the house to yew hedging and topiary heading due west. In 1946 this hedge was extended northwards, resulting in a continuation of fifteen topiary sculptures that beautifully frame the view westwards from the house.

From the front of the house there is an axis of paths and steps that bisect the 1946 hedge and continue westward along a stone pergola linked by chains festooned with old roses. This axis culminates in a circular 'anteroom' which was originally planted as mixed beech and yew hedging to contain concentric rings of rose beds (or 'Ring a ring a roses'!). Over the years the hedges have grown tall and have shaded out the roses. It now provides a perfect site for a focal statue of Pandora and provides entry to two remarkable topiary gardens.

Running northwards is Hebe's garden, a peaceful sunken garden and pond enclosed by tall yew hedges and buttresses. To the south lies the 'piece de resistance', a stunning and unique topiary gallery. The gallery is simple: lawn beneath, sky above, four yew walls and nothing else to detract from the many manicured sculptures which flank both sides of the 150 foot long 'room'. These sculptures consist either of birds or geometric forms. Some sixty years old, they are cut each August, and where possible improved, by Chris Crowder, head gardener at England's greatest topiary garden, Levens Hall, Cumbria.

To the south of the gallery is the tennis court. This was later planted as a conifer wood and is now being gradually transformed into a hidden garden! North of this is a large new rhododendron bed leading to the spring walk. Unseen on our visit, Otterington is famous, (and usually open to the public at the time), for its collection of spring bulbs forming multicoloured drifts over wide areas.

Mike Heagney

Thanks are due to Mike Heagney and his team from 'Gardens Revitalised' for presenting the gardens so immaculately and of course to our hosts, Mr and Mrs Andy Preston who purchased the property in 2003 and are committed to its restoration. Gardens never stand still; they either go forward or backwards. Otterington Hall gardens are going forward with enthusiasm, and the future is set fair!

Alison Brayshaw

Cusworth Hall and Park

On May 19th, Julie Harrup, the Assistant Manager, welcomed a small group of Trust members to Cusworth Hall near Doncaster. She told us of her heroic efforts to secure Lottery Funding to enable refurbishment of the 18th century house built for William Wrightson between 1740 and 1745. It was home to the Battie-Wrightson family until 1952. Since 1961, Doncaster Council has managed the Grade I listed house. The Hall opened as a museum in 1967 and since 1974 it has housed the Museum of South Yorkshire Life, illustrating 250 years of social history. The Hall was designed by local architect and mason, George Platt, and altered and extended by James Paine between 1749 and 1755.

The £7.5 million restoration has enabled sections of the Hall previously in a poor state of repair to be opened to the public for the first time. So the Great Kitchen, Bake House, Still Room and Laundry can now be visited, giving a glimpse of what life was like "below stairs" when Cusworth Hall was occupied by the Battie-Wrightson family. Julie took us to see the most dramatic of the restoration work. In the remarkable Italianate chapel, the splendid painting by Francis Hayman on the vaulted ceiling has been painstakingly lowered, repaired and returned to its dominant position. In addition stunning ceiling paintings surrounding it have been revealed after 50 years of being painted over.

The grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, supplemented by Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council, has also made possible extensive restoration work in the park. After a pleasant lunch in the Tea Room in the old stables, we walked down through the landscaped parkland to the lakes. As we walked, Julie told us that work on the grounds began in 2004 with the felling of 500 trees, mainly sycamore, and the clearing of overgrown shrubberies, followed by replanting to restore the landscape to much of its 18th century design.

John Battie married Isabella, the only surviving child of William Wrightson who built the present Hall. In 1761 he commissioned Richard Woods, the landscape gardener from Chertsey, Surrey, to make improvements to the grounds round the new Cusworth Hall. Woods designed a "naturalistic" landscaped park with a concave-convex slope from the Hall down to three artificial lakes created to give the impression of a river flowing through the grounds. A wide variety of trees, such as beech, elm, chestnut and larch were planted in clumps and groves. The restoration of the old tree patterns certainly gave stunning views down to the lakes in the May sunshine.

The lakes have been drained, dredged and with the 1760's lining only in need of repair and not replacement. They have thus been restored to Richard Woods' original design with the upper lake resembling a river overflowing on to meadows. We admired the boathouse, designed as an arch to give the effect of a cave hidden among the thick foliage of the lake embankment, and the cascade built to look like a natural rugged waterfall. Paths round the lakes make, in Woods' words, "a fine range of walks" with splendid views up his Hanging Lawns to the house.

There was concern about the effect on the wildlife within the park during the work on the lakes and the grounds and great care was taken to reduce disturbance to the minimum. Julie was delighted to report that dragonflies, frogs, water voles, reed buntings and kingfishers were returning to the lakes and that she had heard a woodpecker in the park so recolonisation was obviously taking place.

