YORKSHIRE GARDENS TRUST

NEWSLETTER

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At last the new Yorkshire Gardens Trust website has been launched!

Go to www.yorkshiregardenstrust.org.uk where you will see pages that everyone can see and special areas for members only. To access the latter, you just put in your surname and membership number.

Chairman's Letter – July 12th 2008

Despite the inclement weather this summer has been an exceptionally good one for the Yorkshire Gardens Trust. In May I attended the Parks and Gardens UK Launch at the magnificent Kensington Roof Gardens in London. It made me aware of the work that can be achieved by individual Gardens Trusts when we all pull together under the auspices of the AGT. I also felt extremely proud of those YGT council members who have been involved with the project, which is based at the King's Manor, University of York.

Events have been well supported this year and I think we (Ray Blyth, Alison Brayshaw and myself) have offered members a wide range of excellent days out. Martin and I were delighted at the amount of people who came to support us when we opened the gardens at Low Askew for the Trust. They numbered over ninety and despite the weather we all had a jolly time. I am extremely grateful to all the other garden owners who have welcomed us to their gardens, often serving us tea from their best china cups in the privacy of their homes. This entails a lot of work on their part but it is enormously appreciated by our members. Money raised from these events is channelled into our many good causes such as Education in Schools directed by Nicola Harrison and our Small Grants Scheme.

The summer picnic at Old Sleningford gave me the opportunity to thank both generations of the Ramsden family for their continued support to the YGT. It is a few years ago now since James and Juliet left Old Sleningford and moved to Ripon so that their son Tom and his wife Jane could take on the family home. It made me consider how, inevitably, a garden must evolve with new owners even when they are one's own children. Tom, in his preamble talk before we explored the gardens, told us that in reality the work they had done since their arrival had been simply a matter of 'editing' the creative work of his parents; a delightful remark I thought and yet new things had taken place such as the creation of an intimate courtyard where we all took coffee. But this had been sympathetically designed to compliment what was initially there.

In the introduction to his book *The Genius of Gardening,* Christopher Thacker quotes from an article published in *The World* on 12 April 1753 in which its author talks about the unique practice of the British and Irish to keep changing their gardens: 'They are usually new - created once in twenty or thirty years, and no traces left of their former condition. Nor is this to be wondered at…..Were any man of taste not to lay out his ground in the style which prevailed less than half century ago, it would occasion as much astonishment and laughter as if a modern beau should appear in the drawing-room in red stockings'. Thacker agrees but embellishes the author's observations by adding that 'fashion or no fashion, the gardens themselves grow, flourish, spread, encroach, recede, collapse and grow again, always different from before. Thus the inborn 'genius of gardening' changes them, and they themselves will not stand still'.

I am excited by the amount of gardens that are being re-designed and restored in Yorkshire and it is our job as a Gardens Trust to embrace their excellence and record their beauty and innovation for posterity. One such garden I recently visited was Mount St. John near Thirsk, which surely must rank as one of England's top new gardens. Gardens such as this involve a team of learned gardeners as well

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Chairman's Letter – July 12th 2008 continued

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as local craftsmen - stone masons, sculptors and joiners who flourish because they have been blessed with a fresh canvas on which to work.

YGT events are always happy occasions and I often feel I should write-up the anecdotes and chitchat I hear on such days. On a visit to Jackson's Wold Garden near Scarborough earlier this month where the roses were exceptionally gorgeous and fragrant, Joyce Hampshire turned to her husband John and said 'I think dear we should go home now as I feel totally intoxicated by the scent of the roses'. John replied with a wry smile 'Well, dear, it's a good job you are not driving'!

Our refugee day at Brunswick Organic Nursery was a wonderful occasion too where we got to know some lovely people. The majority had been granted asylum and were living in Leeds. However there was one young Afghani woman who was likely to be sent back to her country. Tears welled up in her eyes as she hugged us all goodbye with a sense of foreboding. She and her children (her husband had been killed in Helman Province) had grown to love this country and the freedom it gave her. These days, organised by Susan Kellerman, are enormously beneficial to both our guests and us. They learn about our culture and we learn about theirs and all the things they miss such as their native plants and wildlife and the herbs and spices that they use in cooking.

On the 27th and 28th of June the YGT took part in Malton's Conservation Fair held at York House, a recently restored 17th century town house. On the first day Val Hepworth and I manned the stand where we had put up a series of display boards promoting the Trust. Jenni Howard and Ray Blyth took over on the second. It was a most successful event, which included a talk and conducted walk of the historic garden site behind the house by Peter Goodchild our first Chairman.

As ever I cannot praise enough all the hard work of my fellow Council members and indeed all our members whose great camaraderie is always present at events and gatherings. We have become a contented band of like-minded people who care passionately about our great British heritage with its magnificent designed landscape and the abundance of glorious gardens that lie within it. Happy days!

Penelope Dawson-Brown

Thorp Perrow – 13 February 2008

It was one of those amazingly bright winter sunny mornings with clear blue sky when members of the Yorkshire Gardens Trust descended on the Arboretum at Thorp Perrow. Terry Exley, the curator of the Arboretum since 1997, was to be our guide. Coffee and biscuits were laid on for us in the tearoom (new since our last visit in 1997).

Brief History of Thorp Perrow

But first for a little background and history. Trees have been important at Thorp Perrow for many years and there is a section of the Arboretum called Spring Wood. There is evidence that this has been woodland since the medieval period (the name Spring Wood usually refers to an area that has been under coppice management which was common in the C16th). However, it was from 1699 when John Milbanke bought the property that is of most interest to us. Part of the Arboretum today encompasses the Milbank Pinetum. Lady Augusta Milbank planted this in the 1840s and 1850s. Many of the species were raised from seed gathered from many parts of the world and which were introduced into England at this time. Thorp Perrow stayed in the Milbank family until the death of Sir Frederick Accolm Milbank in 1898.

His executors sold it to Mr H C Allfrey in 1902. He in turn sold it to William Cresswell Gray (1867 - 1924) in 1904 when it was referred to as *'a fine house overlooking two lakes and surrounded by a large park and plantations'*. William Cresswell Gray was the second son of Sir William Gray from whom he inherited a shipbuilding empire.

In 1927 William Ropner, grandfather of Sir John Ropner, the current owner, bought Thorp Perrow. William's father, Sir Robert Ropner, had come over from Germany in 1857 and founded a fleet of merchant ships. It was Sir Leonard Ropner, Sir John's father, who had asked his father for a piece of land at Thorp Perrow; he was given 60 acres in 1927 and began planting. Sir Leonard continued planting until his death in 1977. He had planted over 2000 different types of tree from all over the world. Together with some of the estate workers they had looked after the arboretum, which sadly in later years became too much for him.

After his death in 1977 Sir John, his son, and family raised a gazebo in the arboretum to Sir Leonard, with the wording "*If you seek his memorial look around you*". Similar to the translation (Latin) of the epitaph to Sir Christopher Wren in St Paul's Cathedral. John Beach became the first curator and he went through the arboretum with Alan Mitchell (dendrologist) who insisted that the collection must be preserved. Some of the trees had not survived but each year more are planted.

The Arboretum currently holds five National Plant Collections. They are: Juglans (walnut), Fraxinus (some ash), Tilia (lime), Laburnum and Cotinus.

Our visit to the Arboretum

Terry Exley, the curator, met us after our coffee in the Arboretum. He explained that it was divided into sections A-Z. We were, then, standing in

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section Z. All trees were tagged which had the section letter followed by a number, this makes for easy identification when used with the catalogue, it also meant that the tags are not pinched by budding enthusiasts!

One of the first trees we were to study was a very rare specimen, *Abies kawakamii* (X213), which came from Formosa and had a purple cone. The rarest *Abies* they have is *Abies nebrodensis* (X243), planted in 1961, it comes from Sicily where it is an endangered species as there are only about 27 trees left there. Logging has caused the great loss. Behind this was a large *Araucaria araucana* (Monkey Puzzle) (X234), the origin being from Chile and Patagonia, and was planted in 1952. Terry then showed us a piece of Whitby jet – and told us the story of how during the Jurassic period a large part of Yorkshire had been covered by Monkey Puzzle trees – and how when they fell over and became compressed over the many, many years it became what is known as Whitby Jet. We also learnt that the male cones were long and thin and that the female where short and stout! We also learnt that the cone of the Abies (fir) is usually borne on the upper side of branchlets whereas the Picea (spruces) the cone is pendulous and usually falls intact.

Next we looked at *Pinus attenuata* (X240), the Knob Cone Pine from western North America. Here the cones grew in whirls around the branches where they may stay for 40 years. We then looked at some of the Champion Trees. There are 57 Champion Trees in the arboretum they are on The Tree Register of England and Ireland; the trees are measured and the biggest and best of their species are nominated as a Champion Tree. At Thorp Perrow there is a trail where the Champion Trees are identified by a peg in the ground with a green plaque with a trophy depicted on it. They are also numbered. The first we saw was Champion Tree (CT) No.7, (X164), *Laburnum anagyroides '*Quercifolium', the oak-leaf laburnum and it was the only one that Terry had seen. We then saw CT No.8, (X162), another laburnum, *Laburnocytisus '*Adamii*'*, the common name for this uncommon tree is Adam's Laburnum. It is a laburnum grafted onto a cytisus producing both the yellow flowers of the laburnum and the purple of the cytisus, and also as Terry said "a 'mucky, purpley mixture of both".

Terry then took us to the Acer glade, where there are cultivars of *Acer japonicum* and *Acer palmatum* (a must for autumn colour). Nearby were cedars. *Cedrus atlantica* Glauca Group (Y106) also *Cedrus atlantica* 'Glauca Pendula' (Y109) and the rare *Cedrus atlantica* 'Fastigiata' (Y110). Unfortunately, three or four other cedars in the centre of this area had been lost to honey fungus. In a six-week period they had turned yellow and were oozing sap. When Terry looked into the history of the area he found there had been an old ash tree stump – which was full of honey fungus – and subsequently all the trees around had died. We learnt that honey fungus was endemic in woodland and now when planting they use a fertilizer which is antagonistic to honey fungus.

