YORKSHIRE GARDENS TRUST

NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 30 WINTER 2012

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HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW A LANDSCAPE?

A call for volunteers!

If you have always wanted to 'read' our historic designed landscapes and to understand how the layers of time have produced what you see now – then you may want to be involved with a new project we are launching in March 2012 at the AGM.

We will be looking at designed landscapes, parks and gardens in the East Riding as part of a long term, wider project to produce a published portfolio of Yorkshire's historic parks and gardens that will be useful for the professional and the amateur alike. For the project, we need volunteers to collect information on the chosen sites to assist the consultant(s) we are employing. Workshops will be provided (with refreshments!) to demonstrate how you as a volunteer can help, which you will then put it into practice on the site. Our project will not just examine the historical background to the site, but will also take notes on its current state and the possible threats and challenges to its sustainability. This will provide the relevant information that is so useful when owners, conservationists and planners are making decisions.

Volunteers can be YGT members or non-members (so if you know of others who could be interested then please pass on the news). Volunteers can be involved in a single site or several sites, as they wish. If you have a particular preference for a certain aspect – such as map reading, photography, note taking – that can be incorporated too. You don't need to live in the East Riding provided you are happy to travel.

If you are interested and want to know more, then contact me on 07952 951255 (text or voicemail) or email on eastgatehouse@uwclub.net.

Many thanks for your support

Jenni Howard

PS If you can offer advice or any information as time goes on and sites are published (in the newsletter or on the website) please do not hesitate in coming forward! J.

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

Happy New Year. May I wish you all well for the year ahead.

The 30th of September is the year end for official matters for Yorkshire Gardens Trust and a suitable point to reflect on the year. Writing this in October, it is possibly easier to recall the past year than for you reading this at a later date, post Christmas, and trying to remember all that has happened. Hopefully reading this newsletter will bring back some good reminders for everyone. It has been an interesting year and one in which the YGT Council has had to take stock and activate some changes. Generally there has been some gloom and despondency around, but our Trust is in good shape and there is sound financial under-pinning to help us face the challenges ahead. There are some interesting projects on the horizon and I hope you will support these and be able to take an active part in some of them.

Sadly, with the death of the Earl of Harewood in July, we have lost a supportive President. The Trust was represented at a Service of Thanksgiving in September by Penelope Dawson-Brown. Details of the event are included later in the newsletter.

In the light of stringent financial cut-backs, the County Gardens Trusts are moving towards a closer working partnership with the Garden History

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AGT Research and Recording Study Days in Yorkshire

- **'Historic vistas, current perspectives, future prospects'** Studley Royal, North Yorkshire, Thursday 3 May 2012
- **The Bretton Hall estate C18–C21** Bretton Park/Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Friday 21 September 2012

In 2012, two Yorkshire designed landscapes will take centre stage as part of the annual programme of events offered by the Association of Gardens Trusts. Organised in conjunction with the YGT, these study days will give our members and those from other gardens trusts the opportunity to learn more about these sites and exchange ideas with garden experts and enthusiasts from across the country.

A bridge on the reinstated lakeside walk at Bretton, July 2012, *photo Dick Knight*

Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal is a landscape that all YGT members will surely be familiar with, but 'improvement' was not, in the eighteenth century, and is not in the twenty-first, a process with a finite end point. The international significance of the gardens and park means that work of all kinds is on-going: research, restoration, conservation, management, interpretation, and archaeological excavations – as recent visitors to the feature known as 'Quebec' will have witnessed. However well you think you know Studley, you will almost certainly discover something new from our speakers – and perhaps even have some myths dispelled!

- Mark Newman, Archaeological Consultant, Yorkshire & the North-East, NT: 'Digging in a garden: public archaeology, visitors and conservation at the Quebec'
- Michael Ridsdale, Head of Landscape at Studley, NT, will consider the practical implications of research, investigations and excavations (including the Quebec site) for management of the landscape
- Dr Patrick Eyres, director of the New Arcadian Press and editor-publisher of *New Arcadian Journal*, will reflect on the Quebec Monument and Neptune statue at Studley Royal, and will consider the Georgian fashion for military and naval memorials as realised in Yorkshire gardens

The Quebec excavations 1, September 2012, *photo Dick Knight*

Talks will take place in the Aislabie Conference Suite in the Visitor Centre; after lunch, there will be guided tours of the water gardens.

Although many members will have visited the Yorkshire Sculpture Park, the historical **Bretton Hall estate** is less well-known, and has certainly attracted less research – due in large part to limited access over recent years. But following recent changes in the ownership of the Hall, and after decades of divided management of the designed landscape, the whole has now been brought into the care of the Yorkshire Sculpture Park. An ambitious project to open up access, and restore both natural and built features, has been embarked upon in 2011. It is more than timely, therefore, that the history of the estate should not only become more widely known, but that an attempt should be made to fill in the many gaps in the Bretton narrative.

The Study Day will trace the history of the estate over the last 300 years, focussing on the major landscaping of the park in the mid- to late 1700s by Sir Thomas Wentworth Blackett (with Richard Woods); the period of Diana Beaumont's expansion of the gardens in the early 1800s (together with head gardener Robert Marnock); the establishment in the 1970s of the sculpture park; and the historic landscape as a setting for contemporary sculpture.

Talks in the morning (in the YSP conference suite) will be followed by guided walks around the landscape after lunch. See www.ysp.co.uk for more information about the sculpture park.

Further information about the study days, and application forms, can be obtained from the AGT

www.gardenstrusts.org.uk, tel. 020 7251 2610

Please note that all inquiries and applications should be made to the AGT, ***not the YGT***.

Susan Kellerman

The Quebec excavations 2, September 2012, *photo Dick Knight*

Visit to Ledston Hall and Ledsham Estate

9 April 2011

A place of hidden cabinets, itinerant brick makers, buried chapels and empty facades: a personal view of the YGT visit to Ledston Hall and the Ledsham Estate

I am writing this on a balmy day in one of the warmest Octobers on record and enjoy looking back to the equally glorious spring we had this year. The early April day we visited Ledston Hall, just off the A1 near Castleford, was absolutely wonderful with clear skies and a pleasant spring warmth.

Figure 1 – East Terrace and amphitheatre

Ledston Hall, park and garden is Grade II* listed on the English Heritage Register. It is in a rural setting and contains a further ten structures that are listed as Grade I or II. It is a complex site and landscape and this article can only be a brief view. We were visiting Ledston Hall and Ledsham Estate as part of a YGT season of 20th century Yorkshire landscapes.

The site is on high land, which slopes to the south, and can be traced back to before the Romans. It was an ideal defensive site, which also forded the River Aire. Its history comprises three main periods: monastic, Medieval and Jacobean.

The manor dates back to the 11th century. In the 16th century, it was granted to the Earl of Shrewsbury who passed it to Henry Witham. Witham built his Manor House in 1556 on the remains of Pontefract Priory. It was in the hands of his family for three generations and then passed via Thomas Wentworth and Sir John Lewis (an eminent merchant and founder of the East India Company) to Sir John's daughter Elizabeth, who married Theophilus Hastings. Their daughter Elizabeth (Lady Betty Hastings) inherited the estate, which she eventually passed to the Wheler family, descendents of her half sister.

The gardens also demonstrate three clear periods of distinctive design: work for Sir John Lewis between 1653 and 1671, works for Lady Betty Hastings between 1701 and 1739 and finally restoration work in the 1920's. In 1967, a 20th century landscape was recreated using the estate accounts lodged in the Leeds Archive. Frank Clark, landscape architect and founder of the Garden History Society, undertook the design, working with the original planting plans.

The gardens now comprise of early formal gardens, pleasure grounds and a landscaped park within 170 hectares. The walled garden and terraces date from the late 17th and 18th centuries and they still contain elements of Charles Bridgeman's design of 1716. The 1802 map shows what remained of the original baroque landscape by Bridgeman.

The east terrace is at the front of the Hall and accessed via the amphitheatre and two sets of steps (Figure 1). It has been restored in Bridgeman's baroque style, creating recesses in the beech hedges known as cabinets. Beech hedges are a signature feature all across the gardens and estate. The term 'cabinets' apparently originated as an indoor name for an enfilade of rooms inside rooms to house and protect the landowner's valuables or private collections (often of exotics). At Ledsham this was reflected in the design of the east terrace with a network of secret compartments within the hedges, some still containing marble statues or specimen trees and with beech alleyways between the compartments. These were hidden within the seemingly formal beech hedges and lawns stretching to the eastern boundary of the gardens. The cabinets vary in size, creating very intimate spaces or ones large enough to hold a bowling rink.

To the west of the Hall a wall was constructed in the late 17th century to create a level area on which to extend the Hall (Figure 2). A medieval chapel and Tudor house were covered over on construction of the soil terrace and retaining wall. They are still hidden there today but inaccessible due to safety concerns.

Figure 2 – West Terrace and view beyond

At the far end of the west terrace is Lady Betty's Summer House (Figure 3). Designed by William Thornton (a known baroque designer), it has recently been restored with the help of an English Heritage grant. The summerhouse is of an early and unusual brickwork. Discussion of this led to a tale of itinerant brick makers. They were experts who found clay on the estate, used the estate timber for ovens and made bricks used for building on the estate. These teams of brick makers left behind the bricks they had made for the lord of the manor and then moved on to the next estate.

Figure 3 - Lady Betty's Summer House

The Summer House was also special in that it was constructed with three distinct vistas. One was south west aligned on the village road (some cabinets also

take this line), another to the north was parallel with a ride and the third looked west across the terrace, garden, gates and over to the public road.

The Hall itself is fascinating built layer upon layer over the centuries and boasting an empty façade. The North range was built to externally visually match the existing Hall, but due to a shortage of funds the interior was never completed. Sir John Lewis extended and unified to what we see today in 1655, half the building is medieval and half is of Lewis's design. The main hall is in need of desperate repair. We were due to meet in Lady Betty's Dining Room, however a large chunk of ceiling which had fallen in the previous day reduced this to a quick look. We were also able to see the two baroque rooms, and this further emphasised the state of dereliction. The Hall has been empty since 1954. Repairs have been made to the roof and external stonework to ensure it remains structurally sound.

The Ledsham Estate comprises of the Hall, gardens, the hunting lodge and estate parkland. Since the 17th century, the vistas have not been well recognised and the interconnection between the Hall and the rest of the estate muddied. The ride from the lodge to the Hall was still visible by a broken line of beech trees within the North Parkland. Ledston Lodge (a pretty hunting lodge, Figure 4) is a 1670's building set in 19th century landscape. This landscape was created by Wheler who had a love of tree plantations. However, especially with the gap of tenancy in the Hall at that time, this unfortunately emphasised the separation of the estate into two landscapes, the Hall and the Lodge. Reproductions of the 1728 paintings by Sir John Settrington, displayed in the Hall, helped us to better understand the estate at that time.

The Wheler Foundation, a Charitable Trust, now manages the Hall and Estate. This has enabled Conservation Plans to be produced for both the Hall and the Estate. The 2000 acre estate now supports the Hall and the Trust is actively seeking further funds and a sound business plan to achieve their aims. The park and gardens are open to the public between May and August.

Liz Neild-Banks

Figure 4 – Ledston Lodge

Continued from page 1

Society (GHS), the Museum of Garden History and, until recently, the Parks and Gardens Database UK. At our business meetings and at the AGM of the Association of Garden Trusts (AGT) held in September, the ramifications of working in closer partnership were presented and discussed. This move has been precipitated by the Government's funding cuts for English Heritage and Local Authority budgets (most severe in the north of the country it seems) and also the review of the planning process with the publication of the 'Draft Planning Policy Framework', which will have serious implications for our historic landscapes both rural and urban. The latter has caused consternation in many quarters as well as the Garden Trust, where the loss of local planning officers, in authorities with whom the Trust had built up good working relationships, may also have an impact. "Sustainable Development" has become a largely incomprehensible byword for pinning hopes for wide-ranging economic recovery - in hopes and frail confidence so far, if not yet in practice. But development at what cost for our green spaces? This is the shadow which still looms over us.