The most exciting part of our visit was when Julie led us across Cusworth's old village street and through an unassuming wooden gate into the "secret garden". This is the walled garden of the original house, its high walls built of thousands of Epworth bricks. It originally contained a kitchen garden, a flower garden, glass houses complete with pineapple pits, an orchard, a bowling green and a lower garden called Low Piece: its huge size is quite breathtaking. We followed Julie through the waist-thigh grasses and wild flowers to the little Bowling Pavilion that was built in 1726 and restored in 1992. The interior walls are decorated with delightful paintings depicting, not completely accurately, the gardens which once surrounded the pavilion. This wonderful walled garden with its terrace and stone steps leading down from the now demolished old hall is to be restored when funding permits. There are plans for a parterre, for local apples and pears to be planted in the orchard and for the bowling green to be used again. There is obviously much work to be done and obviously much enthusiasm on the part of Julie and her colleagues to get it done.

Cusworth Hall Museum and its 18th century designed parkland are splendid local assets. Admission is free to both and the large number of people looking round the exhibits in the hall or walking with children and dogs in the park indicated how popular they are. There is a wonderful feeling of space and beauty in the park that is greatly valued by Doncaster residents. The MBC can rightly claim Cusworth Hall, Museum and Park to be among "the brightest jewels in Doncaster's crown".

Yorkshire Garden Trust members are grateful to Julie Harrup for her enthusiastic guidance and to Jennifer Tiptaft for arranging the visit to this jewel.

Pat Byford.

Note from the Editor

The Trust presented a cheque for £100 to Cusworth as a result of our visit.

Cusworth was also a previous recipent of one of our Small Grants of £500

Midsummer Visit and Picnic

On Thursday, June 28th, on one of the few dry days of the summer, some 50 YGT members met at Newburgh Priory for the annual mid summer visit and picnic. We assembled in the eighteenth century kitchen of the Priory for coffee before, in two groups, being given fascinating and amusing tours of this extraordinary house by the owners, Sir George and Lady Wombwell. After the tours of the house it was sufficiently fine for most members to picnic in the grounds, although many chose the comparative protection of the ruined and roofless Elizabethan wing for their *al fresco* lunch. The afternoon was free for all to explore the extensive grounds and, with the aid of a booklet, to attempt to trace the remains of the seventeenth and eighteenth century gardens.

Newburgh Priory is Grade II listed on the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England. Sir William Bellasis built the manor house at Newburgh in the mid-sixteenth century on the site of a dissolved Augustinian Priory. Its first, quite simple, gardens were shown on a survey map of 1605, commissioned by Sir Henry Bellasis. He was a keen and knowledgeable gardener to whom William Lawson (1553-1632) dedicated his *'New Orchard and Garden'* (1618). The elaborate Jacobean gardens laid out by Sir Henry are shown in two large late seventeenth century topographical paintings of the house and grounds, still, fortunately, at Newburgh. During the second quarter of the eighteenth century the house, gardens and deer park were extensively altered by Thomas, Lord Fauconberg (1699-1774), the fourth Viscount and later first Earl.

His remodelling may clearly be seen in maps now held at the North Yorkshire County Record Office. The first shows (1722) the still surviving seventeenth century formal garden layout whilst the very large 1744 map depicts the fourth Viscount's planned alterations. These are in the style of the Stephen Switzer proposals for 'rural and extensive gardening' and show a large, elaborate, landscape design. It is not known how much was actually implemented by the fourth Viscount but some traces of his interesting plan still survive on the ground today.

Plan of Newburgh Priory from 1722 showing the formal layout before the remodelling by the 4th Viscount

The plan provides a rare link between the early eighteenth century formal gardens and the naturalistic landscapes of Capability Brown. After Lord Fauconberg's death in 1744, there were few major changes to the gardens and grounds, apart from those effected by time and neglect, until the twentieth century. In the 1970s the former owner, Captain Wombwell, created, to the south east of the house, an attractive and imaginatively designed water garden, planted with rare alpines. Although many of these plants have now disappeared YGT members were able to enjoy a tour of this garden, which, in the wet summer, did not lack copious supplies of water for its cascades and pools.

Moira Fulton

Visit to Rye Hill Helmsley 14th July 2007

Roomed gardens may not be to everyone's taste, but we found this series of small rooms cleverly slotted into only half an acre, a unique and enjoyable experience. The owners since 1984, Sheila and Claude Briske, were originally faced with what was basically a bare expanse of grass on sandy well-drained soil. She is the plantswoman and propagator, and he is the builder and landscaper, have since then transformed the setting into a riot of colourful flower, shrub, and small tree-planting, interspersed with tasteful garden statuary and ornamentation, with surprises round every corner.