Close-by was a single *xCupressocyparis leylandii '*Leighton Green' (the Leyland Cypress!) splendid as a tree. Planted in 1940 it is now enormous – and should not be planted, as it so often is, as a hedge! Another interesting tree was the *Magnolia officinalis var. biloba* (Y27), a very rare tree originally from China, so called because of its extra ordinary shaped leaf – evidentially the Chinese used it as an aphrodisiac.

The *Acer palmatum '*Ozakazuki' (T072-T081) avenue replaced an earlier elm avenue which was then planted with tulip trees, *Liriodendron tulipifera*, of which there are only two left near the main house (T048-T049). They had a serious rabbit problem when one winter they had removed the rabbit guards and they then had a very severe winter and the rabbits ate the bark. Another avenue was that of the Italian alders, *Alnus cordata* (T063-T069). They have lovely glossy leaves in the summer with the catkins, also they look wonderful in the autumn with the red of the Acers.

We then headed for Jenny's Walk (the 'walks' are named after Sir John's children), here we saw a wonderful beech, *Fagus sylvatica* (S177). Also in section S we saw another uncommon tree *Xanthocyparis nootkatensis '*Pendula' (S060)

Next was Carolyn's Walk where we saw different Pinus underplanted with Malus (crab apples) and Prunus. Two large pines had blown down here, leaving *Pinus sabineana* (V243), the Digger Pine, which are very rare. The cones are large and have edible seeds which the 'digger' Indians of North America used as a food source. We saw the Stone Pine, *Pinus pinea*, (T012) which had large cones. Other pines here were the rare Macedonia Pine, *Pinus peuce* (pronounced puke), (V250). Another rare pine was the *Pinus coulteri*, (V212) also known as the Big Cone Pine because the cones can weigh up to 2 kilograms! Next the fire climax tree – which needs extreme heat to release its seeds, again the cones come on the branches and hang there for up to 40 years. They are found in California and are known as *Pinus muricata* (V197) also known as the Bishop Pine. We saw the *Pinus wallichiana*, Bhutan Pine, with long thin cones.

We passed the *Pyrus serrulata* (V112), which was planted in 1941 and, originally from China. It is the only specimen of the tree known in Britain. It has a white flower. We then walked to along the Cherry Avenue which had various Prunus varities; at the end of which was The Bothy. Here we saw the Incense Cedar, *Calocedrus decurrens* (V030) that was planted in the late 1930s; the foliage is aromatic and the timber, being find-grained, is used for pencils. Here too, infront of The Bothy, was a *Garraya elliptica* with its lovely long tassel catkins, near-by was a white Mulberry, *Morus alba*, the leaves of which are the food of the silk worm.

We understood from Terry that the rougher areas of grass were mown about 4 times a year. The first cut being at the end of June because of the spring daffodils, bluebells followed by wild flowers. It is then cut again in August, September and finally in

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Thorp Perrow cont.

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November. Even though spring was still along way off, with our erratic climate as well as the wonderful drifts of snowdrops some of the early daffodils were beginning to flower.

Again we came across another uncommon tree, this time the evergreen Algerian Oak, *Quercus canariensis* (N032). From here we headed down the Lime Avenue, which contains many different varieties of lime, including *Tilia x europaea* 'Pallida' known as the Kaiser Linden because it is found growing in 'Unter der Linden' in Berlin. We then crushed the needles of *Abies grandis* (M103) and enjoyed the smell of oranges given off, before coming across a huge sculpture – of a colossal stone acorn. Lady Ropner had commissioned it for Sir John's 70th birthday and had it placed in the arboretum. It was spectacular in a fitting sort of way.

The Birch Avenue beckoned, where we also looked at some yew, including various species of *Taxus baccata* and the Pacific Yew, *Taxus brevifolia* (B025), another rare tree, which the North American natives used to heal sores on their skin. I think most of us know that Taxus (yew) has plant alkaloids within the bark that are known to us as 'Taxol', which is used in the treatment of cancer.

The final tree of great interest was another yew, which when knocked gave off a huge plume of powdery smoke, but sadly I did not get the name of it but will try and find out! Finally, we walked along the side of the lake and then the stream ending up back at the Tea Room. Penny Dawson-Brown kindly thanked Terry for his expert guidance before we all parted for lunch, having picnics or lunch in the Tea Room or off to the pub, before we met up again outside Snape Castle for the afternoon to visit the chapel.

The Chapel, Snape Castle

Richard Turner a member of the Snape Historical Society told us a short history of the Chapel, of which there is very little published. He began by telling us that a 'Combine' had bought the village of Snape including Thorp Perrow when it came up for sale early in the C20th century. The tenant farmers of the village bought their own farms and then re-sold Thorp Perrow and the remainder of the estate. This is when the Ropner's acquired Thorp Perrow in 1927. In the 1930s, when times were hard, some of the land and farms were sold back into the estate. Up until 2001 half of the Castle, and the working Castle Farm, had been owned with Thorp Perrow. In 2001 the owners of the other half of the Castle then bought the remaining half bringing the whole back into one ownership.

Terry Exley showing us the *Pinus pinea* cone (Stone Pine)

The Castle was built in 1214. Snape means 'boggy pasture', therefore the foundations are upon upright oak beams with further beams laid across the top.

John Neville, the 3rd Lord Latimer of Snape was the 2nd husband of Katherine Parr, for 10 years prior to his death in 1542. During this time Katherine spent some time at Snape Castle. She was then to become the 6th (and last) wife of Henry VIII who died in 1547. In 1577 through death and marriage the estates were joined to the Cecil estates. In the late C17th the chapel ceiling was replaced with a plaster ceiling to accommodate a fresco to be painted by the Italian artist, Antonio Verrio (who died in 1707). It is now unrecognisable and only by looking up at it for some time can one envisage where a figure may have been. Sadly, at the end of the C18th the Chapel had fallen into disrepair and was used to store grain and rapeseed. Richard Turner told us how the Cecils used the Castle as a retreat from London but as two died there, they decided they had died from the plague – possibly a corrupt water supply. From 1720 a caretaker lived in one wing and the remainder of the Castle fell into disrepair and fell down. In 1725 the ceiling is recorded as having badly degraded.

In 1798 the Milbanks of near-by Thorp Perrow bought Snape and amalgamated the two estates.
At some time prior to 1802 William Milbank used some of the oak from the ruins of the castle to provide panelling around the chapel. In 1836 Mark Milbank repaired the floor and introduced moveable pews so it would be the domestic chapel of Thorp Perrow and was available to the estate workers; before it had only been available to the inhabitants of the Castle.

Further restoration took place after the death of his wife Lady Henrietta Augusta Milbank (Augusta being responsible for the Milbank Pinetum at Thorp Perrow). There is a memorial to this restoration work undertaken by Mark Milbank. There is also a decorative stained glass window featuring a recurring pattern of MM and HM (Mark Milbank and Henrietta Milbank). We learnt of the 5 panels of the carved rherodos, which were acquired by the Milbank family when

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important carving from continental churches were sold off by Charles Scarisbrick of Scaribrick Hall, Southport. A joiner from York made frames for these panels and also made the pulpit. The Chapel is found on an upper floor of the south side of the remaining wing of the Castle. It is now approached from outside at ground level up a flight of interior steps, although originally it would have had an entrance integral to the castle.

The Castle archives are at the North Yorkshire County Records Office in Northallerton and that it is English Heritage Grade I registered. The Chapel was sold off in 1926 to the Church of England. Once again Penny Dawson-Brown thanked Richard Turner on behalf of us all.

As we left the Chapel by a newly made pathway created because of the development of some of the Castle Farm buildings into residential dwellings, some of us could not resist a quick peek into the still undeveloped Dovecote. Evidently the Dovecote had been sold but because of all the restrictions on its development, including keeping the boxes and covering them with Perspex, and the cost incurred, it is for sale again. We then drove out of Snape down the lovely Lime Avenue after another excellent visit where we learnt much and enjoyed the company of fellow YGT members, and then sadly, back to reality!

I would like to take this opportunity of thanking Penny Dawson-Brown, Ray Blyth and Alison Brayshaw for all their hard work that goes into arranging these visits – it is no small feat, we do all appreciate it – thank you from us all.

Helen Lazenby

Ella Simpson 1935 – 2008

Ella Simpson who died peacefully on 12th May 2008 aged 73, was a most remarkable plantswoman and early member of the Yorkshire Gardens Trust.

She was born in Wrelton, near Pickering where she attended Lady Lumley's Grammer School. Gifted academically she became its first pupil to be sent up to Oxford and went on to teach history at Doncaster, Peterborough and finally Alston in Cumbria where she retired in 1991 as deputy head of the school and where she enjoyed the lovely wild flowers of this remote area.

Ella was loved and revered by all who knew her, especially in Pickering where she lived. She was a great supporter of the Pickering Horticultural Society visiting the shows and chatting to everyone in her special endearing way. In October 1991, she co-founded the Pickering Horticultural Society Hardy Plant Group with her great friend Jean Feaster (YGT member) and became its Chairman. This popular group with a membership of 150, flourished because of Ella's passion to promote rare and interesting hardy plants, which could be successfully grown in all types of gardens and this, will be her legacy.

She was discerning in her choice of speakers, only inviting those from the gardening cognoscente such as Roy Lancaster and Carol Klein. The latter, who stayed in her house, would most certainly have admired Ella's enormous Aeoniums and her diverse collection of Pelargoniums of which she was so very fond. Hardy Plant Group lectures were most recently held at the Pickering Memorial Hall and were always delivered to a packed audience. Ella was a renowned authority on plant identification, not only garden plants but wild flowers and houseplants too. Indeed, she belonged to nineteen horticultural societies most of whom she acquired seed from. Some years she would receive as many as 150 packets, which she diligently sowed in her beloved greenhouse.

Her green fingers ensured that most germinated and consequently a multitude of seedlings would demand her undivided attention! Though she did not open her own garden she loved to help those who did such as Jean and Dick Feaster, whose beautiful garden Fernwood at Cropton has attracted hundreds of visitors on charity open days. Ella would always be there manning the plant stall. She grew many of the plants and one year over £700 was raised.

Jean and Ella had been friends since childhood and later on developed a mutual love of gardening and unusual plants. Together, they visited many gardens and nurseries all over the country always searching for unusual garden plants. It is befitting that Jean, who until now has been secretary of the Hardy Plants Group is to succeed Ella as its Chairman.