What this may mean is that the Trust will be called upon to comment on an increasing workload for planning matters. It may be that the Trust becomes a Statutory Consultee for Grade II listed landscapes (with and without related properties). Currently the Conservation sub–committee, under the astute leadership of Val Hepworth, is proactive with a considerable number of issues for sites, primarily, but not exclusively, in the north of the county. This could increase and Council are seeking guidance from the AGT and other counties as to how this can be managed. The possibility of needing more proactive and trained volunteers to assist the Trust, with all the implications of time, goodwill and costs which this will mean, has to be considered.

Like the YGT, the AGT is also a 'voluntary body' but it is working on behalf of all counties to expedite matters and create a plan for taking this forward. The publication of the first of the Association Year Books, handed out at the March AGM, showed the countrywide range of achievements in research, conservation practice and education which have been made. The links it helps to forge through the membership networks to other organisations with like-minded aims and ambitions for safe-guarding the heritage of designed landscapes are very welcome. YGT makes a 'capitation payment' to the AGT to contribute to their "fighting-funds". This has risen by 50p per head in the current year, but Council considered this represented a fair donation for the benefits of services and expertise shared for the benefit of Yorkshire.

Some of the YGT information from the Dales Project, where not sensitive, has now been lodged with the Parks and Gardens Database UK. This was carried out by Moira Fulton liaising with Rachael Stamper. For reasons of administrative autonomy, PGDB UK have opted out of a close merger with the CGTs and the GHS, but sites of interest will (volunteer 'up-loaders' permitting) continue to be placed on the database to highlight and safeguard

(?) the many and varied sites across the county.

I am delighted that Research and Recording has regained momentum with a project lead by Jenni Howard, who presented a comprehensive proposal for work in East Yorkshire at the last Council meeting. It is detailed in this newsletter and hopefully will attract some keen volunteers to work, with due guidance, to document some as yet largely unchartered territory.

That Jenni felt able to move into the research field is due in no small part to her having handed over responsibility for the administration of the membership list. With no additional volunteer help coming forward, Council have taken the momentous step of appointing a paid administrator to assist with membership and events administration, which has become a large workload for the few who endeavour to keep the YGT active across all areas. Research, Conservation (planning) and Small Grants, Archives, Events, Education and Communications (including publications, newsletters, website and correspondence with members and researchers far & wide) is, as you can appreciate, a full workload. Applications to the Small Grants Funds have been numerous and have led to Council approving a larger budget for these for the next financial year, inevitably increasing the workload for the Conservation sub-committee! But the Council have high hopes that the administrative help will facilitate the effectiveness of the Trust. The alternative would be a drastic cut in areas of activity. However, we would like to continue with the work which has been begun and it is hoped that some younger (?) and willing volunteers will continue to join us to help strengthen this resolve.

It is very pleasing that there is increasing awareness of the Trust and its work in the schools communities with whom Nicola Harrison and Lucy Porritt work so hard. Their imagination and interest to encourage and to enthuse young, green-fingered activity is hopefully infectious. If there are others who would like to take this work into schools - east, west or south - they would be delighted to enlist your help.

Events have once again proved very popular and apologies go to those who were unable to secure places. Early booking is the best policy but it would be very useful if, knowing you cannot make an event you let the events organiser have forewarning so others on the waiting list can be contacted. It is the small profit made from the events that has made an administrator post feasible. Please look out for the developments of an *online booking system,* which by necessity was researched when it was mooted that cheques were to be withdrawn. This will run in tandem with a paper booking system, but as so many people have signed up for an online contact with the Trust that (alongside ever-rising postal costs) it was felt worthwhile to continue with this initiative. Council is very fortunate in having some computer savvy members who can take this on-board.

The website continues to evolve thanks to our two, very able web administrators, Louise Wickham and Caroline Schofield. I am in awe of the ease with which they can navigate this realm, and I know that members of the sub-committees find it a good way to keep in contact and to keep their work current for members to share.

However, electronics bye the bye, YGT 'deposits' in the Archives at The Borthwick Institute continue to grow and now includes a fascinating oral archive from Daphne Hamilton remembering the heady days of a "real nursery" at the Backhouse Nursery, York . Those members who were fortunate to join the visit to Acomb enjoyed some of the revelations of these times past.

The AGM next year is to be held at The King's Manor, York on Saturday, March 17th. In addition there are another set of interesting Study Days and Events running through the year, which I hope will continue to delight, entertain and educate. Details are all listed in this 'Bumper-bundle' of a newsletter, along with articles to remind everyone of the many activities of the past year. I hope you have a few happy hours to read, digest and once again make YGT part of your New Year Resolutions. All my best wishes for 2012.

Liz Simson

TUDOR CROFT

26 May 2011

Tudor Croft is a family residence. Past the gate, you first encounter the beautiful house. A circumventing path leads to the rear, where there are views over the 5-acre garden on to the two hills, Roseberry Topping and Highcliff, which shelter it. A beck meanders through and is persuaded to contribute to some of the many features. Built for his own use in 1934 by Ronnie Crossley, a brick manufacturer, Tudor Croft has been with Mike Heagney's family since the 1950s. His father purchased it, restoring and adding to it. The young Mike at first assisted and then, in time, took over.

Some 80 YGT members visited the gardens. Rain is often a companion on garden visits in England and it was that day too. Umbrellas went up, but the spray refreshed the colours. The brightening sun was miserly, yet the magic and beauty of the garden drew us onwards as we were shown around by Mike and his able assistants.

Past the house is the cosy Fernery, with ferns peeping from between Westmorland boulders. A glass roof provides protection and light. Nearly opposite is the walled garden, full of herbs and fragrance, a fig and a grapevine, where a view through a circular window gives a hint of incipient delights. The Gravel garden leads to a gravel path which, being a little above the garden, enables a look across to appreciate its colours,

geometry and balance. Long beds, separated by a lawn strip, have mounds of alpines, among which are saxifrages and the touchy-feely "head" of *Bolax glebaria* from Falkland Islands. The pergola is visible beyond these and then the herbaceous border. The quality of care is striking.

The herbaceous border is colourful and vibrant with alliums, foxtail lilies, angelica, lupins, *Iris sibirica* and more. Around the corner is a very fine part of the garden, Mike's favourite, of troughs imaginatively planted with alpines. The stone bath tub from the house of a past local industrialist is, with humour, planted with soapwort! Mike's sister Geraldine's house, which was the gardener's cottage, has its own distinctive charming garden, where she also grows vegetables.

The pergola, with its multifarious bricks, was a showcase for Mr Crossley's business. The garden has always contributed to its own keep. The gnomes (and there is a gnome garden too) were also commercially available. Now there is a horticultural consultancy.

The lovely water garden includes a fountain, rockery and waterfall. Nearby, the drooping fronds of *Pinus patula* emulate a cascade by the beck. The rose garden was re-established some three years ago, using the symbiotic mycorrhizal fungus in the soil. Looking across from the tennis court, with a revolving summerhouse, the shapely colourful copper beech hedge catches the eye. It then reveals the secret garden: an intimate, intriguing and restful enclosure where you may sit and ruminate.

All that says little of the trees, including many sculpted and specimen trees. The quaintly named *Magnolia* 'Star Wars', long flowering, is from New Zealand. The eucalyptus, unfortunately badly frost-damaged last winter, will hopefully recover the same way as fire damaged ones do in Australia.

Walking around, I got a feel for Mike's enthusiasm for this fascinating garden and its connection with his happy childhood and that enhanced the joy of a most rewarding visit. I thank Mike for making it all possible. Thanks are also due to Geraldine who organised the tea and delicious cakes.

A Mahmood

The tactile head of *Bolax glebaria*

Midsummer Picnic at St Nicholas

23 June 2011

It seems appropriate that this year's Midsummer Picnic should fall in the tenth year since Mr and Mrs Schellenberg's arrival at St Nicholas. The weather was not promising, but no one was deterred and Keith and Jilly very kindly let us have the use of the house for picnicking, which added an unexpected extra dimension to the day's enjoyment.

Since they arrived at St Nicholas Keith and Jilly, with the help of their head gardener Mark Morrell, have gradually and gently been redefining the garden. This has included the removal of much overgrowth and rejuvenating plants and hedges, including the Hornbeam hedges backing the double borders. Some of the areas have taken on a seasonal role, so the Rock Garden or Nepalese Jungle, as Lady Serena called it, is more of a Spring area. Along with the Old Orchard and the Long Border, it is resplendent in May and June. There is always something to find at St Nicholas and if there isn't a plant to please then the place itself is a delight.

Keith and Jilly, with a plan drawn up by Mark, have laid out a new garden on the site of Lady Serena's garden. The garden was infested with ground elder and mare's tail and to try and continue maintaining it in its current state was a waste of resources. The garden was laid out in 2010 and is already looking settled with plants established. Roses that were growing there have been planted again including *R.* 'Cardinal Richelieu'*, R.* 'Chapeau de Napoléon' *and R.* 'Charles de Mills'. *A central feature is planted with R.* 'St. Nicholas'*, R.* 'Scepter'd Isle'*, R.* 'Falstaff' and underplanted with *Lavandula angustifolia* 'Munstead'. Mark has also included a lot of winter interest planting including a collection of Cornus, *Hamamelis x intermedia* 'Jelena', *Sarcoccocca hookeriana*, *Viburnum x bodnantense* 'Dawn' and with the emphasis on scent.

One of the major concerns for St Nicholas has been identifying the plants and a start was made in 2005, with a group from the Yorkshire Gardens Trust including Geoffrey Smith, who was a friend of Bobbie James's head gardener, Don Watts. One of the most exciting things this visit highlighted was the collection of lilacs. There are colours ranging from pale lilac to pink to deep purple but most wonderful of all huge blousy double purple and mauve lilacs. The lilacs were sent off to the National Collection of lilacs (NCCPG) with each cultivar head in a double layer of plastic bags, as recommended by the collection holder, and they arrived the following day with enough flower left for a reasonable stab at identification.

New Garden

Some of them still need verifying but identification included the very rich deep purple *Syringa vulgaris* 'Andenken an Ludwig Spath' (Ludwig Spath, Berlin 1883). Other notable plants are of course the rhododendrons which will require some specialist identification, the Deutzias whose beauty I think is truly astonishing and the Abelias, which were a favourite of Bobbie James.

Recording gardens is one of the aims of the Yorkshire Gardens Trust and to that end Penelope Dawson-Brown has taken a set of pictures through the seasons at St Nicholas. The images are currently being labelled and will be lodged at the Borthwick Institute.

It is now well known that one of Bobbie James's great interests was old roses, so appropriately Keith and Jilly commissioned the rosarians Charles and Brigid Quest-Ritson to identify the roses. It was a fascinating day and fascinating to hear them counting petals and generally discuss scent, colour etc in their pursuance of the correct name. Great headway was made although there are still some mysteries. One of course of which there is no mystery is *Rosa* 'Bobbie James' which grows up the front of the house. There are two stories about the finding and naming of the rose. One that it came from Betteshanger, Kent, Bobbie James's childhood home and that Graham Stuart Thomas named it. The other story is that Graham Stuart Thomas found it at Sunningdale Nurseries and named it in his honour. (Any advances on this story?) Another rose on the long border is the low growing, and extremely vigorous suckering rose, which Graham Stuart Thomas named as the 'wild *Rosa gallica*, a single pink only a foot high'. Charles and Brigid Quest-Ritson found they could not put a name to this particular rose, although gallica they felt 'it showed signs of hybridity.'