We entered via the southfacing 'Rock Garden', a rectangle with a lawned centre whose central feature is a miniature Box Knot Garden, screened from the road by a privet hedge and shrubs filling the gap between it and Claude's low walling with two semicircular herbaceous borders. A Victorian-style conservatory full of exotic plants at the corner then leads round into the 'Woodland Garden' through a metal archway, which uses decorative chimneypots for hostas and other plants, clipped box surrounds for trees, and an openfronted 'chalet' with two seats and a table in one corner.

Next comes the 'Owl Garden' with a Roman trough and obelisk, a miniature water garden with a realistic model heron, eight owls in various forms, the largest, a stone owl, perched on an upturned stone roller wheel, small seating alcoves and benches, and a stone circular paved area featuring a tall central pot. Beyond this, the kitchen garden features a large raspberry cage, vegetables in stone beds and a cold frame. A distinctive feature is the outer wall door opening on to the boundary shrubbery, which gives a 'trompe l'oeil' effect of extra depth, as does all Claude's stone edging throughout the gardens. A *Betula utilis jacquemontii* (Himalayan birch) planted in the unbricked gap in the wall breaks up any hint of monotony.

Lastly we entered the 'Italian Garden' by a half moon gate matched by a clipped cypress arch, with a clever brick tunnel catflap running alongside. Its brick walls are attractively niched with statues and classical-style busts, and there is a small central pond, with stone potted plants judiciously spread around it. Beyond stands a small greenhouse, where Sheila showed us some of the many cuttings she produces for sale.

No inch is spared for growing here, yet all the plants appear to thrive on the competition. If any shrub or tree grows too big and begins to affect the surrounding plants, the owners have no qualms about digging it out and replacing it with another more suitable, surely one of the key reasons for their garden's success. In order to round off a most intriguing tour in such a restricted space, we sampled Sheila's delicious homemade cakes, after which, like many others of our party, we couldn't resist retracing our steps round the circuit to ensure we had missed nothing out.

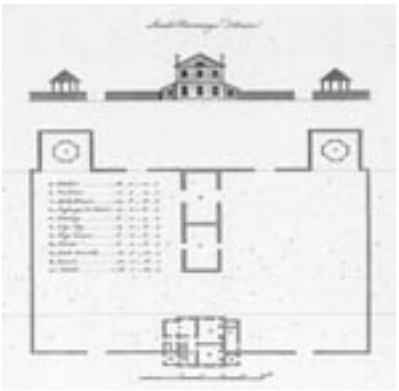
Patrick and Veronica Rickards

Committee Round-Up

Research and Recording Report - The Vicarage Gardens Project

What is Queen Anne's Bounty?
Queen Anne's Bounty was created in 1704 because of the poverty in the parishes of many of the clerics. It was a scheme originally devised by Bishop Burnet of Salisbury after studying the Reformation, to persuade the Crown to restore the First Fruits and Tenths that had been appropriated by Henry VIII as state income, to provide a fund to supplement clerical incomes. The aim of the Bounty was to augment, with grants, the very poorest benefices, initially those with an income of less than £10 per annum. However the benefices of £35 per annum or less could receive grants if private donations were also available in each case. The monies granted of up to £200 were to be invested in land, which would help increase the income of the living.

Our research into Vicarage (Rectory and Parsonage) Gardens is already giving us an insight into social history. Not only are the gardens of interest but so are some of the incumbents. We know that towards the end of the C18th the clergy was undergoing something of a social transformation, and the educated younger sons of the nobility and gentry were beginning to turn to the Church for a career. Some of these gentlemen finding themselves in outlying parishes and often being short of intellectual company, they may study natural history or take a scientific or botanical interest in their gardens and surroundings.



From: *The Gentleman and Farmer's Architect….. plans and elevations of Parsonage and Farm Houses. By T. Lightoler, Architect. 1762*.

The houses they were expected to live in were not really fit for the purpose. Therefore, in 1811 the governors of Queen Anne's Bounty decided to use its funds to provide mortgages to build new parsonages. Although the parson would first have to seek the permission of the bishop and to provide him with plans of the proposed house. Some of these plans still exist and may be found in Diocesan Records. One of the first clergymen to take advan-

tage of these new mortgages was Sydney Smith, who used the money to build a new vicarage at Foston, near York, where there had not been a resident priest for 150 years.

If you would like to know more, or if you know of anything, which may be of interest to us, we should love to hear from you. Do please contact Moira or me, details below.

We meet every two months. Our next meeting is, provisionally, at the Borthwick Institute on Thursday, 13 March 2008 at 10.30.

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Helen Lazenby and Moira Fulton

Education

The Trust is continuing to help increasing numbers of schools develop their grounds and garden areas, as well as setting up gardening clubs and involving the children in the activities.
Schools are still applying for, and being granted, monetary awards and sets of high quality gardening tools. This is in addition to support from members giving their time and advice.