Ella's interest in garden history was profound yet she guarded her knowledge modestly. She collected early nursery catalogues and gardening books borne out of a nostalgia for the old fashioned methods of gardening and garden tools.

I remember her vivid description of the interior of the original horticultural premises of R.V. Roger at the top end of Pickering High Street. She told me it was stuffed with garden memorabilia such as the early seed draws which, I have recently learnt from Anthony Roger, were purchased by his father Royston Valentine, from the venerable seed merchants Wright and Harris of York when they closed down. Indeed Anthony can remember travelling to York as a boy with his father to collect them.

Ella was an active member of the YGT and spent a great deal of time researching the early nurseries of Yorkshire. Over the years we all came to admire Ella's special qualities. We shall miss her dearly.

Penelope Dawson-Brown

Water Works at Bramham – 12 April 2008

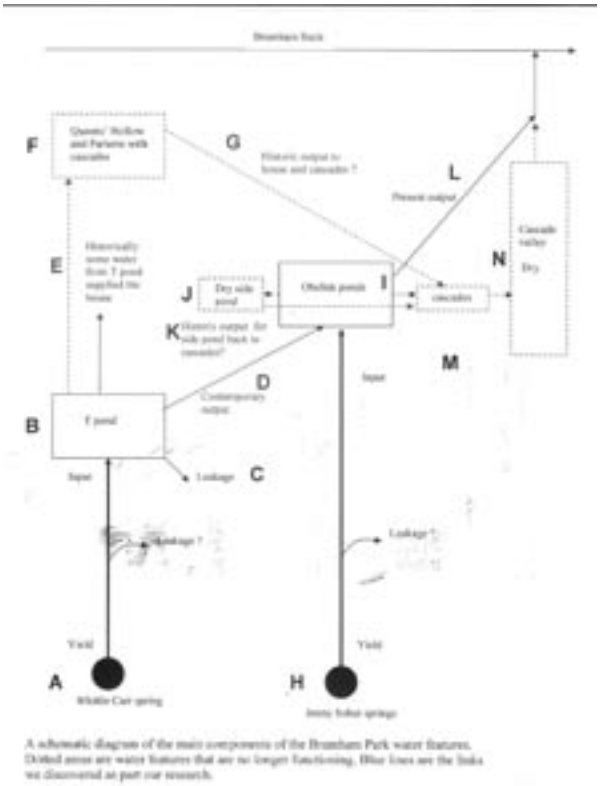
Circumstances fortunately conspired to provide a fascinating insight into an historic landscape, beautiful scenery, and a good walk in warm sunshine, on our visit to Bramham Park, near Wetherby in April. We were able to follow in the footsteps of Dr Joseph Holden from the Geography Department, University of Leeds, as he explained how he and his team traced the series of connecting water features to their sources - water features most of which now are hidden from view, or are isolated with no obvious connections. The present owner Mr. Nicholas Lane-Fox, who was able to give us details as to the present situation, accompanied us.

As part of the overall Conservation Land Management Report (2000), it was recommended that 'water' was examined; how much remains, how much water flowed, now or previously, how are the systems connected, and the viability of their possible restoration, complete or partially. The original positions of the gravity-fed systems, built between 1690 and 1730, could not be successfully archived due to a fire in 1828, which destroyed all records. The layout is reasonably preserved however, mainly due to the house being destroyed in the fire and being unoccupied for a further eighty years.

By following the schematic diagram it is possible to follow in our footsteps. We first walked up behind the formal terrace immediately behind the present house, to view the grassy slope rising still further. This is where geophysics and resistivity surveys revealed a 30-step cascade once flowed (M). The water would have come tumbling dramatically over the steps down, centrally to the house facade, emerging to fall into a basin in the side of the formal terrace.

Following the suggested flow course in reverse, we reached Queens Hollow (F), where geophysical surveys illustrated the connections that once existed as part of the water supply to feed the cascade, and providing an ornamental pond also. Without the sensitive archaeological surveying all that would be seen is a grassy depression. Modern methods did not reveal all courses, as no evidence could be found for how water leaves to the lower cascade (G).

We then visited the T Pond (B) with the house sinking down out of sight. This later addition has been leaking and has had to be repaired. The source for this pond comes from Whittle Carr Spring (A), which follows the contoured landscape, as does the Ha-ha, giving views over the valley beyond. The contemporary output (D) was piped in the 1960s, unlike the historic method of open channels or ditches allowing water to flow. These and some remaining channels, are susceptible to blockages, but were engineered precisely to give a 'natural' flow rate. Dr Joseph Holden showed us the 21st century method of establishing flow rate and water levels, using an accurate, efficient and pocket-sized device strategically placed to record automatically.



A schematic diagram of the main components of the Bramham Park water features. Dotted areas are water features that are no longer functioning. Blue lines are the links we discovered as part our research.

We then descended to the Obelisk Pond (I). Here the cascade built in 1849 has gone; this is thought to give some credence to the possibility that there was insufficient water to allow the feature to work. The Obelisk Pond is half moon shaped, fed by Jenny Sober Springs (H) and the overflow from T Pond (B). The Springs are the main sources for the water features, but it must be remembered, Dr Holden pointed out, that the broader landscape also feeds water into the ponds. This must have been supplemented with further catchment ponds (including J) and respective sluices, not all yet identified.

The quantity and quality of water entering the estate is influenced not only by the 600mm per annum rainfall (described as a semi-arid area!) but numerous external factors, many of which are unpredictable and uncontrollable. Climate change included!

From the Obelisk Pond we emerged into an opening in a wooded area. The Cascade Valley was gushing with clean water (courtesy of the rainfall the previous week) into and ornamental stone basin against a formal retaining terraced wall. The subsequent and now hidden cascade was 'revealed' in 1991 by a Yorkshire Archaeological Trust investigation, suggesting connections beyond to further pools in the woods. The water leaves the Cascade Valley to join Bramham Beck. As you follow the Valley down and up the steep far side, and look back, you can imagine as you catch your breath, the investment of time, labour, money, persistence involved; and the ever optimistic approach that these water engineering exploits would result in an amazing spectacle.

For the more intrepid of us the journey continued (off the diagram) over an open field towards a copse, actually following an old Roman track, to another spring. This was made even the more picturesque by

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emerging from a somewhat derelict, moss-covered 'grotto', once visited on horseback. The spring trickled and meandered through the wood. A delightful discovery.

It was at this point you realise the need for a cup of tea, and possibly a piece of cake, back at the Old Kitchen. Here you can reflect on the fact that had Robert Benson (born 1675) not gone on his Grand Tour (1693-4), we would not now be intrigued by his Italianate vision for Bramham Park water features. Tim Richardson in his book 'The Arcadian Friends', describes Bramham Park as standing out for 'its attractive compactness and judicious scale', although I'm not sure my legs would agree. However the 'first-hand experience of Italy, second-hand experience of Germany, and third-hand experience of architectural treatises' (Richardson), is evident in the relics that remain…the French style allées and rides, the Italianate cascades, and the Germanic geometry and engineering.

Cascade Valley Basin at Bramham

Whether we see a restoration, in part or entire, in the style of Benson or his successors, it is like water itself, influenced by numerous circumstances. Let us hope that this once imaginative, dynamic and delightful water system flows forward and the restoration vision does not dry up.

Jenni Howard

Low Askew in Spring

Spring this year had a cold and wintry flavour. The morning of April 17th was lovely but by the time some 100 members gathered at Low Askew the promised rain was on the way and the temperature fell in sympathy. Nevertheless we were able to make the most of the spring display in Penelope and Martin Dawson-Brown's immaculately tended garden set in the valley below Cropton.

The garden runs down from the house to a stream which doubles as a ha-ha so that the fields and hill-top woods on the other side seem to enclose it. In front of the Georgian house the layout is formal with lawns either side of a path lined with old forms of bearded irises and variegated hollies trimmed as pyramids. Well-stocked pots add colour and interest around the house. To the right, in the shelter of the house and barn walls, a difficult slope has evolved into a scree garden. To the left, shrubs separate the garden from an orchard. Steps and paths lead down to lawns; past beds and borders set among trees, both evergreen and deciduous. Many are mature and they include fine oaks, appropriately enough as 'askew' means that oaks traditionally grew here. You find new treasures and viewpoints as you explore. Finally you come to the stream which, at this point, runs between stone walls, topped with a border of pimpenifolia roses and hardy geraniums which were leaving up nicely. A bridge takes you into a field where a path follows the stream, its banks lined at this time of the year with the wild daffodils so characteristic of these dales.

The garden is designed to be interesting throughout the year so, as well as a lovely display of garden daffodils on one hillock and a splendid group of snakeshead fritillaries on another, there were many spring flowers and shrubs to admire, fine hellebores about to show off their wares and many other plants waiting their moment of glory. The rain finally drove everyone in for tea, with welcome scones and cakes, to warm us up. Penelope took the opportunity to tell us about the development of the garden over the past 26 years. All the hard landscaping, including the walls keeping the stream under control had been done by Martin. The orchard had been created on a piece of waste ground and now boasted a collection of fruiting trees including varieties of quince, medlars, apples, cherries, some stone fruit and rowans. The 'bones' of the garden had not changed but planting inevitably does over the years. Recently roses and lavender beside the house had reached the end of their useful life and had been replaced with the irises and hollies. A big conifer in a bed close to the centre of the garden had grown too large and dominant and had been taken out. New shrubs had been planted in the winter with a *Caragana arborescens 'Lorbergii'* as the central attraction. Penelope is now wondering whether this dramatic alteration might trigger other changes!

Irises flanking the central stone path at Low Askew

The visit was intended to include a walk across the valley to the cottage where the Scoresbys, father and son famous for their arctic adventures, were born. We were warned that the paths were extremely muddy and it would be a longer expedition than had been expected because it would be impossible to wade the stream as a short cut. Only the hardiest and best shod among the group were tempted but they did enjoy the expedition.

Anne Dennier

Restoration and recreation – Bishop's Palace Gardens

Much of the value and meaning of a place may well be historic, in the broadest sense; but inevitably the site would have acquired qualities and interest over the whole of its existence, often by chance. It has been said that conservation is about negotiating the transition from past to future in such a way as to secure the transfer of maximum significance. And, although this was written primarily with nature conservation in mind, I believe that it is reasonably valid for most aspects of conservation.