The subject of old roses brings me to another connection, Constance Spry. Constance was a great collector of old fashioned roses and had a painterly eye. She had a collection of old roses at her home in Kent and then she moved them to Winkfield Place in Berkshire. She collected a lot from France and also from a nursery in America according to an article by Graham Stuart Thomas in his last book *Recollections of Great Gardeners* (2003). Their similar approaches and interests made me feel that they must have met and if they hadn't they should have! The proof came with a chance rummage in the second hand bookshop in Helmsley where I unearthed a copy of *Constance Spry's Garden Notebook and Pictures* (1940).

Syringa vulgaris 'Andenken an Ludwig Spath'

'...in the lovely garden of St Nicholas in Richmond, Yorkshire, belonging to the Hon Robert James. Mr James is successful in propagating difficult shrubs, not only for himself but for his many gardening friends. The frames are all arranged so that the cuttings are at ground level, for the owner here takes the view that plants will root much better in this position as they are subject to less extreme changes of temperature…The lights are fixed at the back to a low piece of timber, and close down on to a concrete kerb at the front, standing about three inches above the ground. Inside the soil is dug out and a mixture of sand and compost suitable for cuttings substituted.'

And

'As September is essentially a month for replanting various parts of the garden, I would like to mention a border which I saw at St Nicholas – the garden I mentioned in July. I was there when the old roses and magnificent lilies were in bloom. I came away with my eyes and mind filled with many visions of beauty, but among all the splendour of flowers one border made a particularly deep impression, and yet nothing could have been more simpler, and I was seeing it not at what was considered the height of its glory but out of bloom. This was the iris border. On either side of a grass path German and Siberian irises were planted together. This is an unusual association, as it is generally considered that Siberian irises grow better in a moister soil than is enjoyed by the Iris germanica; but here they grow beautifully together, and the contrast of the broad grey foliage of the one and the more grassy foliage of the other was good. At intervals down the border were well pruned standard apple trees. The trunks have assumed a bronze tinge which shone here among the greens. At the back of each border was a hedge of gooseberries grown on a wire fence; the whole was a study in greys and greens...'I have heard a criticism made that a border of irises is at its zenith for such a short time in the year that it is hardly worth while, but I cannot agree. The picture I have described of greens and greys had a quality of beauty of its own which was not less than, only different from, its beauty at flowering time.

Mr James told me that earlier in the year the border had been alight from end to end with pale yellow and deep purple May flowering tulips.'

Both these quotes says a lot about Bobbie James and Constance Spry: that they were both practical gardeners with a great understanding of the individual needs of plants and their painterly observation of these subtle contrasts, which to the untrained eye may have appeared just as iris leaves and rather dull. The pale yellow tulips referred to by Bobbie James may well be *Tulipa* 'Miss Ellen Willmot', as I gather from Mark Morrell, the head gardener that some random pale yellow lily flowered tulips do appear from time to time. Helen Lazenby when photographing the garden in June 2005 for the YGT visit picked up a random yellow lily flowered tulip in the foreground of one of the photographs of a rose in the orchard. Work in progress. In a recent discussion with Peter Goodchild, he noted that the description of the pale yellow and deep purple May flowering tulips was very impressionistic.

It is interesting to see looking around the garden that many groups of plants are block planted with genera together sometimes taking up a whole bed. For instance in Lady Serena's garden there is a bed of mostly Magnolia taking up a whole bed at one end of the garden against the wall, and at the other end Deutzia and Philadelphus take up one bed alongside a path backing to a wall. It seems obvious but the effect of planting with only one genus has great impact, but only for a short time, but then the roses and lilies which were in the centre part of the garden take over later.

Talking to one of the members on the day of the picnic she said she was

Mark Morrell, Jilly and Keith Schellenberg in the Formal Garden

rather nervous of seeing the garden because she had heard it was being restored and was afraid of what she might find. In the event she was pleasantly surprised and was clearly happy with what she had found. When the garden was at its height with four full-time gardeners and Bobbie James at the helm, the edges were crisper and planting clearer: Bobbie James lived there for 60 years until his death. However Lady Serena's 40 years there on her own, is I suggest, an important part of the garden's history and clearly one which many people have come to enjoy, and indeed many have never known it otherwise. In the end she lived there for 77 years. With reduced labour, the edges became softened and blurred, but still captured and contained by Bobbie James's architectural layout of hedges and paths. St Nicholas assumed a mantle of mystery and romance, brought about by necessity.

I can remember my first visit to St Nicholas and one of the first things Lady Serena James said to me, prodding an enormous *Senecio greyii* in the corner of the forecourt, which actually was taking up about a quarter of it: 'Now the National Trust would never allow that !'. I notice in deference to Lady Serena that the Senecio still sprawls. She could be direct and many of her comments ring in my ears still. On asking her what style she thought the garden was, she said without having to think 'It's an Edwardian garden, it's all straight lines'. Quite correct of course, although there are other layers and influences. In an effort to find out who their gardening friends were I once enquired whether they knew Ellen Wilmott to which she replied 'oh that funny old stick' and that was all I got. Evidence is showing more and more that she did exert some influence in the use of some of her plants and both she and Bobbie James did sit on the Lily Committee at the same time. I expect the 'funny old stick' comes from Ellen Willmot's increasing eccentricity as she got older. There has been some suggestion that she may have had a hand in the design of the rock garden. She was known to have helped lay out a woodland walk at Newby Hall.

Lady Serena was also responsible for the dividing up of the Long Border into sections, with benches in the bays. This reduces the labour but gives the same effect and also provides some let up, which works very well. They are very long. In a letter from her nephew-in-law, Walter James, in 1977 he commends her decision and notes 'The 4 new recesses in the long borders could be widened substantially, and I think that they would even look better.' Whether she took that advice or not is not known. However the current layout of the borders can firmly be attributed to her and probably done in the 1970's.

In her entry in The Englishwoman's Garden (1980) Lady Serena writes 'I came on the scene in 1923, loving flowers, loving weeding, bored with long Latin names and with high-powered gardening friends, but with no say in the planting or layout. However, I did annex a small kitchen garden behind the privet hedge which was known as MY garden and still is.' There were high powered gardening friends but one she spoke of fondly was E A Bowles referred to by her as Little Bowles. Every year a group of them would drive up to Teesdale to see Gentiana verna and certainly on one occasion Little Bowles accompanied them.

Keith and Jilly, with Mark, seem to be weaving a path between these two extremes of maintenance without losing sense of either the gardening achievements of Bobbie James or the touching romance of Lady Serena's loving care.

If any member has any information about the garden or connections with other gardeners or gardens I would be delighted to hear.

Caroline Kernan
kernan.boyce@btinternet.com

A Farewell to our President, The Earl of Harewood 1923 - 2011

The afternoon of Friday 30th September 2011, could not have been a more beautiful late summer's day when hundreds of guests gathered at Harewood to celebrate the long and distinguished life of George Henry Hubert Lascelles, 7th Earl of Harewood KBE, cousin to the Queen, who died peacefully on 11th July, 2011. He had been President of Yorkshire Gardens Trust since its inception in 1996: his support and encouragement have proved invaluable over the years and we shall miss him greatly.

As many will know the Earl's lifelong passion was music, especially opera, which he shared with his musically talented wife Patricia, Countess of Harewood. He was founder and vice-chairman of Opera North and served as managing director of English National Opera. It would not be an overstatement to describe his Thanksgiving Service as more of a musical extravaganza which enthralled and enlightened all of us who attended.

The Service was held at All Saints' Church, Harewood but due to its size, the seats within were reserved for family and close friends. Princess Alexandra, the Hon. Lady Ogilvy, represented the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh and Lord Crathorne represented Prince Charles and the Duchess of Cornwall. The majority of us were seated in a large marquee close to the church where the service was relayed to a screen. I represented Yorkshire Gardens Trust along with figureheads from a rainbow of charities and organisations close to the Earl's heart. He was well loved by people from all walks of life.

While we were arranging ourselves in the hopes of finding the coolest spot -

it was probably the hottest day of the summer - we were treated to a glorious rendition of tunes sung by the Colne Valley Male Voice Choir. The flaps of the marquee were rolled back to entice the faint breeze thus allowing us the opportunity to take in the magnificent view of Harewood House and the great landscape created by Capability Brown in which it so comfortably sits.

We were welcomed by Richard Mantle, Director of Opera North, who told us that the Earl was a lover of singing – good singing naturally! What was to follow constituted a mélange of exquisite musical pieces interspersed with thoughtful readings and prayers delivered by The Very Rev'd Canon David Richardson and embellished throughout with the Orchestra of Opera North conducted by Anthony Kraus. Extracts from this extraordinary musical feast were to include: Adagio from String Quintet in C – Franz Schubert, *Chilingirian Quartet with Rudi De Groote*; Nocturne - Serenade for tenor, horn and strings – Benjamin Britten, *Mark Padmore - tenor, Robert Ashworth – horn, Orchestra of Opera North*; The Song of the Flea – Modest Mussorgsky, *Sir John Tomlinson – bass, Roger Vignoles – piano*; An die musik – Franz Schubert, *Sarah Connolly – mezzo, Roger Vignoles – piano*; a speech from "Gloriana" by Benjamin Britten - *Dame Josephine Barstow*; Serenade to Music – Ralph Vaughan Williams and to top it all, there was a spectacular performance by The English National Opera live from The London Coliseum. The final hymn, Jerusalem, was followed by the Organ voluntary, Nun danket all Gott by Karg Elert which was magnificently recited by Simon Lindley.

James Lascelles - a devotee of Indian music - played a beautiful piece of Indian music on the dulcimer which he had originally composed for his father's 80th birthday, a remarkable sound which suited the moment. Later on at tea, I was fortunate to speak to James and learn more about Indian music and its influence on his family.

A tribute by David Lascelles, Earl of Harewood, enlightened us to his father's achievements. Amongst the responses the Earl had given to a question on what were the coolest things he had ever done, he proudly replied "introducing Indian music to Western Culture". He also told us that in 1947 the Earl had danced with Ginger Rogers! He fondly remembered his father's love of sport, his love of cricket and football and that he was with his father when England won the World Cup in 1966.

This was followed by a reading delivered by Mark Lascelles of Sonnet XV111 by William Shakespeare, perhaps the loveliest sonnet ever written.

Lord Harewood at Glyndebourne in 2003

The performing arts and football do not naturally run hand in hand but they were the Earl's enduring passions. For fifty years he was President of Leeds United Football Club where his friendship with Yorkshire's legendary footballer Jack Charlton blossomed. The Earl and Jack also shared a fervent love of shooting. Jack was a regular guest on shooting days at Harewood despite the problems of convincing his manager that he should be allowed time off! Few could fight back the tears when Jack stood up to give his tribute. After relating fond and amusing anecdotes of the man who had meant so much to him for some fifty five years, he concluded "he was far more than President of Leeds United – he was my friend".

Sir Mark Elder, whom the Earl had appointed Musical Director of English National Opera in 1980, amused us with his personal recollections. He talked about memorable driving holidays spent with the Earl and Countess in Europe adding that the former was a 'terrible back-seat driver'! He recalled the Earl's enormous physical presence when he entered a room, his resonant voice, the famous turquoise velvet jacket and the 'BWB' (beautiful white beard) all of which gave him gravitas. He said artistic people throughout the country owe him a debt and that he was dedicated to all forms of art. Sir Mark described him as dominating without being domineering. After arguments, his catchphrase would be "I think I'm going to lie down in the road for this one"! A more colourful personality could not have been described.