During the Autumn term, I have been working with an enthusiastic group of parents from Carlton & Faceby CE Primary School to survey their overgrown Wildlife Area; give advice on what should be cleared and what should be left to provide valuable habitats for wildlife; produce plans for the newly developed area and an associated action plan to allow them to achieve and maintain the plans. Children from the school will be involved in restoring the area, sowing seeds, planting bulbs and finally being able to make use of the area for nature studies and science lessons.

I also wanted to share with you Penelope Dawson-Brown's wonderful account of an afternoon in November 'A group of ten children and two teachers from Norton Primary School near Helmsley, plus National Park Officer and (YGT member) Peter Woods came to collect wild crab apples from the top of our steepest hill. We have a lovely old tree up there, which has shed a great deal of fruit. The children had such fun (so did I) and when they returned with the crab apples they cut out the seeds and planted them up in pots filled with molehill soil. We also looked at the Junipers planted earlier this year by other pupils from the same school. It was encouraging to see just how much they had grown. If the crab apples germinate we hope to create a small plantation near the mother tree and I look forward to the day when the children return to plant them up.'

If any members would like to share experiences of involvement in their local school's gardening endeavours, or would like advice on how they might offer help, I'd be delighted to hear from you.

Nicola Harrison
mntlharrison@tiscali.co.uk

Small Grants Scheme 2007-8

In her Chairman's letter, Penelope writes of our heritage of public parks and their importance to us all. As you will have realised over the last two years or so it is this theme that underpins some of our thinking for our grant scheme.

In the first half of the nineteenth century the main thrust of park development occurred in the major industrial towns of the northwest of England and Glasgow spearheaded by local benefactors and promoted by John Claudius Loudon (1783-1843), one of the most important early designers of public parks and a supporter of numerous liberal causes. After his death Joseph Paxton (1803-1865) took up this mantle and became arguably even more influential not only designing, but training other designers such as Edward Miner, John Gibson and Edward Kemp. Which brings us to Yorkshire. Edward Milner worked with Paxton on the People's Park, Halifax completed in 1857 and from about that time there developed a crescendo of public parks in towns and cities throughout Yorkshire providing Loudon's 'breathing zones' and recreation for vast swathes of the industrial poor and the emerging middle classes.

As we know the latter half of the twentieth century was not kind to our public parks but thankfully within the last fifteen years the tide has turned due the efforts of many concerned people, the advent of the Heritage Lottery Fund and the growth of 'Friends' groups. So again this year we are delighted that our grant scheme has attracted applications from Friends groups breathing new life into their local park, a community group wanting to create new green space on an historic site, two charities working on more recent garden projects; and not a million miles from Paxton and Milner's park in Halifax, a neighbourhood association trying to create a community garden on waste ground.

I'm sure that you'll agree our grant scheme although small in financial terms has the potential to help other voluntary groups with some very worthy projects and is a credit both to them and to the fund-raising which we can achieve in our Trust. And we do seem to be reaching most parts of Yorkshire.

From the Friends of Beaumont Park, Huddersfield and the Friends of Whinfell Quarry Garden, Sheffield, to the Castle Garden Project from a community group in Malton, via York Gate Garden, Leeds (Perennial, the Gardeners Royal Benevolent Society) to the Dales Plants and Gardens Project 1900-1960 and finally to Hopwood Lane Neighbourhood Association in Halifax. The small grants committee have a hard task deciding how to allocate our funds but all will be revealed at the AGM at Cannon Hall. Meanwhile do spread the word about our annual grant scheme and if you feel that you would like to help with a donation to the fund then please let us know.

Committee Round-Up cont.

(Continued from page 15)

Beaumont Park was Huddersfield's first public park created on land given by HF Beaumont who said in 1880, 'public parks and open spaces are almost necessities to large and populous towns and they tend to increase the life of the people'. We could say the same today.

Val Hepworth

Heritage Counts - Conservation and Planning

Since 2002 each of the nine regions of England has had an historic environment forum that brings together groups covering every aspect of the historic environment from canals to places of worship, archaeology to parks and gardens and every type of historic building. In the current climate this ability to provide a single voice on our heritage is absolutely vital if we are to have any chance in competing for funding and importance against all the other pressures that drop at the feet of national and regional government. The Yorkshire and Humber Historic Environment Forum has been very active and it has been a great pleasure for me representing The Yorkshire Gardens Trust and our heritage of parks and gardens to be involved with heritage strategy's and funding for the region, sharing of best practice and information, and overall promoting understanding and appreciation of the historic environment and its positive role in regeneration and renaissance.