The significance of a site could perhaps be defined as: distinctiveness; importance; unique qualities; comparative value; and special merit. But significance is not confined to objects and designs, or related entirely to history in the accepted sense: among other things, significance in relation to a place can also be aesthetic, social, educational, recreational, cultural, architectural, horticultural, biological and environmental and it is likely in gardens to involve processes of development, production and decay, systems (of upkeep and renewal), and skills vital to the place. Above all, significance should be seen to embrace less tangible qualities of character and ethos: also values, meaning and potential. These depend at least partly on subjective perceptions, which will vary locally and nationally according to people's familiarity with the place, their knowledge of the site and their own background. This does not make them any less valid.

Effective conservation relies on a full, effective assessment of these elements of significance, followed by an accurate analysis of their relative importance. It is neither possible nor desirable to preserve everything and it is essential to establish an order of precedence, especially when resources are limited and where major adaptation is envisaged.

Restoration vs conservation

Conservation is not the same as wholesale restoration and reconstruction. Indeed, in many respects comprehensive restoration can be the enemy of real conservation because the process of restoration and recreation in a garden may well destroy much of what exists. Before beginning major work on a site, we should be confident that the restoration is going to be of greater value (in other words more significant) than that which would be destroyed. More time spent on reflecting on this equation between gain and loss would probably result in the number and scope of substantial garden restorations being greatly reduced; that is no bad thing.

A similar approach should be adopted with proposals for addition, adaptation, development and change of use.

Statement of significance

A plan for the conservation of any garden or park should begin with a Statement of Significance based upon exhaustive survey, research and analysis, covering the whole spectrum of potential importance that is a full knowledge of the site.

Fundamental to our understanding of the place are accurate surveys of the physical features – land, buildings, ornament, water, paths, plants and so on – alongside a full account of the history of the place. Nowadays this procedure is routine and well perfected, although often insufficient attention is paid to the proper cataloguing and analysis of the plant collection, which can reveal a lot about the continuing development of the place. Furthermore it seems that scant consideration is often given to analysing the garden's vital processes, past and present.

The statement must at least reveal what makes the place unique, what the reasons are for its existence, why it was made in that place over that period, who made it and for whom. It should also comment on the perceived quality of its design and plant collection.

The next step should be to formulate the principles of conservation concerning the property. These arise from the Statement of Significance, stating clearly the fundamental policies and assumptions governing all important decisions – restoration, renewal, management, adaptation, access, interpretation, planting style, standard of upkeep, nature conservation and so on. Again these should be concise and arranged in order of precedence as far as possible.

The principles I have outlined so far could be easily adapted for any site and would be perfectly valid when contemplating the conservation of great houses, countryside, woodland, sites of nature conservation importance, relict sites of various kinds. The considerations vary in kind and emphasis but principles remain valid.

But we are concerned here primarily with gardens and landscape parks, which are complicated because they comprise a synthesis of different elements arising both from deliberate actions and chance events, often over an extended period of time.

The nature of gardens

A clear understanding of the elements that make up gardens is vital in dealing effectively with their conservation. Firstly: to a large degree gardens are controlled and determined by the environment in which they are made. Indeed site, surroundings, views, soil and climate may have been important, often overriding, reasons for selecting a place for the garden. Once the garden is sited, for whatever reason, we have a minimum of control over these elements and forces and we have to make the best of the situation. Our conservation response, in practice, can only be to modify and ameliorate – for example by shelter, irrigation, manuring, choice of plants – while exploiting any advantages to the full such as views, aspect, sun, shade, microclimate.

Secondly, all gardens have a more or less fixed structure of land form and buildings, including terraces, steps, walls and other structures; also water in the form of lakes, ponds, canals, streams and so on. Given sufficient resources and expertise we have the maximum degree of control

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over these elements of the garden: anything is possible. The conservation response to these, essentially 'dead' features is to preserve, repair, adapt and possibly to replace. Exactly similar principles apply in architectural conservation where the philosophy is firmly established.

Thirdly, the crucial component of gardens is the living things they contain – obviously plants (from trees, hedges and lawns to mosses, liverworts and lichens) but also birds and animals, not forgetting people, especially where the garden is open to mass visiting. These are the dynamic elements over which we have varying degrees of control, according to our abilities and resources. Plants have a life of their own and are subject to accident, disease and pest epidemic; also to climatic and even deliberate damage or loss. Both people and plants are unpredictable. Our conservation response to these components of the garden is crucial. They need to be consistently managed, manipulated, harnessed, directed, trained, controlled, developed and renewed. Plant growth, development, interaction and decay are what make gardens and gardening so fascinating to so many people.

Unlike architecture and town planning, garden making does not only consist of designing, constructing and arranging objects for use and effect, where it may be possible virtually to retain the status quo. As well as having an inanimate structure, gardens consist of a contrived ecosystem – a complex web of interacting systems and processes which take time to establish and which are sustained only by consistent and sensitive management.

Bishops' Gardens

Since the publication of *The conservation of the garden at Stourhead* [National Trust, Bath, 1978] long-term conservation/management plans have become essential means for the survival and renewal of large historic gardens and landscape parks. Techniques of research, survey, analysis and policy formulation are now highly developed. But techniques appropriate to smaller gardens have been neglected although, as a nation, much of our rich garden heritage exists in gardens of one to five acres.

Half way through formulating individual conservation/management plans for the gardens of 42 See Houses, a technique applicable to historically sensitive but comparatively small gardens has proved itself. These See Houses are the bases for Church of England diocesan bishops, serving as the centre for each bishop's ministry in the diocese and the nation; also as a family home. The commission, working with the York-based Landscape Agency, is for the Church Commissioners.

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Management plan for Bishop's Croft, Sheffield, September 2004

Restoration and recreation – Bishops' Palace Gardens cont.

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Few of these properties are the 'bishop's palaces' of old, having been rationalised in recent decades, but they must remain appropriate to the needs of the bishops' public and private lives. Some of them are ordinary houses, others occupy a part of an historic building either in or close to a cathedral precinct.

Focus on assets

While aiming to minimise expenditure and eliminate unnecessary liabilities, the Church Commissioners are committed to maintaining the Church's assets and providing a suitable home for each bishop and his family, together with appropriate offices and space for many meetings and diocesan events. The gardens vary enormously in size, scope and significance. Many are of historical and archaeological importance, some contain significant buildings and other artefacts and others have ancient trees or interesting horticultural qualities. In varying degrees they have almost all been cherished and enjoyed by bishops and public alike over many years, sometimes centuries, for their beauty and repose.

Assessing needs

Our job is to assess the qualities and significance of each site and consider the extent to which the garden meets the needs of the bishop and his family and accommodates the particular requirements of the diocese. Each plan is generated as a result of a single joint visit by my colleague, landscape-architect Jo Brehaut, and I, using a site plan, tree survey, and historical and archaeological assessment where appropriate, followed by several hours work by Jo.

Plans have to be financially prudent, so inessentials are discarded, in order to retain and enhance the gardens and their planting. As well as including a schedule of year-round upkeep, they aim to provide continuity and a sustainable plan for the garden's long-term future, including tree work and replacement. The approach is necessarily flexible and our main recommendations vary widely from site to site.

View back to the house from the pond, Bishop's Croft in Sheffield. Proposal to Implement an ongoing programme of pruning overgrown shrubs

Bridge over pond in Japanese themed corner. Proposal is to prune selected trees to allow more light to the pond

Orchard: proposed that path is removed to reduce maintenance and unify space

Emphasis on continuity

Bishops move on or retire and one important purpose of the plan is to provide continuity. This includes recommendations for staffing and for appropriate machinery and equipment. As well as safeguarding historic and horticultural qualities, we invariably aim to reduce inputs and where possible improve wildlife habitat.

So that the plan can be easily passed on from one bishop to the next and from one gardener to the next, we have devised a mainly visual format. This involves a densely annotated plan, initially on A1, on which all important elements of the proposals are set out – major changes, fellings, new plantings, levels and styles of upkeep and so on. These plans can be reduced to A4, while remaining legible and they can be laminated for durability – even in the potting shed!

Along with the plan we provide notes on priority and any major adjustments, and the report also incorporates a full photographic record in digital format, indicating the proposed changes.

Although devised specifically for the Church Commissioners, this technique has wider application where the conservation of historically sensitive, but comparatively small, gardens is concerned. *Visit: www.landscapeagency.co.uk*

John Sales – senior consultant advising on historic landscapes and planting, previously head of gardens at National Trust.

Editor's Note: this article first appeared in *Green Places* magazine, Nov 07. My thanks to Caroline Roy and other members of the Landscape Agency team for providing me with this and getting me the plan and photos of one of the sites in Yorkshire.

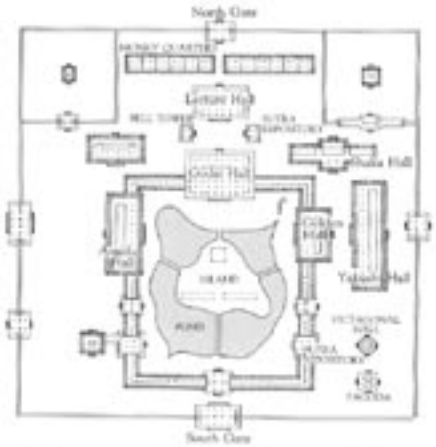
Japanese gardens – a personal view

Although I had visited Suzhou, the famous garden city in China, I struggled to understand Chinese and particularly Japanese gardens. Most of the pictures of them, I found later, did not do them justice with their subtle palette of greens. There was also the problem of a lack of flowers, something that we British gardeners crave to the extent that we fill our gardens with as many species as possible, gathered from the four corners of the globe. Japanese gardens by contrast only use native species and flowers are limited to almost one per season, starting with plum blossom, then cherry blossom, azaleas and irises. The only other colour being provided in the autumn by the fiery maples.

Then of course, there are the dry landscape gardens of raked gravel, large stones and occasionally moss. Are these really gardens? We often dismiss the trendy modern designers who cover a back garden with hard landscaping and sculptures with just the odd 'architectural' plant plonked in for good measure as not being a 'garden'. So why should we regard the Japanese dry landscape as being different. Well, for a start, it is about where they are placed. They are part of Zen Buddhist temples and they are meant to be viewed as a means of contemplation.