Though his love of gardens and landscape was not mentioned, it goes without saying that our late President cared passionately about them. Living in one of England most beautiful stately homes he worked tirelessly to preserve his inheritance for future generations. In the 1990s he commissioned the restoration of the Terrace Gardens and the Parterre to the original formal design of Charles Barry, an achievement which delighted Yorkshire Gardens Trust, reviving an important era in garden history. Over the years the Trust has worked closely with Harewood's Head Gardener Trevor Nicholson, always valuing his immense knowledge especially on conservation matters. His recent restoration of the Himalayan garden, the ultimate plantsman's paradise, is a true work of art. Having forged such a close bond with Harewood, it seemed fitting that with the publication in 2009 of Yorkshire Gardens Trust's first book *With Abundance and Variety - Yorkshire gardens and gardeners across five centuries*, we invited our President to write the foreward. To our delight, the Earl accepted. In it, he extols the virtues of gardens as a major source of pleasure declaring his sorrow for those who don't appreciate them and congratulating the Trust on doing its best to reduce people who fall into this category. He particularly enjoyed the essay on Plumpton Rocks written by Karen Lynch. This was a special place to him, laced with fond childhood memories where his parents had brought him and his brother to play. The Earl recalls the excitement of listening to the echoes of their voices resonating from the ancient rocks: such a mighty landscape could not fail to impress such an intelligent young mind.

We shall miss the Earl and all he stood for but the richness and variety of his fascinating life will live on in all those whom he inspired and in the great house and landscape which was his home and which he shared with so many.

We should like to offer our sincere condolences to Patricia, Countess of Harewood and the family.

Penelope Dawson-Brown

Visit to Maidens Folly, Youlton

30 June

It was the most perfect of evenings for a garden visit and, bar a short shower, the sun shone throughout. We were welcomed by Mr Henry Dean and entered the garden from the paddock by the wicket gate. We were told that the six seriously large compost bins were essential to prevent the continuous leeching of nutrients from the sandy loam soil of the area.

Maidens Folly is a very pretty orange-bricked, pantiled roofed Grade II cottage/farmhouse dating from the late 17 th century/early 18th century. The property stands in one and a half acres on the corner of Hag Lane at the cross roads with Goose Lane, at what must have been the 'centre' of the hamlet/ township of Youlton. Youlton Hall was the property of the Ellerker family from 1345 to the end of the 17th century. Originally a moated manor farmhouse, it was rebuilt in the 16th and 18th centuries and faces onto Maidens Folly. So too does the 18th century façade of the Methodist Chapel House, currently a private dwelling and previously a farmhouse.

Figure 1 - A map of the site within Youlton

Maidens Folly appears on the 1850 first series of the Ordinance Survey map (Sheet 139, see Figure 1). It is described there as a long narrow building, with a large orchard, a small enclosed garden to the property's front/ roadside and a yard at the rear. Here we enjoyed a glass of wine by a small copse of exquisite silver birch planted on the incline of a grassy bank.

Figure 2 - The path through the long border to the house

After refreshment we entered the garden via a series of rooms that wrap around the house that the late Mrs Mary Lee Dean described as her "big cottage garden". Tim Longville's appropriately titled "Down the Garden Path" (Country Life – June 2005) took issue with this most modest of descriptions, suggesting that Mrs Dean's garden was far more sophisticated than that. The walls and beech hedges were already in place when the Deans moved to the house, highly necessary to counter strong winds in a flat agricultural landscape, once the ancient Royal Forest of Galtres (deforested in 1603).

Following the curve of the garden wall there is a deep border of Mrs Dean's signature plants, notably the penstemons, *P*. 'Countess of Dalkeith', *P*. 'Garnet', *P*. 'Apple Blossom' and *P*. 'Snow Storm', together with lilies and hydrangeas interspersed with the old white *Rosa* 'Iceberg', all of which sit comfortably with the wall.

Next we found ourselves returned to a quieter and more formal style. Double rows of the lavender 'Hidcote' not only border the path to the front door, but also frame the pretty weathered brick and wisteria-clad frontage of the house. This juxtaposition of the rich and dramatic with the calm and the orderly is continued through a delightful herbaceous border between two majestic beech hedges where plants spill over onto the stone-flagged path. Gertrude Jekyll's "TheYew Walk" at Vann House in Surrey was of a similar design in 1930.

From this point white planting becomes the order of the day. Tim Longville says that this is Mrs Dean's "respectful tribute" to the late Vita Sackville-West who was nursed by Mrs Dean, when a student at The Royal Free Hospital in Belsize Park. Tim Longville surmises that Sissinghurst in general and the making of the white garden in particular must have been likely topics of conversation.

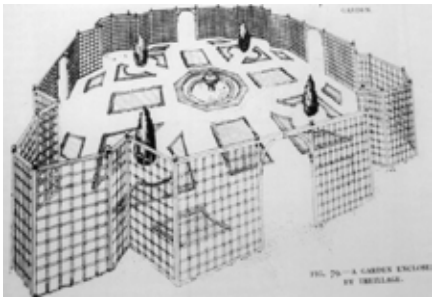

Figure 3 - A plan of the treillage surrounding the inner garden from Jekyll, G. and Weaver, L. (1912) *Gardens for Small Country Houses*. London: Country Life, p63

The raised octagonal structure is enclosed by the treillage is, according Tim Longville, inspired by Jekyll`s design at Upton Grey (see Figure 3). Here at Maidens Folly, it functions as an *orto botanico*, housing Mrs Dean`s collection of rare and tender plant, patiently watched over by a half-sized statue of a peasant boy. Around the deep green beech walls of this `room`, white monardas and the white hydrangea 'Annabelle' make a dramatic contrast. This is the garden of a most discerning horticulturalist, whose love of gardening and garden plants is exemplified by the perfect balance of loose planting and firm design. Mr Henry Dean has lovingly maintained her creation. We thank him for his hospitality.

Pauline Murray

Mount St. John

14 July 2011

Border at Mount St John

The visit to Mount St John in July was blessed with a glorious summer day. It is a very beautiful property lying to the north east of Felixkirk. The present house was built in 1720 by a clergyman, with some addition made in the 1870's. Modernisation was carried out in 1964 with a further extension by the present owners, Mr and Mrs Chris Blundell, who acquired the property approximately 11 years ago.

Felixkirk is named as the "Peace Village" from its original Domesday name of FRIDEBI and its place in history rests on the presence at Mount St John of the local headquarters (Commandery) of the Knights Hospitallers of St John of Jerusalem. The original house had stood below the gardens and the ha-ha that fall away from the south side of the present house. On a clear day York Minster can be seen on the horizon. The original ponds in the Valley Garden were stocked with carp to feed the returning Knights.

Our morning visit began with coffee served in the walled garden where we were introduced to the head gardener Chris Gough. Following his welcome we were split into groups each led by one of his team of gardeners for our tour, followed by a free period to wander about. The walled garden is laid out in a traditional manner: engraved stone edged beds and a lean-to greenhouse housing fig and kiwi fruit trees, orchids etc. The overall appearance is of a very tidy, full and well-kept area. This is highlighted by vivid orange marigolds placed throughout the vegetables, herbs and low cordoned pear and apple trees, the latter being used as path boundaries. Below the walled garden is the cut flower garden, set with long regimented island beds edged with manicured grass walks. The produce of both these gardens are collected daily and used in local pubs that are associated with Mr Blundell's business.

The Estate has 6 gardeners, one being solely responsible for lawns. Work began in 2003 on the garden area with all top soil being removed and replaced with a 60%/40% mix of top scree soil and peat. A total of 118,000 plants have been planted: trees and shrubs were obtained from Germany and herbaceous plants from a nursery in the UK. The original sunken garden has remained intact but alongside it, a new modern garden has been designed and landscaped by Tom Stuart-Smith, as has other parts of the Estate including the Valley garden. New walls, hedges, flights of steps, gravel paths and a modern pool are set in a cascade of borders, filled with a great variety of herbaceous plants, roses, shrubs and box balls. No feeding is done in this area except for a liquid seaweed fertiliser for the box. This new garden area compliments the extension that has been added between the house and the walled garden and fronted with a row of clipped Crateagus (hawthorn) trees. At the bottom edge is a ha-ha, first recorded in 1017, and now topped with immaculate lawns that link both the gardens. During the "special occasions" period in the summer these lawns are cut twice a day. The view from this area is quite awe inspiring.

The Valley garden, which falls away south west of the house corner, has been cleared of the natural foliage and breathtakingly planted on all sides. Long winding gravel paths trail down to the redesigned interlinking pools, now stocked with trout and some coarse fish. The natural water flows from the north side of the house and is pumped and recycled around the ponds. As in the gardens, the top soil was replaced and planted with some 86,000 plants, trees and shrubs, including tree ferns, self-seeding *Primula florindae*, epimediums, hostas, Japanese maples, together with moisture loving plants around the pool's perimeter, all viewed from wooden walkways and viewpoints.

The old stables behind the house have been modernised to house the family's collection of classic cars. Two years ago, a stud of 52 dressage horses was set up and is managed by 8 girls. A third phase in the grand plan is a new arboretum. The work carried out so far is truly amazing, giving a feeling of magnificent rolling lawns, manicured cultivated areas and quiet serene corners with spectacular views. What a wonderful day we all had.

Win Baldwin

Pond at Mount St John

Sion Hill

30 July

Set in the village of Kirby Wiske, near Thirsk, the estate has both a fascinating history and under the guidance of the current occupant, Michael Mallaby, an interesting future. At the start of our tour of the house and the gardens, Michael gave us a potted history, particularly of the more colourful inhabitants! Sion Hill Estate has had many owners since first mentioned in the Doomsday Book. It was the property of the wonderfully named Ulchil who held 1½ carucates (about 180 acres) as one 'manor,' and Ligulf, Tor, Siward and Gamel who held the rest with one hall, prior to the Norman Conquest. In common with much of the country, by 1086, it was held by the Norman, Picot, who was thought to be related to the Lascelles family (later owners of Harewood and other estates in Yorkshire). By 1210, a Roger de Lascelles was the occupier. However the family of Kirby Wiske were lords of the manor at the time. In the middle of the 13th century, another Roger Lascelles acquired the property. Roger had four daughters and on his death, the manor was assigned to one of them, Avis, and her husband, Robert, head of the family of Constable of Halsham in Holderness. It remained in the Constable family until 1590, when Sir Henry Constable (of Burton Constable) sold it to William Middleton of Stockeld. Twenty five years later it was in the possession of William Woode, whose grandson John sold it in 1668 to Sir Hugh Smithson of Stanwick.

Up until the advantageous marriage of Smithson's great-grandson and namesake in 1740 to the heiress of the Northumberland estates, the property had been known as 'Kirby Lodge'. Smithson (now Percy) changed the name to 'Sion Hill', possibly in reference to Syon Park, the London estate of the Percy family. Michael Mallaby in his talk also wondered whether it may be a reference instead to Psalm 48 – 'Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion'. The main section of former Sion Hill Hall was built around 1730. In 1788, the Percy family's interest came to an end and the estate was sold first to Metcalfe Graham Steele of Thirsk and eleven years later to Edward D'Oyly, together with the nearby estate of Brackenbrough for £11,000. It was D'Oyly who made significant improvements both to the house, adding the projecting wings, and the wider estate. This was reflected in the value when he sold it around 1820 for £18,000. The new owners were the Crompton family of Derby. Rookes Evelyn Bell Crompton was born there in 1845, son of Joshua Samuel and famous not only serving in the Crimean War (and earning a medal!) at the tender age of 10 but also in later life, as a famous engineer, founding the Compton & Co lighting company.