Each year all the forums working with English Heritage produce a report, called *Heritage Counts,* on the state of their region's historic environment and together these form an annual survey covering the whole of England. *Heritage Counts 2007*, the sixth annual survey, was published in November and this year focused on the historic environment as a learning resource and on the issues faced by the sector in relation to the skills of the workforce. You might like to read more at *www.heritagecounts.org.uk* and as in the past I will bring copies of our regional report to our AGM for those who are interested.

But a few snippets here: 70% of all adults visited a historic environment site in 2005/6 and there were nearly half a million volunteers in the historic environment in this period. The number of school visits is not increasing (and you might be able to guess at some of the reasons why) but at 2.5 million school visits to historic sites in 2006 it is modestly encouraging. And it won't amaze you to learn that being taken to a heritage site as a child is the most important factor related to visiting as an adult. So we must keep on taking our children and other people's children and the more parks and gardens the better! Did you know that Brodsworth Hall has garden detectives? This is an interactive, cross curricular session which helps children develop their historical enquiry and problem solving skills by exploring the gardens as a piece of historical evidence, and collecting information that helps them learn about the lives of both rich and poor people in the past. Art, language and having fun outdoors is the order of the day.

Planning and managing the historic environment requires specialist skills and *Heritage Counts 2007* reveals that half of all local authorities surveyed in 2006 said that they faced recruitment difficulties for management and professional posts in planning. In our region half the local authorities have less than two full time equivalent specialist building conservation staff and as your Trust's conservation subcommittee are aware, these staff may have little training in conservation skills for parks and gardens. This makes anything that we can do to support our parks and gardens even more vital. We would like to do more but as ever it is a question of numbers of shoulders to the wheel. Towards the west of our county, Anne Tupholme and Jane Furse have been trying to help with our concerns about the cascade at Parcevall Hall. Anne has commented on the draft Craven Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) where it relates to designed landscapes and woodland and despite keeping her ears to the ground has no further news on Whinburn which was for sale again by the local authority at Bradford last autumn. Anne has asked English Heritage if they would consider listing the Upper Garden Pavilion at Whinburn; a fine garden building possibly designed by Thomas Mawson.

We have yet to hear whether St Ives Park at Bingley has been put on the English Heritage Register but Anne has completed a fine piece of research to help in this process. In North Yorkshire we have commented on the Hambleton District Council Housing Allocation document where it impacts on Cleveland Lodge, a designed landscape at Great Ayton, not on the EH Register. We were very pleased to work with the authorities' conservation officer over concerns about this site. Similarly it was very good to have input from member David Rhodes who framed a letter registering our concern about proposals from North Yorkshire County Council for a waste management facility in close proximity to the Registered historic park and garden at Allerton Park. At Scarthingwell Park (Selby DC) we assisted the Garden History Society with comments on a planning application for a nursing home and we have also commented on the draft EH Register entry for Middleton Lodge near Scotch Corner.

As I wrote in the last newsletter we would welcome any help. Eyes and ears on your patch are really helpful and we are here to help you to do something positive for our parks and gardens. Please get in touch with the conservation subcommittee.

Val Hepworth

News from AGT

2 trips are planned to visit Italian gardens in 2008, following the success of the tours last year.

30 April to 7 May Campania

12 to 19 May Lazio

Full details on AGT website and in latest Eyecatcher. Otherwise contact Polly Burns: 01787 370953 or surry.burns@keme.co.uk

Beaumont Park Huddersfield October 6th 2007

I loved to visit Beaumont Park when I was very young. It was so was sad when it became overgrown, unloved and unsafe. I was delighted in 1998 to hear that the Friends of Beaumont Park had been founded to try and remedy this. They were first of all a pressure group, but they are now actively working together with Kirklees Council. It therefore seemed a most appropriate venue for a YGT visit. The 40 members attending were welcomed by the Friends with coffee and speedily organised so that we had an illustrated talk and the opportunity to be taken around in small groups.

Prince Leopold, Duke of Albany and Queen Victoria's youngest son opened the park with great ceremony in October 1883. It was on land given by Mr. H F Beaumont. Prince Leopold's wife planted a sycamore tree by the small lake for toy boats. This tree is thriving although the lake is no more and almost all the buildings in the park have now gone. However, much remains of the landscape itself.

The site is spectacular. It is on a very steep hillside with fine views across the Holme Valley to Castle Hill. Virtually all the paths are now open and we were able to see the pond with its fountains playing and the cascade that was restored only this summer.

The park was being well used while we were there but most of the visitors stayed on the upper levels. Many of our group were more adventurous and were taken down the steep slope to the original entrance, a castellated gateway with its Victorian wrought iron gates. A few days earlier the good news had been received that Kirklees Council had been given a £44,000 grant for their restoration.