As with many garden styles we need to understand the historical context in which they were created and Japanese gardens are no exception. Indeed the style, down to the planting and pruning for many gardens has remained the same for hundreds of years. So today when you look at a 17th century garden in Japan, it is exactly the same as it was when it was created: very few other gardens in the world share this characteristic, as subsequent owners have wanted to put their 'mark' on a landscape.

The first recognisable gardens in Japan were those created at the first capital, Nara, in the early eighth century AD. Like the buildings they surrounded, they had a strong Chinese influence, as it was from here that the imperial court took its cultural references. This style was also adopted in the second capital, Kyoto, later in the century and continued for the next 300 years. Their main feature was a lake or large pond with an island, surrounded by buildings. Below is a diagram of a typical layout from around 1020:



Plan of Hōjō-ji and paradise garden, ca. 1020.

With the arrival of Zen Buddhism in the 13th century, this led to specific gardens within temple precincts solely for contemplation. The most well known of these, Ryoan-ji was created in the late fifteenth century and attributed to the designer, Saomi. Its layout of three groups of rocks set amongst raked gravel has been endlessly examined as to its meaning but somehow that does not seem the point. When I visited it was pouring with rain and the viewing platform was crowded. However it was incredibly evocative and all the people were sat in silence, just looking at the unchanging space before them.

Ryoan–ji dry garden with its enigmatic rocks

The other main garden style within the temples was the tea garden, complete with its tea-house. One of the most charming is at Toji-in that was founded in the 14th century and restored in the 20th. It typifies the exact pruning style, turning the bushes (including azaleas) into 'clouds'. An idea that has been championed by the leading designer, Jacques Wirtz and also seen in the 'Best in Show' garden at this year's Chelsea by Tom Stuart Smith.

Toji–in tea house and garden

With the establishment of the Tokugawa Shogunate in 1615, there was a period of relative peace and prosperity and the last great Japanese garden form, the stroll garden, was developed by members of the Imperial Household (including 'retired' Emperors) and leading aristocrats. Three of the most famous gardens built by royalty still exist today in Kyoto: Katsura, Sento Gosho and Shugakin. These are still cared for by the Imperial Household and tours of these are strictly regulated with a commentary in Japanese which can seem very long if you don't understand! Personally, I found them somewhat sterile and fixed in aspic.

Of greater interest in my view was Kenrokuen in Kanazawa, a town north-west of Kyoto on the China Sea coast. It is very large by Japanese standards, equivalent to a western urban park but once inside you forget you are in the middle of a relatively modern city. In particular the use of water was exquisite with large ponds, streams and

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Japanese gardens – a personal view cont.

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rills weaving their way throughout the garden. It looks very natural but controlled at the same time: something you only see in Japanese gardens.

Plan of Kenrokuen showing the use of water in the garden

I could not finish this without talking about how the Japanese view gardens. I was lucky to visit in the cherry blossom season and I was fascinated how young and old came out to view the beautiful blooms, in the case below in the Imperial Park in Kyoto.

White cherry blossom at the Imperial Park, Kyoto

If this has fired your interest in learning more about Japanese gardens old and new, then you should attend the following events organised by the Japanese Garden Society. The first takes place on **20th September**, at the Sheffield Botanical Gardens, starting with a buffet lunch. The Japanese designer, Haruko Seki, will give a presentation on both of her Chelsea gardens: "A Sense of Transience in Japanese Gardens" (Bronze Medal in "City Garden Category" in 2007) and "Garden in the Silver Moonlight" (Silver Gilt medal in 2008). She was a co-designer of the latter and it was the first contemporary Japanese garden to be featured within the show garden category.

The National Conference of the Japanese Garden Society is being held at the Royal Armouries in Leeds on the **4th October**. The Principal keynote speaker is Dr Stephen Turnbull who is a leading expert in many aspects of Japanese culture and is author of over 60 books including 'The Samurai and their gardens'. The afternoon speaker is Robert Ketchell who was the consultant for the "Japanese Gardens" in the recent TV series "Around The World in 80 Gardens". The charge for non-members will be approximately £25.00 including lunch.

If you are interested in either event please e-mail the Regional Co-ordinator for Yorkshire and Humber, Delia Coburn, on deliacoburn@hotmail.com

Louise Wickham

Joint lecture with the York Philosophical Society March 4th 2008

Dr Patrick Eyres - Conflict and Resolution

The Political and Family Rivalries between the (two) Wentworth(s) Woodhouse and Wentworth Castle

In order to understand the origins of this great family and dynastic quarrel, Patrick took us back to the 'Great Strafford', Thomas Wentworth the First Earl of Strafford, Minister to Charles I who was sacrificed by the King to Parliament on the eve of Civil War in the 1640's. The Great Stafford's son was childless and instead of willing the enormous lands of Wentworth Woodhouse to his nearest relative through the male line, another Thomas Wentworth, he chose to leave it to one of his nephews Thomas Watson, third son of his sister who had married into the Rockingham family.

The second Thomas, an ambitious soldier and diplomat was black affronted at this snub and it was this sense of injustice which fuelled the next 50 years of rivalry and political antagonism between the Wentworth and Watson families. It took the younger Thomas Wentworth, (whose only inheritance from the WW estate was the contentious title of Lord Raby) some 11 years to obtain enough cash to purchase an estate locally and it was his building and landscaping programme for the estate which sparked off the ensuing competition.

All this was encapsulated into a set of three slides Patrick used to start the

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lecture off and we were then treated to a wonderful set of split screen images, contrasting not only the two estates and their landscape design, but also many before and after views of estate buildings, following recent restoration work on both sites.

Patrick showed how these South Yorkshire landscapes were designed with political iconography in mind and how the ever changing levels of political fortune between the two families Tory and Whig respectively, influenced the nature and the extent of the work on their estates. These family's political allegiances within Britain if not Europe were carefully set out for the initiated contemporary visitor to enjoy and Yorkshire is still infinitely the richer because of them.

Thomas Wentworth's desire for the restoration of his ancestor's honors thrust him into the arms of the Tory party, and he successfully petitioned for the restoration of both the title of Lord Strafford and for the Order of the Garter from Queen Anne government. However once the Hanoverians succeeded to the British throne he was consigned to the political wilderness and it was from then that evidence of his alignment with the Jacobite cause can be identified. This was a much more dangerous affiliation, and Patrick went on to show just how subtle these treasonable allusions had to be and how greatly such a reading of Thomas' work aids our current enjoyment of the rivalry between the two estates. Most British Jacobite families removed evidence of their allegiance after the Battle of Culloden in 1745, but fortunately for posterity, Wentworth Castle's house and landscape are left with many clues, not only in the house but also within the estate's archives, some of which were bought for the nation as recently as 1980.

Patrick contrasted Thomas' work with that of his younger cousin Lord Malton - son of Thomas Watson - whose avid support for the Hanoverians secured him political favours early on in his career and showed us how the differing Whig and Tory iconography of the two sites remains to this day.

Both Thomas Wentworth and the Marquis of Rockingham (as Lord Malton became), were politicians on the national stage, the former under Queen Anne and the latter under George II and III. Both men employed the latest architects and designers, and were so concerned with the iconography of their estates that they specified the exact wording to be carved on their follies. Patrick was able to show how Thomas' Obelisk was a carefully coded message for the Stuart cause, whilst the Marquis of Rockingham's monuments proclaimed not only his early support for the Hanoverian cause, but also of his peacemaking efforts to avert the civil war with America and his conclusion of the peace treaty ten years later once the opposition government had lost it.

The lecture confounded some contemporary assumptions along the way, as for instance the erection of monuments to women, both surprisingly perhaps, on the Tory and Jacobite landscape at Wentworth Castle. The new Lord Strafford put up an obelisk to Queen Anne with a very cryptic inscription to 'her successor' and also an obelisk to the pioneering medical advancements of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. The latter was responsible for bringing smallpox inoculation to Britain from Turkey, cutting fatalities from the disease drastically and astonishingly drawing great resentment from most of the medical practitioners of the day on her head. The Whig on the other hand, now the Marquis of Rockingham, dedicated at least two of his follies to senior members of the armed forces who had fallen from favour with the government of the day, a different Whig faction who the Marquis felt had betrayed the ideals of freedom from tyranny and arbitrary government by the monarch that their party had always stood for.

Jane Furse

Visit to Brunswick Nursery and Archbishop's Palace walled gardens

Bishopthorpe, 13 May 2008
Readers may know of the allotment project for refugees pioneered in Liverpool by psychotherapist Margrit Ruegg. This horticultural therapy for refugees and asylum seekers, some severely traumatised by their experiences, sought to improve both their physical and mental health, and eventually inspired a film, *Grow Your Own* (highly recommended). Now the Refugee Council in Leeds has embarked on a similar allotment project, and work has begun on clearing a very overgrown site in the south of the city.

Faced with a long-neglected plot, and having to deal with a different climate and growing conditions, it will take time, dedication and perseverance before the refugees see positive results. It seemed appropriate that the YGT should give them some early encouragement, so we organised a visit to Brunswick Organic Nursery and the walled gardens (leased from the Palace), in Bishopthorpe, York. Despite difference in scale, there are similarities between the projects/enterprises: the two walled gardens were, when first leased from the Palace, derelict, and smothered in brambles and weeds. Many of the workers in the nursery and walled gardens have learning difficulties, and so gardening, with its commitment, responsibilities and rewards, brings them physical and mental benefits. And the principles of planting, mulching, composting, and protection from predators and the elements, are the same for a commercial concern and an allotment. (Indeed, there was much discussion of the dictum: cast not a clout till May is out, and some of us were very grateful for having received prior warning of a frost the following weekend!)

Members of the nursery staff showed us round; and members of the YGT were on hand to offer further explanation and practical advice to Etah and Rhoda from Zimbabwe, Ronald from Uganda, Modi from Cameroon, Nazanin from Afghanistan, and Nat and Mohammed from Iran. Some are seeking asylum here, others have been granted leave to remain, and are now volunteers at the Refugee

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Brunswick Nursery and Archbishop's Palace walled gardens cont.

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Council. They recognised many of the plants they saw - it is generally not appreciated that although refugees may now live in the inner city, often in flats, they once had gardens of their own.