In 1867, the estate ownership turned full circle when George Lascelles became the proprietor. By the time Percy Stancliffe purchased it in 1911, there was a major problem with the structure when the Georgian house was surveyed. The latter's poor condition led to its demolition and in its place one of the last Edwardian country houses to be built in Yorkshire prior to the Great War. The new house was designed in 1913 at a cost of £5700 by the renowned architect Walter H. Brierley, who was known as 'the Lutyens of the North'. Based in York, he worked on over 300 commissions between 1885 and 1926. Goddards, on Tadcaster Road, built for the Terry Family in the 1920s and the regional headquarters for the National Trust was his last building. Sion Hill Hall is 'neo Georgian' in style (Figure 1) and is loosely based on the Lutyens' Middlefield House in Stapleford, Cambridgeshire. In its Edwardian heyday, it had twenty-two staff although one of these took a more prominent role in the latter period of the Stancliffes' tenure. In 1932, Mr Stancliffe brought in a nurse to look after his wife who was suffering from depression. Following the former's rather mysterious death (following a fall caused by slipping in

Figure 2 – The Long Walk

Figure 1 – Sion Hill Hall

some disinfectant to clear the drains in her bathroom), the nurse ended up looking after the husband instead until he died in 1947…

Today, the hall is in the care of a charitable trust, following the death of the last owner, Herbert W Mawer in 1982. Mawer bought Sion Hill in 1962 and restored the mansion, bringing his collection of fine antiques and works of art that he and his wife had built up from the 1930's. In 1952, all the fixtures from the house had been removed and slowly some of these are being returned. Michael has not only added to the contents of the house, he has also restored and enhanced the present gardens including the formal planting complimenting the house and the Edwardian period in which it was built. Now a woodland garden sweeps towards the banks of the Swale, together with a vegetable garden is in its traditional setting below the Walled Garden. The restoration of the garden has been complicated by the failure of the original drainage system as areas of the garden are heavy clay, while others are free draining rubble and mortar left over from the foundations of the old house.

There are glimpses of an earlier Georgian garden including a long walk (Figure 2). No maps or plans exist of the Georgian landscape, although there is a book written by a Richard Steele of Sion Hill in 1793. Its grand title is 'An Essay upon Gardening: containing a catalogue of exotic plants for the stoves and green-houses of the British gardens, the best method of planting the hot-house vine: with directions for obtaining and preparing proper earths and compositions, to preserve tender exotics, observations on the history of gardening, and a contrast of the ancient with the modern taste'. This Richard could have been the son of Metcalf Graham Steele, although he would only have been 18 at the time…So it is possible that there were stoves and early green houses on the site.

Louise Wickham

PALMS – Resourceful, symbolic and architectural

In April 2010, I attended an international Palm Symposium which brought together botanists and scientists from all over the world with a collective interest in *Arecaceae,* the palm family. It was held in the beautiful and ancient town of Montpellier in the South of France, home to the oldest faculty of medicine outside Paris. The window of our small hotel exquisitely framed a view of the 14th century bell tower of Saint-Pierre Cathedral which adjoins the Faculty. The early physicians were apothecaries, whose medicinal plants and herbs were most probably grown by the monks of the Benedictine monastery on which the Cathedral's foundations were built.

A pre-conference tour had been arranged to look at parks, gardens and palm groves situated along the French and Italian Riviera and Martin and I we were fortunate to be included. Palms, of course, are not native to this part of the world but since their introduction, the landscape has been transformed into a rich and luxuriant one. We were based at San Remo, an historic town where palm trees dominate the public parks and gardens and grace the promenade along the sea front. One of our hosts was Claudio Littardi, President of the Research and Study Centre for Palms at San Remo. He is in charge of

Palm leaves have been cherished for their religious significance since the birth of Christianity

maintaining the municipality's palm trees and many of the fine specimens we looked at were planted by him some twenty years ago. Today he supervises a team of men who keep them in perfect order. This entails climbing the tallest palms to cut off their lower leaves once they have withered. A huge range of palm species from all over the world are grown here due to the gentle climate. The most prolific is the date palm from the Canary Islands, *Phoenix canariensis.* Recently scientists have become increasingly concerned about the survival of this species because it is under attack from a lethal palm weevil *Rhynchophorus ferrugineus*, which eats the new buds and eventually kills the palm. Since 2005, more than 100,000 palms have been destroyed in the southern European coastal regions and Claudio is only too well aware of the vulnerability of those in his charge at San Remo.

The religious significance of palms can be traced back to Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem. The Gospel of John specifically mentions palm fronds which were strewn in his path and this is because the palm branch was a symbol of triumph and victory. Palm Sunday or Passion Sunday as it is sometimes called, always falls on the Sunday before Easter and is celebrated in Christian countries throughout the world. In one South American country a certain species of palm almost became extinct due to the demands of Catholic worshippers who wave them during Palm Sunday processions. In European churches Palm Sunday is often marked by the distribution of palm leaves tied in the shape of a cross. These, and other decorations crafted from dried palm leaves, were always an important part of Christian worship and during the Middle Ages palm groves were established in the Mediterranean region to satisfy demand. Today only two remain: one in Spain and one in Bordighera, a small town between San Remo and Monaco which we visited. Situated on a steep hillside close to the town, the ancient palm grove contains date palms of all different sizes. The original specimens were introduced by Dominican monks who cultivated them solely for religious decoration. Presently much is being done to re-establish these palm groves using the original watering system of water channels cut into the hillside on which they grow. Local people continue to produce religious decorations using the dried palm leaves to weave their products.

San Remo's parks are famous for their palm trees

In England, during medieval times, the absence of palm leaves for Palm Sunday meant that alternative greenery was substituted. This was often yew, box, or willow thus Palm Sunday became known as Yew Sunday or Branch Sunday.

The art of weaving palm leaves in San Remo

Palm leaves were, and still are, important in Hindu religion. For over two thousand years the palm leaves of the Indian Talipot Palm, one of the tallest and most floriferous palms in the world, was used by scribes to record much of India's literary and scientific heritage. The readily available material was dried, smoothed and smoke-treated to ensure its durability - manuscripts and paintings have survived to this day. Patta chitra, the painting on palm leaves, is an art form which is still practiced.

Palm leaves for the Pope and his Cardinals, during the Easter religious ceremonies at the Vatican, are of huge importance. For many years this honour has fallen to Claudio Littardi. He is the man responsible for supplying them and each year before Easter, he takes great care in sourcing the finest branches of the Canary Date Palms growing at San Remo. Once selected, they are meticulously packed and loaded on to a lorry, which Claudio himself drives to Rome. It is a lovely story of ritual embracing our affinity with the plant kingdom.


Date Palm after old leaves have been cut off

The International palm Conference at Montpellier was hosted by two French research institutions CIRAD and IRD whose work is focused on scientific research to help sustainable agriculture in Third World countries. Many of their projects involve palms especially coconut, date and oil palms. Oil palm production is one of their main concerns. Originally from North Africa, the oil palm was introduced to tropical areas of the globe where demand has led to the exploitation of vast areas of pristine rainforest in order to establish palm oil plantations. Malaysia is one of the worst affected countries resulting in the devastation of the natural habitat of the orangutan.

Palms, of which there are some 2800 species, are undoubtedly the most diverse plants of our planet. To be marooned on a desert Island with only a coconut palm would ensure your survival for they will give you nutritious food and drink, oil and building material and even a shady place to hide from the sun. Of course there is always the risk that a coconut may drop on your head!

Penelope Dawson-Brown

Boundary Cottage, Seaton Ross

18 August 2011

My garden is one that is un-dug and un-designed (well not drawn on paper, it just evolved).One of you pointed out my favourite stainless steel border spade and expressed surprise. Spades have multiple uses in addition to digging! I always invite visitors to walk on my soil to closely examine plants: they will do it no harm.

My garden has no permanent compost heap but all organic matter is recycled. Lawn mowings are mulch mowed, all weeds are sprayed, hoed or pulled out and left on the surface to desiccate and die. Woody prunings are converted to charcoal on my bonfire and are added to my vegetable plot. Most leaves are left on the surface: those on the lawn are chopped by the mower. Brenda does not allow me to shred and scatter in situ my herbaceous perennial tops as I do in Bolton Percy churchyard garden and on the village plot. Generous amounts of these make temporary organic layers or heaps in the vegetable garden, together with kitchen peelings. All brassica tops are fed to Harry's rheas next door, they rush to the fence when they see me with a bundle! Oh, and all our newspapers are buried in deep holes to gradually create raised borders. (Anyone interested in my passion for charcoal should google terra preta and biochar)

My whole gardening philosophy is based on the principle, 'take care of the weeds and the plants will look after themselves'. Never let weeds seed and get rid of all the perennial weeds before you start (with the weed killer glyphosate).

I am sure I bored visitors with my monologue about my sandy soil, water retentive when wet and water repellent when dry. It is slightly acid, enabling me to grow azaleas and other calcifuges. I hope the plants you bought from me are doing well: as I explained, raised in my modified soil, not compost. Don't do this at home, most soils are unsuitable. For the record I add lime as dolomitic limestone and nutrients as slow release resin coated fertiliser. Perhaps you want to hear about the plants!

I am addicted to herbaceous perennials. The lower part of the acre garden has a high water table which is great for my giant herbaceous borders. It has lots of vulgar colour and tall, unstaked free standing clumps in full sunlight. I am quite happy to supplement the hardy plants with dahlias. In fact in the drier parts of the garden I plant dahlias very deep and expect them to over winter (in a normal year, not 2010). Elsewhere in the garden I like to use herbaceous plants in mixed plantings with bulbs, alpines and dwarf shrubs where they can all be viewed as specimens. My walk-in bog area is contoured with small artificial streams and ponds and raised drier areas. I love letting primulas naturalise.

The basic layout of my garden is that most parts are set in grass and effectively are connected by sweeps of grass. (Thank you someone for complimenting me on the turf: most people don't notice).Visitors observe different things in the garden. Some look at the forty or so developing small trees, all different. Others notice the gravel gardens or my rock gardens and alpine displays. We like mulches, especially gravels, which plants love and are wonderful for water conservation.

My vegetable garden is not a thing of beauty. I don't do straight lines and some of the veg such as rocket, coriander, spinach beet and parsley sows itself. My carrots and leeks are sown broadcast (there are few weeds after ten years not seeding and no digging up of buried weed seed). It's pretty chaotic but we have lovely fresh vegetable all year round. I have to tell you that Brenda says Tesco would not touch them!

We are suckers for variegation and coloured foliage. Plants with nice foliage have a long season of interest. In fact we appreciate plants with multiple uses for example this year we have had a lot of blueberries and can still look forward to fantastic autumn colour from the same plants. They are in an ornamental border. Similarly our herbs are where they grow well and look good. Chives rather invasively thrive in the bog garden. Sweet grapes dangle over the sitting area on the pergola.

We do hope you will come again to see us. Look in the yellow book and also check in the Yorkshire Post for open days in April.

Roger Brook

West Bank Park and Holgate Windmill

1st September

Figure 1 – West Park entrance at Hamilton Drive

It was a bright early autumnal day: just right for a visit to two gems in Holgate, York. Some 30-odd members gathered first thing at the local working men's club to hear the background to the day. The main element was an introduction to West Bank Park and in particular to its early role as a home and nursery for the famous Backhouse family. The club was a good starting point, as it began life as the nursery's laboratories. The Park is a beautiful 20-acre urban space occupying part of the former site of the 19th C nurseries (Figure 1). Opened as a public park in 1938, many generations of local children have played there and for the older generations it has a very well established bowling club. The park has a healthy mix of formal and semi-natural areas and is structured around the earlier pattern of use by the Backhouse family.

Run by York City Council, the park now proudly flies the Green Flag and has a well-established Friends group. We were pleased to hear from Margaret Weedon about the work of the group. It can trace its origins back to 1993 when locals heard of a possible housing development threatening the park. Thanks to concerted campaigning, the scale of proposals were greatly reduced and redesigned to minimise the impact. The group then set themselves the task of enhancing what was left of the park. Today it is a much loved local green space with considerable natural environment interest (greater spotted woodpeckers were busy during our visit). The Friends help organise a regular programme of events and have produced a booklet themed around memories of the park. Much has been achieved with limited funding, although the Park has had a small grant through the 'Breathing Spaces' scheme.