Margaret Hardcastle

Note from the Editor:

A donation of £100 from the YGT was given by Val Hepworth to the Friends of Beaumont Park.

Scarborough's Valley Road Gates

Scarborough & District Civic Society was very pleased to receive a grant of £500 from the Yorkshire Gardens Trust Small Grants Scheme towards the cost of restoring the Valley Road Gates. Some years ago, the Civic Society decided to get more 'project orientated'; actually doing things on the ground rather than just writing letters and reacting to planning applications was seen as a good way of raising our profile and so it has proved. The Valley Gates are now just one of a series of practical projects we have on the stocks. The suggestion for tackling this project came from one of our members who was fed up with seeing rusting skeletons of gates hanging off partially collapsed supporting pillars on the boundary of a Grade II registered park and in a location highly visible to residents and visitors.

We came to an agreement with Scarborough Borough Council that they would restore the pillars if we provided the gates and off we went. We raised money the hard way by coffee mornings, raffles and bring and buy events and eventually we had enough to be in a position to seek estimates for the work. The total cost of the gates was £2100 and the grant from YGT almost completed our funding requirements. The gates, of galvanised steel, were made by James Godbold of Egton, near Whitby who installed them in August 2007 and we must say that we are delighted with the finished product. The Borough Council rebuilt the pillars and all that remains to do is paint the gates. A galvanised finish needs to weather to improve paint adhesion so we are assembling a team of volunteers to get started as soon the weather is favourable. The Valley Road Gates project fits perfectly with the Civic Society aims of making Scarborough a better place to live, work and visit and instilling civic pride and we were delighted that the YGT was able to offer financial support for such a worthwhile project. We hope that our efforts will encourage more regeneration work within the Valley & South Cliff Gardens, there is now an active friends group working hard with the Borough Council to achieve this goal.

Val Hepworth in front of the new gates on Valley Drive

Peter Cooper

Scarborough & District Civic Society

Visit to Londesborough 1 April 2006

Our visit, courtesy of Mrs Ashwin, to Londesborough last April gave us the chance to see one of the 'lost' landscapes of East Yorkshire. It is important, historically, as one of the earliest 18th century natural landscapes in the North, created by Lord Burlington. While little remains of the original plants and the main pleasure gardens, the overall framework exists. Standing on the steps of what remains of the old house, looking to the lake and the hill opposite, it is still possible to see what Burlington and his head gardener, Thomas Knowlton, created nearly three centuries ago.

Kip and Knyff drawing of Londesborough c1699

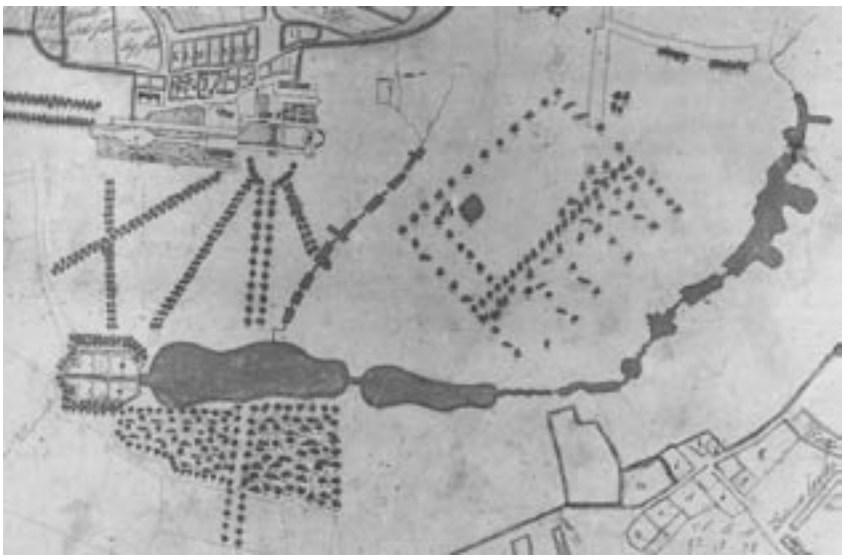
The first house and landscape on the Londesborough estate in East Yorkshire dates from the mediaeval period when the Fitzherbert family leased it from the Archbishop of York. The manor house, with an adjoining closed garden, was on the site of the current stable block with an extensive deer park.

The estate passed to the Clifford family in the late 14th century and in 1589, a new Hall was built to the southwest, giving a view to the natural valley below. Richard Boyle, 1st Earl of Burlington, following his marriage to Elizabeth Clifford, heiress to the estate, did further work on the Hall from 1676. He called in Robert Hooke at the same time to develop the gardens: the results of which can be seen in the drawing from c1699.