We all found a lot to talk about: plants and gardening, of course, and inevitably, the weather; and arising from the story of the walled gardens, the history of the Church of England, and the question of how the current Archbishop of York, himself originally from Uganda, fits into the Church hierarchy - a subject which taxed us more than the horticulture! Finally, the most rewarding sight of the day was seeing a beaming Nat carrying off a courgette plant to grow at home. Let's hope he heeded the frost warning!

Thanks are due to Geoff Freeston from the nursery and to Lesley Dean from the Refugee Council for making the visit possible. For those who are not familiar with the Brunswick Nursery, a visit both to the site itself (for plant sales and the shop) and the website are well worthwhile: http://www.brunswickyork.org.uk

Susan Kellerman

Creskeld Hall – 22 May 2008

The sun shone and, with the slight breeze, Creskeld's 200 year-old rhododendrons strutted their stuff, their blowzy blooms determined to flirt and delight. Indeed the fame of these self-same bordering banks of rhododendrons was regaled throughout the Ridings according to E.H. Hiley-Peel (Yorkshire Life, February 1927). The Dalesman (August 1963) had gone as far as describing Creskeld Hall as "gay" with daffodils and rhododendrons. Keats who in 1820 gazed on the thousands of blooming daffodils, fronting the house, was more circumspect, writing – "A thing of beauty is a joy forever, its loveliness increases, it will never pass into nothingness".

We met on the south-facing lawn, a perfect spot to view the garden, and watched the Holsteins watching us, a picturesque tableau from either side of the beck. Creskeld Beck, from which the house gets its Anglo-Saxon name, (cressa –cress and keld – a spring) not only separates the formal gardens from the parkland, but also serves the two mediaeval stew ponds.

The 1851 6-inch Ordinance Survey map clearly marks the site of what appears to be a three-sided moat. Today the beck only circumvents only two sides of the hall, leaving the garden after the second stew pond. This poses the question – when is a moat a moat? The S.O.E.D. gives two possible definitions: (i) a deep wide ditch surrounding …… or (ii) a pond, lake, especially a fishpond. Furthermore, the map also reverts to the Creskeld's "monastic" title of Kirkstill Hall, a name that clearly links it with the Cistercian abbey at Kirkstall. Hugo de Creskeld, in 1240, granted the manor to the abbots of Kirkstall.

In 1849 Francis Rhodes (1825-1906), son of William Rhodes of Bramhope Hall, married Charlotte Maria Darwin, changing his name to that of his wife's family, becoming Francis Darwin. It is from his father's recollections in 1827 of "a spring of watercresses and an old farmhouse that had been occupied by a farmer called Christopher Rhodes", that Francis Darwin writes in 1880 "at the time the moat round the house was much in evidence, part of it being planted with willows".

John and Annie Stoddart-Scott welcomed us and he said that the present garden was much reduced since his grandfather's (Bertram Parkinson, a JP and Bradford wool industrialist) day. Creskeld had then four gardeners and a boy, extensive kitchen gardens, a coke-heated greenhouse and an orchard, now grassed over. Today the Stoddart-Scotts look after the gardens themselves, with contractors coming in every September for the annual clip of the 400 year-old yew hedge. Scaffolding is needed to deal with the thirty-foot high hornbeam hedge. The yew hedge has a parallel hawthorn hedge in front of it and the two hedges, together with an inner border of rhododendrons present a striking feature from the road.

Creskeld Hall parterre of box, lavender and santolina

The Rock Garden, constructed in 1938 by Conways of Halifax, was sadly overgrown. Photographs (1938-1940s) give an idea of the construction and placing of the large slabs of weathered limestone through which the beck now meanders. Gertrude Jekyll (1843-1932) wrote "nothing is more interesting than to plan and construct a combination of rock and water. Given perfectly bare ground, if only a needful supply of water and change of level are there, there is no end to the construction of form that might be devised." The Second World War was to bring to an end the labour-intensive practise of rock gardening and it is thanks to the present family that Creskeld's rock gardens survive today.

It would be interesting to know how an earlier Conway rockery, sold in 1936 to George VI for the royal lodge at Windsor, has prospered. Hussey (Country Life – July 1939) describes a scene not dissimilar to Creskeld: "undulating lawns, beds of azaleas,

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majestic oaks, cedars, banks of rhododendrons to afford a touch of colour – the picturesque background to rock and water garden weathered limestone, the slopes and pockets of which, provide a comfortable home for alpines, Asiatic primroses and iris. His Majesty takes a particular interest in rhododendrons, ornamental shrubs and irregular drifts of daffodils."

From the south lawn the path led to a summerhouse at the far end of the lawn, between two parterres of box, lavender and santolina with the magnificent hornbeam to the right. To the left the walled bank of the beck gave way to three sets of steps to a small grotto well beyond which was the first of the stew ponds. It is deep, dark and dramatic, overhung with trees and planted with flag irises. An early photograph shows a grassy and sunny bank which today is hedged with trees.

Stepping through the summerhouse was a "wow" moment, an intimate and enclosed space of delightful disorder, a riot of colour and form, where the beck was free to meander through the irregular banks of limestone. Planted with yellow *Primula prolifera* and purple *Primula reidii* and bordered with yellow and red rhododendrons, white garlic and blue *Helleborus orientalis*. Leaving the garden by the rock bridge/dam, the beck joins the second stew pond, which is planted with Lysichiton (stinking cabbage), *Gunnera manicata* and flag iris. The garden here was once an orchard, now grassed over, with an ancient walnut tree, its young replacement, an ornamental pear (*Pyrus salicifolia*). A rather lonely Wollemi pine stands close by the tennis court (my thanks to Mike Ashford for plant identification!).

Two walled gardens stand co-joined but not identical. Dated 1855, the first has a sunken lawn and a double-boxed gravel path. Shrubs and climbers line the walls and a simple sundial, engraved "hora fugit Darwin 1906" stands by the middle of the long wall. In striking contrast to this calm and contemplative place, the kitchen garden (1825) is warm, jolly, with a plentiful supply of rhubarb, chives etc. To the front of the house are two wild-flower meadows, a monkey-puzzle tree, a sunken lawn, a triangular mount and a delightful wisteria-clad vinery/ summerhouse with classical arcades.

After tea and cake, Penelope Dawson- Brown presented John and Annie Stoddart-Scott respectively with a bottle of fine malt and a lime-edged burgundy pelargonium that she named "Betts Gaunt" in memory of Mrs Gaunt (d.1996) of Arthington Nunnery. A most poignant moment as the pelargonium, a "regal", was actually raised by the late Mrs Gaunt. Creskeld Hall has a long history of service and giving. The gardens are open several times a year in aid of charity.

Pauline Murray

Annual General Meeting 15th March 2008. Cannon Hall, Barnsley

Cannon Hall proved to be an enjoyable venue for this Annual General Meeting following the very successful previous two AGM'S at Settering-ton and Sledmere. Our Chairman, Penelope Dawson-Brown opened the meeting and invited Vice President, Martin Page, to take the chair, a task which demanded stop watch precision so that the lunchtime deadline of 1 p.m. could be adhered to. With the skill, which comes from experience, he just succeeded although he had to ruthlessly truncate his own excellent paper.

Formalities proceeded briskly, Val Hepworth reported fully on Conservation matters, one of the bedrocks of the Trust; the Minutes of the AGM of 2007 were quickly approved, together with the Trustees report. Retiring council members, Jon Finch, Moira Fulton, Jane Furse and Liz Simpson were re-elected, together with the election to Council of John Long, the Membership Secretary.

With his usual aplomb our Treasurer, David Tiptaft, outlined the Financial Statement succeeding in making 'boring figures interesting'. He succeeded so well that it attracted a number of interesting questions, all of which were fielded satisfactorily, but the chairman could still hear the clock ticking. Short reports on the various areas of the Trusts interests were presented with a time limit of three minutes each. It was not easy to compress twelve months work into 180 seconds, but they managed manfully. Even Jane Furse's excellent report on Wentworth Castle had to be abbreviated, a subject that almost deserved a meeting of it's own.

We then heard from Alison Hunter, on behalf of the Friends of Sheffield Botanical Gardens, and Adrian Perry from Scarborough and District Civic Society, on how the grants they have received from the YGT, have assisted their organisations in the work they are involved in.

However at fifteen minutes to one, Martin Page was able to get up on his feet to deliver his fascinating paper on ' How Valuable are our Parks and Green Spaces?' His main theme was that these should be central to our modern values. Fortunately he illustrated this by a star chart, which he then explained briefly and which I am repeating

Amenity Value. Providing amenities, visual aspect, effecting how an area is perceived, landscape quality etc.
Cultural Needs. Cultural heritage, local and city events, fairs, arts, fund raising opportunities, tourism.
Socially inclusive. – accessible to all, free, equality of opportunities.
Educational Value – ecology, green space heritage, the 'outdoor classroom'. Natural resource, life long learning.
Environmental Awareness – value of being near to nature, local agenda 21, Biodiversity, ecology, environmental sustainability conservation.
Health and Well- Being – sport, recreation, healthy living, food production and environmental awareness
Social Provision – opportunities for organised activities, meeting places for all ages, promoting community safety.

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Annual General Meeting 15th March 2008 cont.

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Leisure and Recreation – participation, play, sports, walks, games, activities, pastimes, entertainment, amusement, spectating, relaxation, solitude.

Local Identity – sources of pride, aiding in the identity of an area – defining urban character, local heritage and distinctiveness.

Local Regeneration – being a focus for sustainable regeneration – involving local residents, community groups and local business, developing partnerships and enabling active participation.'

It was then 1.07, giving members a few minutes to find their lunch places. However armed with copies of Martin's star chart members were able to contemplate on the importance of our Parks and Green spaces in our modern lives, but not before Penelope Dawson-Brown was able briefly to thank him for his most interesting paper, and for chairing the meeting so capably and on time. Then the lunch bell called.