Before being gifted to the City, the park was part of a renowned nursery garden belonging to the Backhouse family between c1853 and 1921. We were told about the origins and early history of the site by our Vice-President Peter Goodchild. The Backhouse family had already established a nursery in York in 1816 when they bought the long-established business of John and George Telford. This had been based inside the walled city, in the nursery garden known as 'Black Friar's Gardens', which lay between Tanner Row and the city walls. This site was abandoned in the 1830's when this site was used for the development of York's first railway station. The nursery moved first to Fishergate and then, in 1853, to Holgate – possibly to land already taken over from the Telfords. The position and extent of this nursery can be determined from the 1853 1st Edition Ordnance Survey 6 inch to the mile map. Peter reminded us of the importance of nurseries to the history of early landscape gardening: a point often overlooked by many garden historians, with the notable exception of John Harvey. As well as being centres of horticultural skill and expertise, they were essential training grounds for new gardeners.

At some point between 1853 and 1892, West Bank House and its famous rock garden were built for the family. Early photographs of the house and garden were on show and we later visited the site where they stood. The house was well set back from the Acomb Road. Its site (the house was demolished around the early 1970s) is now a glade in the woodland which has taken over this part of the park. The woodland includes several mature specimen trees including dawn redwoods and a giant redwood. The rock garden lay to the south of the house and its northern half lies within the park: some of it much overgrown by the woodland. The southern extent of the rockery was partly cleared and infilled at some point after 1954/5 and has now been built over.

Between 1853 and 1892 the main office building and yard of the nursery were constructed to the west of the Great Nursery and set back only a short distance from Acomb Road. The office was the focal point of the nursery and the point at which customers and members of the public were received. Both office and yard are now lost: the site now being partially occupied by the adjacent grounds of the Church of Jesus Christ the Latter-Day Saints.

In about 1910, West Bank House and its gardens and grounds were sold as a family home to James Hamilton (later Sir James). In 1921 the nursery business was also sold to James Hamilton and a group of fellow investors. The business remained in the hands of the Hamilton family until eventually being sold around 1954. It was the Hamilton family who gifted the park to the City of York in the 1930's. In understanding the later history of the nursery we have gained much information from Daphne Hamilton, daughter of Sir James, who still lives nearby.

Before visiting the Park Penelope Dawson-Brown further set the scene with a lecture entitled 'The Greatness of the Backhouse Nurseries'. Penelope has been working with Peter for the last couple of years to better understand and promote the importance of the Backhouse family and their work. They have also been working closely with Daphne Hamilton to record her recollections of the later history of the

Figure 2- Peter Goodchild leads the group around the park

West Bank nursery. She was delighted to introduce Daphne to the meeting and advise us that important archive material still held by Daphne, including some delightful early glass slides, have been gifted to the Borthwick Institute. There they are being scanned and will be fully available in digital form.

Figure 3 - Daphne Hamilton (centre) in discussion with members near the site of West Bank House

Penelope's excellent full lecture is to be published elsewhere and we await this with great interest. A few salient points are, however, useful here to set the scene. The Backhouses were another of our great northern Quaker families. Originally from Darlington, the family were also bankers (one of our members kindly brought along some early Backhouse bank notes for display) but also had a deep interest in the natural world and, in particular, botany. Early family members investigated the upper Tees valley and also travelled abroad, botanising alongside their missionary work. Thomas and his younger brother James were the ones to buy the Telford Nursery in York. Building on the Telford stock they initially specialised in fruit and trees. James botanised with William Hooker and fell in love with alpine flowers. Later he went to Australia and South Africa as a missionary during which time he also investigated the plant life there, corresponding throughout with Hooker. Many plants were sent home and thrived, not least in the huge glasshouses which had been erected at West Bank.

James' son (also called James) followed in his father's footsteps but also developed an ardent interest in geology. This interest inspired him to create the rock gardens which were to become such a Backhouse 'signature'. His gardens at Holgate were to inspire the horticultural world for years and were written about in several journals. On his death his son (another James!) took over whilst also developing his position as a highly respected and published ornithologist.

There is much more detail which can, and will, be added to the above skeletal discussion but it is clear that the Backhouse nurseries were among the most spectacular in the world. Underpinning the displays was a highly developed and scientific understanding of plants. The importance of the nurseries, to both York and the wider world of garden history, is very significant and deserves greater recognition. Thankfully with the detailed work now being conducted by Peter and Penelope this gap in knowledge and appreciation is finally being addressed.

The site visit which followed the introductory lectures transformed our appreciation of the Park (Figure 2) and was a revelation to those of us who thought they already knew it (I regularly walk my dog there!). Whilst much is known about the broad original layout of the house, gardens and associated features there is much fine detail which could probably be further teased out whether through documentary research, on-site archaeology, and local calls for information (Figure 3).

Figure 4 - Holgate Windmill in 2011 with its newly restored fantail

Following our visit to West Bank, we crossed Acomb Road to visit Holgate Windmill. This is a Grade II listed windmill built in 1770 and which was at work grinding corn until about 1933 (Figure 4). Built to a Lincolnshire pattern, it was rare in having five sails. Remarkably it has most of its internal machinery still in place. It is the last surviving mill in York and one of only two in Yorkshire. Today it sits, somewhat uncomfortably, on a very small traffic island amidst a 1930's housing estate. Sadly the millwright's house and associated buildings, which can be seen on a number of early illustrations, is long gone. Figure 5 is an 1895 watercolour of the mill by A Fletcher (an unknown artist) owned

Figure 5 - Holgate Windmill and environs in 1895, watercolour by A. Fletcher

by myself. It is the earliest known watercolour of the mill and is used for merchandising by the Mill group. A large landholding here was originally gifted to the City but sadly the land immediately around the mill was quickly developed. In recent years the mill has been revitalised by the Holgate Windmill Preservation Society, a local group who have been remarkably successful in drumming up interest in and support for the mill. Key members of the group explained the mill and their work to us before guiding parties up the tower. Since 2006, the exterior of the mill has been restored and work has been done to secure the internal features and replace the cap. In July 2011 the fantail was lifted into place and now the sails, which are under manufacture, are eagerly awaited. Once complete, the aim is to begin grinding corn again, with the aid of a new electric motor. This will allow the team to grind corn even when the wind is not blowing. The Preservation Society has an excellent website at www.holgatewindmill.org. The mill is regularly open for visits with details on the web.

Dr Margaret Nieke

Hackfall Restoration Wins Awards

Hackfall Grade I historic park and garden became the scene of a celebratory award ceremony just before the weekend of the Heritage Open Days. A marquee was erected on the field in front of Mr William Aislabie's Banquet House at Hackfall, (now the Landmark Trust holiday 'Ruin') and guests who had been involved with the restoration of Hackfall were invited, including a number of YGT members.

James Ramsden, *photo by David Mason*

Dr Lestor Borley, the chairman of Europa Nostra UK, came to present the award to Hackfall as one of just six 'Grand Prix' winners out of twenty seven projects spread across Europe. The six were recognised at the 2011 European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage at the June Europa Nostra Awards ceremony in Amsterdam. The 'jury had been captivated by the authenticity of the restoration of the ruined buildings, highlighting the garden's poetic communion with nature.'

Tom Ramsden welcomed Dr Borley and his wife to Hackfall and thanked them for making the journey to Yorkshire. Dr Borley in turn thanked everyone for their warm welcome and for his two hour spirited walk round Hackfall. He explained that Europa Nostra thinks it important to present the awards in the locality of the winning project so that more people can enjoy the presentation. He commented on his respect for all the work that has been done by the Hackfall, Woodland and Landmark Trusts and volunteers. He has learnt of the sheer mountain of professionalism and the skills that have gone into the project. The award is to the three Trusts involved but we must not forget that without the richness of the Heritage Lottery Fund, the restoration would not have been possible. Tom had already mentioned that Dr Borley was the former director of NT Scotland and Dr Borley said they would not have achieved all they did without the National Heritage Memorial Fund which was a forerunner to the HLF, committed to saving our national heritage.

In his capacity as chairman of Europa Nostra UK, Dr Borley explained that it is part of the pan-European Federation for Cultural Heritage, with volunteers in fifty countries of Europe, not just the EC. Europa Nostra has been in existence for nearly fifty years. Count Schweizer as Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe was asked one day why given there was a wonderful Italian cultural organisation, Italia Nostra, why not a Europa Nostra and so it was created in the Council of Europe offices in Paris 1963.

Dr Lestor Borley, Alison Brayshaw, Martin Stancliffe and Norman Starks, *photo by David Mason*

Dr Borley confessed that despite working all over Europe and being professionally involved with the development of cultural tourism he had never heard of Hackfall, although he could take anyone to the Leeds Pals monument on the hill nearby or to Thorp Perrow. He had picked up a guide to Masham recreational activities which says that visitors 'can scramble around the follies of Hackfall' but hastened to say it is not on the follies but around the follies. Finally he would like to congratulate the people with vision responsible for all the restoration they have achieved together and James Ramsden in particular.

Europa Nostra Award, *photo by David Mason*

James had already make it clear that the Europa Nostra's award was in fact to all three Trusts for what they had done for Hackfall, not just to the Hackfall Trust and Woodland Trust. The three recipients for the award were Martin Stancliffe for Landmark Trust, who was involved in the Banquet House restoration and is now a Landmark trustee, Alison Brayshaw for Hackfall Trust representing them as adjacent landowner with a long involvement with Hackfall Trust, and for Woodland Trust and Norman Starks, the Woodland Trust UK Operations Director.

After the presentations James thanked Dr Borley and presented him with a picture of Fishers Hall. We were treated to a glass of bubbly and cake from one topped with a marchpane model of Fishers Hall. James then led us out onto the Terrace to toast Hackfall and the volunteers, past, present and future because it is on them that its future depends. Some wag asked 'do we throw the glasses over the Terrace?' The majority of the guests then went for tours of Hackfall led by some of the experts who had been involved with the restoration work of the gardens and the follies.

A few weeks later Hackfall again came into the limelight with more accolades, this time at the Ripon Civic Society annual awards. Hackfall was awarded the Best Environmental Improvement Award and the Best Project Award. The outstanding overall award was to the Rt Hon James Ramsden himself, recognising his outstanding contribution and dedication. His vision and perseverance over thirty years with the formation of the Hackfall Trust and the immense amount of hands-on work in the woodland, he has transformed the Hackfall landscape from near-dereliction to its current state of good repair, re-instating the magical quality that William Aislabie created.

Alison Brayshaw

Coldstones Cut

13 September

The quarry from one of the small viewing platforms

As we picnicked in the car, buffeted by the wind and rain of Hurricane Katia, I did wonder if this was the best of days to visit a sculpture 1400 feet above sea level. But, with the usual YGT spirit, we pulled on our weather-proof gear and assembled to meet our two guides.

To begin, Linda Smith, Rural Archaeologist with North Yorkshire County Council, showed us the remains of the Toft Gate Lime Kiln and gave a brief history of the industry that had once been so important in Nidderdale. From there we walked up the steep hill to see Coldstones Cut. Bent double to fight against the wind it was a bit of a challenge and the relative shelter of the structure was extremely welcome when we reached the top. Huddled together we were introduced to Bob Orange, Operations Manager of the Coldstones Quarry, who lived up to his name in citrus-bright high-vis jacket and trousers.

Bob explained the background to the Coldstones Cut. Local children perceived the quarry as noisy and dirty and the operators, Hanson Aggregates, began an educational programme to help them better understand what happened on the site. A simple platform was built above the quarry so that the workings could be viewed in safety. The tours became so popular that in 2006 it was decided that a more substantial structure was required. At this point the local arts organisation, Nidderdale Visual Arts, suggested that something much more dramatic could be created on the spot and the idea of a public artwork was born. Major funding was obtained from Natural England's Aggregate Levy Sustainability Fund, the National Lottery and from Hansen Aggregates. The Henry Moore Centre in Leeds suggested artists who might design the sculpture and the commission was awarded to Andrew Sabin. Planning permission was eventually granted in late 2009 and work began on site the following March. The opening ceremony was held on 16 September 2010.