In 1704, Richard Boyle, the 3rd Earl of Burlington inherited this estate along with others, most notably Chiswick where he was to implement his revolutionary ideas on landscape design. Unlike Chiswick, there are no garden buildings, instead he utilised the natural beauty of the surrounding landscape, which must have reminded him of Italy. In 1726, he appointed Thomas Knowlton as his gardener and the latter was instrumental in turning Londesborough into a more natural landscape. Apart from a series of radiating avenues from the south front of the house, all the other areas including the lake were informal.

The figure below from 1739 shows the extent of the changes that Burlington and Knowlton made. The lakes constructed between 1728 and 1730 are unlike the formal pools and canals at Chiswick at the time. The formal plantation to the west has been turned into a pleasure garden with serpentine walks. Knowlton was a keen horticulturalist and in addition to growing many exotic species in his hothouses, he also experimented with hardy plants, such as the Turkey oaks he planted in the avenues (they were only introduced in 1735).

On Burlington's death in 1753, the estate passed to his son-in-law, the future 4th Duke of Devonshire. It was little visited, although the gardens were maintained. However the Hall was demolished in 1818 and park divided into two farms. In 1839, a shooting lodge was built next to the stable block that became Londesborough Park. After a brief period of ownership by George Hudson in the 1840's, the estate was sold to the Denison family who took the title of Lord Londesborough. They restored the pleasure gardens and the lakes that had silted up and probably replanted some of the trees in the old avenues.



Estate plan of Londesborough from 1739

Londesborough became the property of the Lupton Booth family in 1923 and then the Ashwins, the current owners, in 1935. Although the grounds are private, some attempts have been made to maintain the estate including replanting of some of the avenues and the maintenance of the lakes.

Louise Wickham

Visit to the Captain Cook Memorial Museum, Whitby, 15th August 2007

The Captain Cook Memorial Museum at Whitby is truly a gem of a museum. Its exhibits exude quality and distinction as does its décor which is light and refreshing though very much in keeping with what it would have been like in the mid-eighteenth century when it belonged to Captain John Walker, a Quaker ship-owner to whom James Cook served his seaman's apprenticeship. Cook slept and studied in the attic where last year's special exhibition 'Botanical Endeavours' was staged.

Display from exhibition of items lent by Penelope

We were honoured and delighted to be guided round the museums collections by its curator Dr. Sophie Forgan. Her inspiration to focus on Sir Joseph Banks (1743-1820) brought to light Banks's achievements both in the discovery of economic plants, which helped expand the Empire, and those which were to fashion British horticulture. In 1768 Banks sailed on Cook's first voyage on board the Endeavour as botanist and collector; fellowbotanist and apostle of Linnaeus, Dr. Daniel Solander, accompanied him. They returned with a wealth of exotic plants that needed a home and where better to place them than the Royal Gardens at Kew, owned by King George III to whom Banks was horticultural adviser. He persuaded the King to transform the gardens into the richest horticultural treasure chest in the world. This was achieved through plant exploration instigated by Banks. Indeed it was Banks who encouraged the monarch to send Francis Masson (1741-1805) to the Cape in 1772.

Masson sailed with Cook on board the Resolution as Kew's first collector; the result was explosive for Masson returned with huge numbers of hitherto undiscovered species including pelargoniums, heaths and exotic bulbs. These were to have a major impact on the nations gardens and glasshouses. As the art of hybridisation developed, horticultural shows such as the RHS (Banks was one of its founder members) were set up to display the new and captivating varieties adored by the gentry and grown by their gardeners in their massif hothouses. Today horticultural shows remain very much a part of our gardening heritage and it gave me great pleasure to display the President's badge of the Ancient Society of York Florists', beautifully enamelled with florists' flowers, which is currently in my possession. Founded in the same year as Cook's first voyage this horticultural Society is still in existence and holds four shows a year at Askham Bryan, York.

Banks's legacy to horticulture was eloquently displayed in one of the large showcase: I was privileged to lend a selection of garden memorabilia including early ceramic plant labels, several Georgian copper watering cans and certain books on floriculture. In the opposite show case, to set apart Banks's immense contribution to economic botany, were items on loan from Kew such breadfruit, tapa cloth and ropes and twines made from New Zealand Flax, *Phormium tenax*. Personal items included Banks's own travelling chair and his walking stick made of sugar cane, which, I confess, left me with a chilling closeness to the great man himself.

Another showcase displayed some fine examples of Banks's herbarium specimens on loan from the Natural History Museum. Sophie told me of her delight while unpacking them for they had been wrapped in old printed sheets of Milton's Paradise Lost! What a treat to see Masson's fabulous work on stapeliads, *Stapeliae Novae*, with its exquisite colour plates. Masson had a particular predilection for these succulents with their extraordinarily diverse range of flower shapes exclusively designed for fly pollination. He cultivated them in his garden at Cape Town and brought a few back to London.