John Long

Committee Round–Up

RHUBARB AND GINGER JAM
Small Grants Scheme

You may ask why 'rhubarb and ginger jam' in the YGT newsletter! Of course we welcome Women's Institute members to our Trust and no doubt rhubarb and ginger jam has been an important part of the WI repertoire, but I want to turn our thoughts to the first half of the twentieth century and particularly the memories of gardens and plants in the Northern dales. Rhubarb was grown everywhere, an important staple for pies and puddings and of course for jamming. Tea-times; children home from the village school, the men-folk hungry after many hours outside in all weathers, mother either working in the home or also on the land, and the table laid with bread and jam and cold fruit pie. If you were living at perhaps 1000ft above sea level with snowy frosty winters, a very limited income, little storage space and little 'free' time, what you could grow was also limited, but a vital part of your families diet. You ate what you could grow, and amongst the fruits under the climatic conditions of the dales, rhubarb was a certainty. As were gooseberries and blackcurrants – redcurrants were not prized, far too fiddly and pippy! So mother produced rhubarb and ginger jam.

This year (2007-8) amongst our small grant scheme projects we are supporting something rather unusual and we think rather special. *Dales Plants and Gardens 1990-1960,* is gathering memories of gardening and plants in Swaledale, Arkengarthdale and Wensleydale and is being organised by one of our members Sally Reckert in association with the Dales Countryside Museum (Hawes), the Richmondshire Museum (Richmond) and the St Johns Centre for independent living (Catterick Garrison) and a group of volunteers. We have offered £385 to cover the cost of outdoor display cases and these are going to be installed first of all at the Dales Countryside Museum where the project is creating a garden from older peoples memories, running along part of the coach and car park. Sally relates that as they work in the garden, people on their way to the museum are always leaning over the garden wall to find out what's going on and tell of their experiences and give anecdotes. The display boards will get a great deal of use as the stories from the museum visitors are added to the memories already included. This is a wonderful project. In the great scheme of things 1900-1960 seems so recent and yet just think of the vast changes that have occurred in the past 50 years. A way of life, a way of gardening has all but disappeared. The stories, the plants, the horticultural methods, the tools used by dales folk are just as important to record and value as those of our more wealthy forebears. I have had the pleasure of listening to some of the many hours of recordings that the project is archiving and it took me back to my childhood on a farm at Rosedale on the North York Moors. There is much in common; the rosehip gathering, potato picking, the scent of lupins and phlox, pungent marjoram and sage for the home-killed pork sausages, primroses and wood anemones, Arran Pilot potatoes, onions, root vegetables and brassicas kept in the ground until needed and dahlias kept frost-free in a late spring with old net curtains overnight, so that they would be lovely for harvest festival. The geology, soil, weather conditions and people result in each area having its own personality; a rich harvest for us to gather before it's too late.

And another thought from Sally: "With the advent of global climate change, we will increasingly need to find alternative ways of growing and using plants; many of those ways are traditions of plant husbandry and use of wild plants that were once passed from generation to generation as people learnt to sustain themselves from their gardens and the land around them. Through this project I can encourage a sharing of plant wisdom that is unique to the area of the northern dales before it is lost forever."
Watch out for the *Yorkshire Life* feature on the *Dales Plants and Gardens 1990-1960.* We think that it may be in the July or August issue.

The only jam to be found in the other schemes that we're supporting this year would I think be spread on the volunteer scones. We have allocated £500 to the Friends of Beaumont Park, Huddersfield for an ecological survey and the removal of silt & invasive vegetation prior to the relining & restoration of the pond at the foot of the former Cliff Cascade. Those of us who visited Beaumont Park last autumn were much impressed with what has already been achieved and the energy and determination of the Friends. £1,000 has been offered to the Castle Garden Project – Derwent Riverside Project (a community group

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leasing land from Ryedale District Council) at Malton, North Yorkshire. The Castle Garden behind the Old Lodge Hotel, Old Maltongate will become a public park. This is a very historic place, currently derelict but a Scheduled Ancient Monument with the remains of Malton Castle & a Jacobean Prodigy house. Our funding is for the maintenance & management of the existing trees following a tree survey already completed by Ryedale DC. We are having a YGT visit to look at the project and the conservation work at York House also in Malton on the 22nd October so do come and see for yourself all this good work in a small market town. York Gate Garden, at Adel near Leeds is a wonderful jewel-like mid-late 20th century garden designed by the Spencer family who passed it into the care of Perennial (Gardeners' Royal Benevolent Society). The Garden Co-ordinator at York Gate, Jennifer Weatherhead

York Gate

has written to confirm their delight at our offer of £750, which with their own fund-raising, will enable them to commission a replacement stone carved dolphin. We will organise a YGT visit to see the work and to highlight this lovely garden rich with design and planting ideas. Finally we hope to assist the Friends of Whinfell Quarry Garden, Sheffield with the replanting of rhododendrons. Our Vice-president, Martin Page, who of course knows Sheffield's parks and gardens well from his professional life is helping with this.

We very much regret that two of our offers from the grant round of 2006-7 have not been taken up. Harehills Park (Leeds) Friends group is unable to take up the £500 grant due I understand to lack of progress with Leeds City Council Area Parks Manager. The chairman is very disappointed but I've suggested that they could apply in the future. Locke Park (Barnsley) Friends similarly cannot take up the £1,000 grant and the park is in a poor state. Martin again has been helping and will support the Friends in their discussions with Barnsley MBC. We have written a letter expressing our concern to the Friends and which they can send on to Barnsley MBC. Again the Friends could re-apply when the situation improves.

We have put aside £2,000 for the 2008-9 scheme. Applications have to be received by the conservation sub-committee by 30th November 2008 – the application form gives the details and is downloadable from the YGT website, the AGT website, and the Yorkshire and Humber Historic Environment Forum [YHHEF] website. I can also mail it out or send as an e-mail file attachment if anyone knows of a suitable applicant. We welcome applications for important parks and gardens from all parts of Yorkshire, particularly where there is significant public access.

Val Hepworth

Education

Since our last Newsletter, the Trust has been continuing to work to help Yorkshire schools develop their grounds and garden areas.

£200 cash awards plus a small selection of tools, have been granted to two schools in the north of the county, Swainby & Potto and Carlton & Faceby C of E Primary Schools; to help develop a wildlife area and productive gardens.

£200 was also allocated to a wonderful collection of Joseph Bentley junior gardening tools for Greenhill Primary School in Sheffield; to help children get involved in developing and maintaining a sensory garden, as part of their wide-reaching 'Inspirational Outdoors' project.
£90 has been spent on plants to help create a garden in memory of one

Children of Carlton & Faceby C of E Primary School in the wildlife area they are developing with help from the Yorkshire Gardens Trust.

of the children of Pius X RC Primary School in Middlesbrough. This is the last of the funds raised from the Yorkshire Gardens Trust visit to Tudor Croft, courtesy of the Heagney family.

Trust members have also devoted time to all these projects, to variously – visit schools, assess sites, offer advice on planting, negotiate deals with suppliers, present awards and even sometimes (the best bit!) help with planting.

As always, if any members would like to get involved in helping schools in their area on behalf of the Yorkshire Gardens Trust, I'd be delighted to hear from you.

Nicola Harrison
nicola_a_harrison@tiscali.co.uk

Heritage Protection, Heritage Open Spaces and Skill Shortages: Conservation and Planning

As you know the Association of Gardens Trusts [AGT] endeavours to respond and comment on important conservation issues affecting parks and gardens on behalf of all the County Gardens Trusts. This role falls to Sally Walker of the Sussex Gardens Trust and myself, ably assisted by Kate Harwood, the AGT Administrator and conservation factotum for Hertfordshire Gardens Trust. Expertise from other county garden trusts is always welcome and some such as Cheshire are particularly active.

It was with some trepidation that I tried to read the draft Heritage Protection Bill in May and as my comrade-in-arms Sally warned me, 'you lose the will to live after about 12 pages'

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Committee Round–Up cont.

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(there are in excess of 200 pages). Fortunately membership of our Historic Environment Forum came to the rescue in the shape of an excellent document from English Heritage that was a much more digestible 26 pages. So with help from other county gardens trusts Sally, Kate and I were able to frame a memorandum to the Culture Media and Sport Select Committee and a written submission to the DCMS. This draft Bill will have a far-reaching effect on our historic environment for many years to come. We welcome much of the draft legislation and its objectives, particularly the intention to strengthen the powers to protect our historic parks and gardens. We have for some time asked for registered parks and gardens to feature on Land Registry maps and we are pleased that this is included. However there are aspects of the draft bill that cause us concern. In a nutshell we are astounded at the meaningless terminology of 'Heritage Open Spaces', the apparent lack of parity with protection for historic buildings, and the inadequate funding and conservation skill shortages both at English Heritage and particularly in the local authorities for effective implementation of the provisions in the draft Bill.

All the currently registered parks, gardens and battlefields will be moved onto the new register as registered heritage open spaces, a term that lacks any meaning and does not take into account the designed landscape value, which in the case of our historic parks and gardens, is of paramount importance. If a generic term is required we suggested Heritage Landscapes or Historic Landscapes. Further, the term Heritage Open Spaces can imply public access and we pointed out that there are many important historic parks and gardens which do not have such access. We are disappointed that protection for historic parks and gardens is not equivalent to that offered to historic buildings. In our view this could lead to historic parks and gardens in a multiple asset site being considered of less importance. It seems at odds with the unified approach and confusing for everyone - against the Government's stated objectives for a consistent and intelligible system. We are very concerned that unless this Bill secures provision for improvement in staffing and skills then its aims will never be delivered.

Also on the national conservation scene, the AGT has written to Lord Coe at London 2012 regarding concerns at the proposal to hold the Equestrian Three Day Event at Greenwich Park. In April we had a successful London Conference on the European Landscape Convention, 'Crossing Boundaries'.

On our patch we have had a request for advice from the conservation officer at Kirklees MC regarding Spen Hall at Gomersal. Jane Furse is meeting the owner and the conservation officer. We have also been alerted to possible development in the grounds of Dobroyd Castle near Todmorden which Anne Tupholme is following up. At the end of June, Anne received a positive response to her letter from the new owners of Whinburn Hall, near Keighley and the news that Andy Wimble, English Heritage's Regional Landscape Architect had recently visited with a photographer and been very supportive of Anne and the Yorkshire Gardens Trust. As you might expect the condition of the buildings and the gardens have deteriorated further since the YGT visit early last year and we have learned from the new owners that they are negotiating rigorously with Bradford MBC to have the lead drainpipes returned. The owners have asked Anne to visit so we look forward to being able to help them in their efforts to repair and restore the gardens.