Constructed of limestone from the quarry, the sculpture is entered through a narrow chasm with huge blocks of stone towering to left and right. At the end is a viewing platform with a magnificent view of the quarry with its geometric spiralling terraces. Looking back down the cut there is a vista towards Guisecliff high above Pateley Bridge. On a clear day you can just about make out the Two Stoops folly, another landmark in local stone but from 250 years earlier. The floor of the cut is tarmacked and painted yellow lines and stone bollards run down the sides. Some disliked this modern intrusion into the landscape but Bob explained that one of the major uses of the aggregate produced in the quarry is for road building, and the artist wanted to show the link via this contemporary streetscape. The cut has influences ancient and modern - Pateley Bridge high street, where the tall stone houses hem in a narrow street; ancient stone chambers; dry stone walls and sheepfolds... As the rain stopped, and the sun came out, we could also appreciate that the cut functions in a similar way to one of James Turrell's Skyspaces with the high walls framing views of the clouds racing by above.

A passage leads off from each side of the cut and two spiral paths, echoing the quarry terraces, ascend to two small viewing platforms. One has a plaque to help identify the many species of birds to be seen and the other has a viewfinder pointing out everywhere from Timbuktu to Middlesbrough (spelled incorrectly as Mike Heagney was quick to spot). The slender column of the cut and the two circular platforms, when viewed in plan, suggest both the female ovaries and the male sexual organ, perhaps a reference to creation. The quarry-workers have a number of nicknames for the structure, some of them too rude for Bob to pass on to us, but one favourite was 'The Womb with a View'.

Bob Orange explains the story of Coldstones Cut

YGT members were privileged to be amongst the first to learn that Coldstones Cut has been awarded the 2011 Marsh Award for Excellence in Public Sculpture. Administered by the Public Monuments and Sculpture Association, the award celebrates 'new works that show originality, artistic quality and merit, and a concern for their setting'. The PMSA is a charity set up in 1991, to raise awareness of art in public places. The award is one of a number awarded annually by the Marsh

Christian Trust recognising unsung heroes who aim to improve the world we live in.

Coldstones is the last working quarry in the area. It is estimated to have a future working life of 15 to 20 years before it will be reclaimed by nature so within a generation the Coldstones Cut will be its memorial.

A reduced number of brave windswept YGT members carried on to Duck Street Quarry. This is a private reserve and only accessible by permission due to the numerous dangers on site. From Roman times there has been mining for lead and fluorspar here and worked seams of exposed mineral veins are evident. In 1960 it was abandoned as a roadstone quarry and luckily, left to its own devices, it has naturally regenerated. It lies on a seam of carboniferous limestone which is unusual for the area and is important now for both flora and geology. Now designated SINC and SSSI it probably represents the finest piece of upland calcareous grassland in the district. Dr Mike McEvoy, joint owner of the site, gave us a comprehensive tour of the varied terrain and told us of the four orchids and other rare plants that can be found in earlier months of the year and the great selection of butterflies that would have been about in more favourable weather conditions. The site is managed to enhance the species present and limited grazing is being experimented on the top of the newly fenced quarry edges. Members were keen to return in spring to see the orchids and other native species.

Coldstones Cut is freely accessible at all times and can be accessed from the B6265 near Greenhow, 2 miles from Pateley Bridge.

Karen Lynch

Valley Gardens Harrogate

3rd October

The historic Magnesium Drinking Well in need of restoration

We were fortunate to have a fine day for our annual trip to an urban park. Assembling outside the Harrogate Pump Room Museum, members showed their appreciation to Alison Brayshaw as she attended her last function as Events Co-ordinator. David Rhodes then welcomed everyone to the joys of Harrogate's sulphurous springs and the relief of Farrah's Harrogate toffee to remove the taste of bad eggs. He explained the gradual growth of Harrogate as Yorkshire's spa town and emphasised the need for areas to promenade whilst partaking of the waters. Traditionally known as Black Bogs or Bogs Field, the Valley Gardens are world famous for having 36 unique springs that are the most diverse known to mankind.

Patrick Kilburn, Head of Parks & Open Spaces at Harrogate Borough Council, took us on a very informative tour of the Valley Gardens. He initially explained that a design competition was held in 1886 for a '*Public Pleasure Ground*' and the various phases were achieved by 1912. Today it is a Grade ll registered site and a major feature of Harrogate. He took us along the *Elgar Walk* by the avenue of beech trees, pointing out the numerous species and colourful flower beds. Patrick explained the many problems of maintaining the historic character whilst planning for future replacements without upsetting regular walkers.

Over the last 100 years the area has maintained its character whilst satisfying the modern need for model boats, crazy golf, children's fun area and the inevitable skate boarding. All agreed the various needs had been accommodated well into the historic spa character. Members visited the Open Bandstand, impressively restored Sun Pavilion famous for its Tea Dances and now a popular wedding venue. A recent addition was a planted biodiversity bed with a 'Bug Hotel'.

We were shown the restored well heads over various springs and then viewed the Magnesium Well Pump Room and heard about the campaign by Friends of the Garden to restore the building. Patrick showed how the park leads through an open pitch & put area to the 'Pinewoods' and ultimately to Harlow Carr Gardens providing a delightful pedestrian route from the very centre of Harrogate. Finally he gave a glimpse of the long-term replanting envisaged and provision of better facilities for the public and staff.

Patrick then introduced Tony Sissons, a Friend of the Garden and a leading light with Harrogate in Bloom and today our guide around the restored New Zealand Garden. Tony briefly explained the WW2 connection between Harrogate and Royal New Zealand Air Force and the on-going links with Wellington Council. In 1953 a collection of NZ plants were given to Harrogate and an area of the park devoted to these unique plants. Fifty years on the area was rather over grown and Tony and others have worked with Harrogate Council to restore this setting.

Tea and scones at the Magnesium Well Cafe

In 2010, Maori visitors donated a *pou whenua* (carved post) and various logs have been carved into New Zealand icons, such as the marlin and a kiwi, and into a bench by 'Chainsaw Mick'. Patrick and Tony were then warmly thanked for a most informative tour of the Valley Gardens before we finally walked across the gardens to the Grade ll listed Magnesium Well Cafe for a much needed cup of tea and scone.

David Rhodes

CONSERVATION AND PLANNING

"The enchantments of this place…constitute a perfect landscape"

We are very blessed in this country with a wonderful and inspirational range of landscapes from high craggy peaks and heather clad moorlands to undulating wooded valleys, picturesque rivers, farmed fields dotted with settlements, amazing historic buildings, broad plains, wetlands and estuaries and tracts of unspoilt coast. Our cultural history of parks and gardens is much admired, with the English Landscape style translated into designed landscapes across the globe. Yet we often do not appreciate the treasures that we have: the sheer delight of growing plants whether in an allotment, a pot, a public park or our own small plot; the quiet places to unwind and the landscapes to savour as we climb across stiles and through woods. All replenish the spirit and are needed more than ever in the frantic world that we inhabit. Yet what do we do? We despoil this treasure in the name of so-called sustainability, progress and economics. The past two years or so has seen an increase in the approval of plans for wind farms, a number of these impacting on our special landscapes: although it could be argued that every wind farm impacts on a landscape that is loved by a good number of people. The Conservation sub-committee of the YGT has been particularly exercised by the recent applications for wind turbines at Chelker Reservoir, which will have a seriously damaging impact on Bolton Abbey and its extensive associated Romantic landscape.

Dr. T.D. Whitaker, in his *The History and Antiquities of Craven* (1805), wrote lyrically about Wharfedale at Bolton Abbey: "the enchantments of this place … constitute a perfect landscape". To emphasise just how perfect it was, Whitaker quoted from William Mason's famous poem, *The English Garden*, published in the 1780s:

. . . where nature and where time
Have work'd congenial; where a scatter'd host
Of antique oaks darken the sidelong hills;
While, rushing through their branches, rifted cliffs
Dart their white heads, and glitter through the gloom:
More happy still, if one superior rock
Bear on its brow the shiver'd fragment huge
Of some old Norman fortress; happier far —
Ah! then most happy — if this vale below
Wash with the crystal coolness of its rills
Some mouldering abbey's ivy-vested wall.

Figure 1 - Watercolour of Bolton Abbey by JMW Turner, 1809 © Trustees of the British Museum

Bolton Abbey with its ancient 'fortress' of Barden Tower and the 'mouldering abbey' of Bolton Priory exemplifies Mason's sentiments completely. Whitaker claimed that Bolton Priory had "no equal among the northern houses". Although he considered Fountains Abbey to be more "magnificent", its Skelldale setting was "insignificant", while Furness Abbey was dilapidated both in structure and situation. Kirkstall Abbey, he conceded, was a "superior ruin" but he declared in Gilpinesque summary that "it wants the seclusion of a deep valley and the termination of a bold rocky foreground". Even famous Tintern Abbey -"perfection" in structure, woods, cliffs and river - could not match Bolton Abbey's Picturesque foreground. This foreground, bound on the west by "a rising copse" and on the east by the bluff of "oak wood, with jutting points of grey rock", offered contrasting views to south and north. To the south lay open dale "soft and delicious ... and the bounding fells beyond". But it was the northern view that revealed "the glories of Bolton . . . the aged groves of Bolton Park, the growth of centuries; and further yet, the barren and rocky distances of Simon Seat and Barden Fell, contrasted to the warmth, fertility and luxuriant foliage of the valley below". Turner visited the Bolton Abbey Estate on many occasions between 1808 and 1824 producing a series of exceptionally fine watercolours including the one reproduced here (Figure 1) and Thomas Girtin in his short life completed fifteen paintings of Bolton Abbey. It's an understatement to say that we find it very hard to understand the reasoning for *'Two Wind Turbines with a Maximum Tip Height of 75 metres and Maximum Hub Height of 46 metres with Associated Foundation, Crane Hardstandings, and Sub Stations, Improvements to and New Stations of the Access Track and Widening of Access from the A65.'* English Heritage has voiced similar objections, as they did for the previous one.

Of course the arguments around energy and carbon targets arouse much debate and it was interesting to read the recent controversial report by accountants, KPMG, that suggested that the government could save each member of the population almost £550 by 2020 if it scraps expensive wind energy plans in favour of cheaper nuclear and gas-fired power plants. Cost is central to the debate. Wind power is the most expensive form of electricity generation to build, with huge costs and landscape impact in connecting to the grid. Even as I optimistically hope that wind farms will not be with us forever, there will still be the concrete pads and other infrastructure left behind long after the turbines have gone.

The economics of heritage is an important way of getting the historic environment message across to government, so it is encouraging that amongst the statistics of **Heritage Counts 2011** we find that there has been a rise in visitor figures to at least 50.4m to heritage sites in 2010 and the gross revenue amongst properties that responded to the VisitEngland survey rose by 4% between 2009 and 2010. Heritage Open Days alone enjoyed 2.2m visitors this year. On our own patch we were delighted to hear that

at Kiplin Hall this year, visitors to the house and gardens were up 28% and just to the gardens 229%. There has also been a rise in membership figures for the larger heritage organisations. Unfortunately we notice in our conservation work that there is reducing historic and conservation expertise, so are not surprised to learn that this year there is a continuing loss of jobs in local authority historic environment services despite an increase in planning permissions and also in trainees and apprentices in historic environment related professions.

As you will imagine we have been considerably concerned about the draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and our concerns have been voiced by the Association of Gardens Trusts (AGT). We concur with Baroness Andrews (Chair of English Heritage) who has said that there was a need to know what the Government meant by sustainable development, and called for the definition to be spelled out fully and clearly "in such a way that the Prime Minister's public assurances to the National Trust, that the planning system is about balance, and, by implication, not about the preference for development at all costs over other considerations, are reflected in the document in such a way that planners, conservation officers, developers and the community as a whole know that that is the case, and thereby remove the confusion and recourse to the courts." We hope that there will be a revision before its expected publication in April 2012.