Members also enjoyed the museum's permanent collections relating to the life and achievements of Captain Cook and those who sailed with him. In the first room we admired William Parry's important painting of Omai, Banks and Solander. Omai was the first Polynesian to travel to England (after the second voyage) where Banks looked him after. I particularly liked the hauntingly beautiful sketch of the Resolution, done on the spot in choppy Antarctic waters, a recent and rare acquisition.

Time was also spent in the delightful museum garden once the yard and slipway leading to the harbour side from which the ships were serviced. Anne Dennier, a volunteer of the museum and also a Trust member, beautifully tends it. I greatly enjoyed working with Anne in late spring when we filled up large pots with plants germane to the exhibition. These included Pelargonium species introduced by Masson as well as some striking Antipodean shrubs such as the Australian bottle brush provided by Mike Heagney, also a trust member, whose beautiful garden at Guisborough is home to many exotics from that part of the world.

During my visits to the Museum last summer I was impressed by the many people it attracted from all over the world including student groups as

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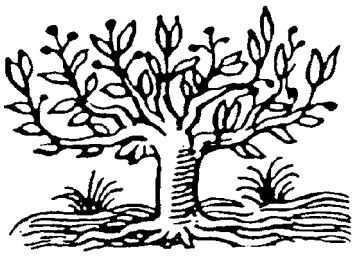

Note from the Editor

I hope that you like this partial colour version of the Newsletter. As colour is so important in gardens, we felt it was a shame that our pictures were not doing justice in showing them at their best. We would therefore welcome your comments (good and bad!), so that the Council can make a decision as to whether it is worth the extra expense of having colour pages.

I would also like to encourage any budding authors out there to send me articles for the next Newsletter, due in July, by the end of June. Any subject relating to gardens is welcomed but please no more than 2000 words! Any pictures would be greatly appreciated.

Finally I would like to thank all those who have contributed to this one and especially to Jenni Howard for her help on proof-reading.

Louise Wickham

STOP PRESS...forthcoming events

Spring Programme 2008

13 February 10.30 am
Trees in Winter, Thorp Perrow Aboretum, Bedale
A guided tour with the curator of one of the finest collections of trees and shrubs in the country

Tuesday 4 March 7.30 pm
Yorkshire Gardens Trust and Yorkshire Philosophical Society Annual Joint Lecture at the Tempest Anderson Hall, York
Winter Lecture Theme for 2007-8 'Controversy and Risk
'Rivalry and Restoration: The Wentworths of South Yorkshire' Lecture by Dr Patrick Eyres (Wentworth Castle Heritage Trust)

Saturday 15 March 10.30 am
AGM 2008 Cannon Hall, Cawthorne, Barnsley.

Saturday 12 April 1.30 pm
Bramham A visit which focuses on the water supply to the water features in this early C18 garden and park with Dr Joseph Holden, of the University of Leeds School of Geography.

Thursday 17 April 2.00 pm
Low Askew, Cropton, Pickering. We are invited by our Chairman, Penelope Dawson-Brown and her husband, Martin, to their garden to enjoy the spring flowers, fritillaries and hellebores, and the wild daffodils along the river banks. Plus a visit to a secret cottage!

Thursday 15 May 9.30 am
Wentworth Castle, Regional Research and Recording Study Day
The Association of Gardens Trusts, together with the Yorkshire Gardens Trust, has organised a full day at Wentworth Castle with talks about the restoration and tours of the gardens. Please contact Kate Harwood, Association of Gardens Trusts, 78 Broadstone Road, Harpenden, Herts AL5 1RE. Tel: 01582 762432

Summer Events 2008

Thursday 22 May
Creskeld Hall, a beautiful Wharfedale garden near Otley.

Saturday 7 June
Joint day with Wakefield and North of England Tulip Society at Temple Newsam to include guided tours of house and gardens and lunch.

Tuesday 24 June
Midsummer Picnic to be held at Old Sleningford near Ripon.

Wednesday 6 August
A special visit to The Lakeland Horticultural Society Holehird Gardens, Windermere

Event Information: Penelope Dawson-Brown Tel: 01751 417251 or Ray Blyth Tel: 01765 689289
Booking Information: Alison Brayshaw, Hackfall Farm, Grewelthorpe, Ripon HG4 3DE Tel: 01765 658752

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well as young school children for whom the brave James Cook shines as a hero. The museum reopens in March when Dr. Forgan will stage a new exhibition. This will concentrate on Cook's last voyage and the inhospitable region of Kamchatka, northeast Russia; it will include newly acquired drawings by John Webber, artist on board the Resolution. Our special thanks to Dr. Forgan and her dedicated volunteers for this memorable and unique visit.

Penelope Dawson-Brown