Following up our concerns about the waterfall at Parcevall Hall, Penelope, Anne and myself met the chairman of the Walsingham Trust, Lord Hope, and James Farrell of Strutt and Parker (managing agents). Subsequently Ray Blyth and Mike Heagney also visited and made suggestions as to how this woodland feature could be improved. We understand that the Head gardener, Phill is now quite happy with the proposal to modify the design of the waterfall and we hope that this can be implemented. Anne has been continuing her researches and from the Edinburgh Botanical Gardens' old despatch books has lists of seeds, seedlings, cuttings and plants sent to Parcevall. Sir William Milner had been a subscriber of a plant and seed collecting expedition to the Ruwenzori Mountains in Africa in 1931 by Dr Noel Humphreys. What treasures must have found their way into the gardens at Parcevall Hall.

Val Hepworth

Research and Recording
England's Finest Parsonages – Country Life

Two parsonages/rectories from Yorkshire are in the last twelve of the Country Life competition to find England's Finest Parsonage. Over 100 nominations were received. One of the two Yorkshire parsonages is Shandy Hall, Coxwold, once the home of Laurence Sterne, and is, coincidently, being researched by Moira Fulton for the Vicarage Garden Project. The other Yorkshire one is The Rectory, Bolton Abbey. This was built as a grammar school in 1700, but today is the rectory for the parish church of Bolton Abbey, near Skipton.

The YGT last meeting was at the NYCRO on 29 April 2008. Keith Sweetmore and Margaret Bousfield provided us with our own room and spoke to us on the work of other groups and their research and how to find things in the archives at Northallerton. Margaret had also laid out some maps which are we had requested for our researchers.

One or two stayed in the afternoon and did further research. Caroline Kernan had a great find in a reference book. 'One History of Kirbyunderdale' by *Rev W R Shepherd MA*, it had some wonderful descriptions, relevant to our research, from the archives. Fortunately, she has been able to borrow a copy from a local vicar so is able to research it at home…..

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Keith Sweetmore kindly offered to take a session on how to access information from the Internet, and in particular, from National Archives **A2A** website. This session has been arranged for 22 July 2008 at 10.30 am at NYCRO.

Moira and I have been asked to give a talk to the Friends of the Dales Countryside Museum, Hawes. I volunteered Moira to give the talk, I would do the illustrations! It is on the 18 July 2008. It is their 'Gift Day' lecture that is also a social evening eg a drink and nibbles. Moira has called it 'Woodland Walks and Walled Gardens', but takes in many aspects of the garden research for the Yorkshire Gardens Trust / Yorkshire Dales Project.

Helen Lazenby

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Wentworth

Wentworth Castle Gardens and park with its monument trail is officially OPEN as many of you are no doubt aware, with our many contracts virtually complete and contractors off site. It means a well-deserved break for our senior staff from all the hurly burly of managing contractors. A vast number of site meetings have been required, not to mention the endless paper work and cleaning up operations needed. Having taken well-earned holidays, our staff can now turn their attention to the future, planning for both short and long term, in order to capitalize on what we have already achieved. It is always pleasant to record successes and Wentworth has recently won two awards, from the Civic Trust and Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors. We won the RICS regional heat for Building Conservation - which will take us forward to the National competition in October – and a national Civic Trust one – their "Special Partnership Award". The latter has been given in recognition of our unique collaborative mix of organizations on this heritage led project. It is an excellent testimony to the extremely hard work and long hours put in by our staff and consultants. See www.rics.org and www.civictrust.org.uk for further details.

Plans for Phase II of the restoration and redevelopment of our complicated and extensive site, were submitted to the board of the HLF in January of this year and we had hoped to be awarded a pass this summer under the current system which is about to be changed. Sadly this is not the case, but we intend to reapply for a smaller grant as soon as possible. Dearest to local hearts is our Conservatory – shown on television 'Restoration' series –which is the best known of our remaining buildings at risk, both locally and nationally. We are really keen to restore this iconic Iron Framed Glasshouse, thought to date from the 1880's when its integral electric lighting was extremely avant-garde and exclusive. Crompton and Fawkes, the firm who built it, also provided the very first electric arc lighting for Buckingham Palace and Henley Regatta!

As more people get to hear about our site, so the study days, group tours and lectures increase. Three trustees share the work and both Patrick Eyres of the Georgian Group and myself have been talking to special interest groups this year. An article is due to come out in Country Life and another run of the New Arcadian Journal about Wentworth Castle, since it has proved so popular that Patrick is constantly being asked to reprint it. The Association of Gardens Trusts held a study day here in May and Yorkshire was very well represented within the group. One month later a large contingent of Lincolnshire Gardens Trust members arrived for a day by coach. They were here on the same day that the Civic Trust came to present our Partnership award and by the time I returned home my voice had disappeared.

Having participated as a Trustee in many meetings over the years where rising costs made our budget ever tighter if not inadequate, it is immensely heartening to be able to report on some recent additions to our restoration works which we thought shelved for several years to come. Courtesy of HLF, English Heritage and Yorkshire Forward in particular, we have been able to spend close to another £1,000,000 on our monuments, tree works and children's playground that has made a real difference to our visitor's experience. The most important addition to our restored monuments is the mid C18th Arcade on the southern edge of the ha-ha looking out onto the oldest area of parkland. It is a wonderful 'screen' of three stone arches topped with Palladian balls - very reminiscent of Burlington's gate at Chiswick House in London. This was collapsing but has now been taken down and rebuilt, providing three framed views from the gardens. Its remaining iron gate c.1800 is being restored and has now been joined by two new subsidiary ones to either side. The extra money has also allowed us to replace the balustrading and stone balls on the Serpentine Bridge, which all disappeared during the mid C20th. It is part of a permissive path through our parkland which is very popular with local people and so we were particularly sad to loose our beautiful pair of beech trees next to the bridge which were terminally ill with bracket fungus right at their bases. Our beautiful Rotunda has also benefited from this unexpected windfall, with new steps giving access to its outer ring once more, and new avenue planting has also gone in.
The most popular addition with many families will probably be the provision of a new children's playground, long sought after by us but not something that HLF could fund. It is situated near the café and takes its theme from our gothic follies without so much height that it impinges on surrounding views.

Out in the parkland, we now have both red and fallow deer grazing our fields, courtesy of one of our tenants Mr Elmhirst whose venison is well known at Yorkshire Farmer's Markets. Visitors taking the monument trail can often see deer near the rotunda, the fallow deer preferring the scrub woodland to the open areas. We also have many brown hares, great crested newts and other amphibians as well as a wealth of bird life that the site is blessed with. New seats, made from our own felled timber have been placed along the trail and

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Registered Charity No. 1060697

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STOP PRESS...forthcoming events

Summer Events 2008
Wednesday 6 August
A special visit to The Lakeland Hort. Soc. Holehird Gardens, Windermere
Wednesday 22 October
Visit to Malton visiting York House and Castle Garden with Peter Goodchild

AGM Advance Notice
Saturday 28 March 2009, Swinton Park

AGT Summer Conference
Friday 29th to Sunday 31st August, Sherborne*,* Dorset
Contact: Judy Tuke on 01935 872269 or visit
www.dorsetgardenstrust.co.uk for more information

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provide welcome stops for reflection as well as picnicking. Our park ranger Paul Evison leads all sorts of public events, from stonewall building, to early morning bird watching and autumn fungi hunts. This year we are hosting a 10k run for Cancer Research in September and are hoping to introduce many new families to the site.

Within the gardens, the planting in the Union Jack and John Arnold areas is really thickening up well and there was an excellent show of flowers on the rhododendrons and magnolias, many of which were only moved last year. Our Secret Garden, (built as a bowling green) is having its new bedding areas cut from the surrounding lawn, courtesy of our many excellent archive photos which show its development at the end of the C19th. Our Fernery and Stumpery to the north and east of Stainborough Castle is also thickening up nicely and the 'gordian knot' of tree roots and twisted branches makes a wonderful contrast to their foliage. Our castle flagpole now flies the English flag and the correct flag for our Earls of Strafford alternately, courtesy of the very knowledgeable Windsor Herald.

For the second year running we have staged open air performances within Stainborough Castle keep, and some 450 people enjoyed our Shakespeare this June. The castle-viewing platform is such a natural stage that we are considering developing a site specific project in future as part of what we hope will become an annual event. Now that we are open all year, the maintenance implications have brought new challenges for the staff and gardeners and I cannot finish without mentioning the many local volunteers who give us a hand. We are very fortunate that so many of our Friends turn up to help on Tuesday and Thursday mornings when they give us a hand with tasks such as scrub clearance and weeding whilst others take a turn at weekends, particularly in the shop and as guides for both house and gardens. They have also initiated special events to start the Conservatory fund going and we are especially grateful for all their efforts.

Finally it is with sadness that I can tell you that Richard Evans our director has been head hunted for another project. We are very proud of his achievements for us and wish him and his young family all the best at Beamish Open Air Museum in the future. We have appointed two new senior members of staff, Steve Blackbourn who will be our new director, arrives with an excellent background in heritage projects and is taking up his post at the end of July. We will also be getting a new head gardener as Steve Catchpole is returning to Cheshire where he has lived and worked for many years. Michael Klemperer who has worked so hard at Cusworth Hall, near Doncaster is replacing him. With a background in both archeology and horticulture he brings an unusual combination of skills to our site.

Jane Furse

Call for Contributions

The YGT is considering the publication of a collection of papers on topics related to designed landscapes. Members are invited to submit articles recording historical research, accounts of restoration projects and new gardens, discussion of conservation or management issues, and any other material of interest and significance to our members and others. Subject matter must be related to Yorkshire, either directly (Yorkshire designed landscapes, families, gardeners, nurseries), indirectly (e.g. Yorkshire-born gardeners who have worked elsewhere), or have strong Yorkshire connections (e.g. a broader topic with specific reference to the county). The material must be new, not published elsewhere, and not submitted for publication elsewhere; or previously published, but with restricted distribution or accessibility; or material which has been published but with considerable updating due to new information or developments

Publication is likely in 2009, but authors need to submit material as soon as possible. More information will be sent out to members in July. Potential contributors can contact Susan Kellerman, at susankellerman@aol.com or 0113 261 3673