However we bat on! As I mentioned in the last newsletter we would be pleased to welcome new members to the Conservation sub-committee. We are a happy crew doing the best that we can. Can I introduce the current members? From the YGT trustees we have Penelope Dawson Brown, Jane Furse, Jenni Howard, Martin Walker and myself. From our wider membership Anne Tupholme in the West Riding, Caroline Kernan, the East Riding, Malcolm Barnett and Linda Smith who work in landscape and archaeology at North Yorkshire County Council, Heather Garnett, a councillor with special interest in heritage, and Peter Goodchild, a YGT Vice-President. Andy Wimble, English Heritage's Landscape Architect for the North joins us when he can and is a valuable source of advice and we have had help from Trevor Nicholson, head gardener at Harewood House.

The YGT Conservation committee is likely to have a larger role in commenting on planning applications in the future. This scenario will affect the whole of England and potentially all the County Gardens Trusts (CGTs).The Working Together Feasibility Study Group, comprising the Garden History Society (GHS), AGT, the Garden Museum and the Parks & Gardens database (P&GUK), continues to discuss a possible way forward towards closer co-operation between its members. A prime motive for undertaking this study, which has strong support from English Heritage, is the prospect of reduced Government funding for historic parks and gardens and particularly the likelihood of a reduction in financial support from English Heritage for the GHS planning work in 2012–13. (The GHS is the statutory consultee on planning matters for historic parks and gardens). See www.gardenhistorysociety.org/post/agenda/important-update-on-ghs-conservation-work/

Facing the prospect of reduced public funding, as well as potentially harmful changes in national planning policy, the GHS current individual resources will not be sufficient to address threats to the parks and gardens about which we all care. Thus more of this responsibility is likely to fall on the CGTs. It is already impossible for the GHS alone to respond to all planning threats to our parks and gardens. Collectively, and by building on our respective strengths and expertise, we stand a much better chance of making our views known to, and understood by, national and local government.

The Study Group has concluded that uniting our skills and resources will give us a more effective voice and avoid confusion as to which body is giving what advice. Giving CGTs' membership more ability to get involved with direct conservation action underpins this thinking. These conclusions have been welcomed by English Heritage. As a result the YGT intends to take part in workshops to develop skills in planning matters organised by the AGT and we would welcome more of our members to join us and help safeguard our parks and gardens for the future.

Since the last newsletter we have responded to quite a number of planning applications affecting historic parks and gardens in addition to our efforts to tilt with wind turbines. Several applications have come in from the Yorkshire Dales National Park and we are grateful for Moira Fulton's research knowledge for these. There have been two applications regarding Grinton Lodge, a former shooting Lodge near Reeth in Swaledale that has been a Youth Hostel since just after the Second World War. The first was for changes to the existing telecommunications site and the second for an extension to the car park. On the latter we gave advice on the layout, landform, boundary and landscaping. We suggested that they might like to apply to our grant scheme with help for the landscaping but have heard nothing further. At Parcevall Hall permission has been granted for a hive pen and observation hive immediately to the north of the walled garden, near the car park. Although we had no objection in principle we are concerned that should members of the public get stung and go into anaphylactic shock, it would be very difficult to summon help.

Unfortunately the saga at Tudor Croft/Spring Lodge continues with the developer going to appeal and then slipping in a new application for 40 detached houses which went to committee at the end of November. We again objected that such a development would irrevocably spoil this part of Guisborough and impact upon the fine Arts and Crafts house and garden, Tudor Croft as well as entail the demolition of Spring Lodge. As I write I have just learned that the planning authority is 'minded to approve the application subject to a Section 106 Agreement'. There is much disquiet in the local community and no doubt we have not heard the last of this proposed development.

At Ilkley, we responded to a planning application for Heathcote, the Lutyens

house with a Jekyll garden (Figure 2). In the making of the house and gardens of Gertrude Jekyll's home, Munstead Wood in Surrey in the 1890's, Sir Edwin Lutyens (1869-1944) learned from Miss Jekyll (1843-1932) the best way to design a garden and a good deal about designing the houses

Figure 2 - Heathcote, Ilkley

favoured by his new clients. This special partnership created over a hundred gardens, mainly in the south of England, either for existing houses or for new properties designed by Lutyens himself. Heathcote at Ilkley is one of only three properties in the north of England where Sir Edwin Lutyens designed the garden as an integral part of the design of the house and where Gertrude Jekyll was responsible for the planting scheme. It is probably one of the most skilfully achieved in a town setting. We wrote that it is important that despite the proposed divided ownership of the property, the gardens are maintained as a cohesive whole following the grand design of Lutyens and Jekyll. Their intention was to steer the visitor through the house and on to the terrace where the intricate patterning of the paving and planting was juxtaposed against the distant view of Ilkley Moor. We suggested that long-term agreements are put in place to ensure that the gardens and setting are maintained to a high standard within the context of the original design and planting, and that there should be some reversion to garden of more recent car parking. Other societies and English Heritage objected to the plans for the house so we await the outcome.

There have been further developments at St Ives Park Bingley: the conversion of the former historic dog kennels to a dwelling where we supported the conservation officer's comments and did not object in principle and second a very unsightly 12.2 x 8.4m steel container for equipment storage which is sited close to Coppice Pond and which we did oppose in its present form. Unfortunately, the local authority officer comments were, 'Note is made of the presence of the container within an area that is included in the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest. The location of the steel container should have minimal impact on the setting of the listed buildings ... will be located more than 100 metres away from the listed building'. The application was granted with the condition that a hawthorn hedge should be planted. It seems that we still have a long way to go in the appreciation of our historic parks, and the setting and views which are such an important part of the experience and pleasure.

Currently several local authorities in Yorkshire have their Local Development Framework (LDF) for consultation. You might like to check what is going on with your LDF by looking at your local authority planning website. We have written to object to the preferred option in the Harrogate BC LDF, Sites & Policies Development Plan Document - Urban areas preferred options, for housing development on the land immediately to the north of the Ripon Workhouse Garden. We support the views of the Ripon Workhouse Trust that any development of this land would seriously damage the setting of the listed buildings (Workhouse Museum) and the Workhouse Garden, all of which make an important tourism contribution to the city.

Figure 3 - The Lodge at Whinburn

We are also concerned about a similar situation at Whinburn where the Bradford MDC LDF has classed sites on both the northern and southern boundary as available for housing in 7 to 12 years. The 4.06 acre site on Whinburn's northern boundary is Green Belt with the potential for 106.5 homes but the 3.66 acre site on its southern boundary with potential for 96, is arguably, the most sensitive, as the house and garden, particularly the listed pergola and its associated walk were probably designed to take in the views across this land. Another area for concern is the extremely poor state of the Lodge. The photograph taken in November shows a large hole in the roof (Figure 3).

Finally to end on brighter notes: thanks to Linda Smith and Malcolm Barnett, we have the draft for management plan guidelines and hope that these will be available on the YGT website in the spring. And secondly, on a wonderfully clear sunny day at the end of November, Caroline Kernan arranged for members of the Conservation sub-committee to visit the Archbishop's Palace Site at Bishop Wilton nestled at the foot of the Wolds. See http://bishopwilton.jimdo.com for a selection of contributions from the local history group. Guided by local historians Mike and Kate Pratt and joined by David and Susan Neave, we spent the best part of the day looking at the archaeological remains of the Palace with associated fishponds, mill pond, moat and what we thought might have been an orchard and a secluded garden. The Palace at Bishop Wilton is believed to have been built in the time of Archbishop Gray (of York 1216-1255) and may have been in use until the end of the 14th Century. The backdrop is the deer park to the south east, a steepish climb that we also much enjoyed, discovering a very ancient pollarded oak. This called for a hug as shown on the photograph (Figure 4); a wonderful way to end a wonderful day.

Figure 4 - Bishop Wilton deer park – an ancient pollarded oak and friends!

I'm grateful to Dr Patrick Eyres for the Whitaker quotation and explanation taken from 'Bolton Abbey: a garden without walls', in *New Arcadian Journal*, no 13, 1984, Bolton Abbey.

Val Hepworth

SMALL GRANTS SCHEME

Alongside the fruits of autumn I felt warmed by the pleasure of seeing the fruits of two of the grants that we gave in 2009-10. Walking south along Scarborough's South Cliff in pleasant sunshine, I felt distinctly that it could have been a 1920's holiday and seeing the **Shuttleworth Gardens** beautifully maintained with its shelter restored and the delightful miniature garden, I was a child again in a fairy boat on a tiny lake. The previous Thursday, Peter Goodchild and I explored the landscape from the **Nelson Gate** down the Sproxton Drive to the house at Duncombe Park. This is an area of the Park that probably dates to the establishment of Sproxton Mill on the banks of the Rye in the 12th Century and which could have been embellished in the 18th Century with the delightful, but now little seen, Mill Bridge and then later the Nelson Gate alongside the public road (A170). Thankfully the great Nelson Gate has been pulled back from serious decay. The mason was painstakingly working his way up the columns and by the time you read this, the stone will have been cut for the entablature. Our grants are only modest, but every little helps – and we hope will encourage others in the conservation and enhancement of our historic environment.

In Huddersfield our friends at **Beaumont Park** have used the £500 grant from 2010-11 to improve the terrace which is now grassed over with new park benches. As far as possible the rhododendrons, laurels and ivy have been removed from the rocks behind and all the new plants have been inserted in the spaces exposed: almost 400 lavenders, thymes, and heathers, including *Daboecia cantabrica* 'Alba' and *Daboecia cantabrica* 'Tinkerbell' (see pictures below). Peter Turner, Chairman of the Friends of Beaumont Park, says that visitors are already commenting on how much better the whole area looks and the Green Flag award this year was very welcome from the 'Friends' point of view as it ensures that Kirklees Council will maintain and

Beaumont Park terrace before restoration

Restored terrace

increase their commitment to the Park. Moving from West Yorkshire to South Yorkshire, the Friends of **Cannon Hall** have used our grant of £130 to replace the regency style urn to the front of the Hall. This will be a welcome addition to the historic setting and a sympathetic enhancement of the terrace which has views over parkland and lakes to the south; the public park. Cannon Hall won its first Britain in Bloom Gold award for the gardens in 2010 and the Friends recently achieved Green Flag status for the park. Well done to everyone involved at Beaumont Park and Cannon Hall, and especially the 'Friends' groups.

The closing date for the current grant scheme (2011-12) has just passed with seven applications going to the Conservation sub-committee on December 8th. We have increased the money that we can distribute to £6,000 this year. We look carefully at the applications and then visit all the applicants/sites before meeting again in January to finalise where we think the funds should go and making recommendations to the full Council of the Trust. These are ratified at the February Council meeting. Our applicants this year are from across the breadth of Yorkshire and include four for planting or fruit tree schemes, a request for help with a landscape survey for a public park and two repair schemes; a dovecote near Scarborough and part of the historic wall of a public park in the Pennines.

Val Hepworth

EDUCATION: Schools

At the time of writing, we are busy organising Winter YGT packs for schools. Each of our member schools has been offered the opportunity to receive a gift of six bare-rooted Goat Willows, along with rabbit guards and mulch mats. Schools are being asked to opt-in to this offer, so as to avoid unwanted trees appearing on doorsteps! It is looking like around half of our member schools will be planting willow in their grounds this season.

Our native Goat/Pussy Willow, *Salix caprea,* was chosen for several reasons. Firstly, it is easy to grow in the northern climate in a variety of different soils and aspects, including damp places. Secondly, for its early flowers; the well-loved furry catkins being amongst the first signs of Spring, easily recognisable by children and providing an important early source of nectar for insects. The Goat Willow is a relatively small tree and will fit into many school grounds, as well as providing good shelter and screening along a perimeter fence. Finally, the rapid seasonal growth provides a sustainable source of withies for a wide variety of craft and structural projects – from Christmas decorations (see photo) to wigwams!

A willow star

We were also delighted to receive an application for a *YGT for Schools* award from Grewelthorpe C of E

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YORKSHIRE GARDENS TRUST

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR:

I hope that you enjoy this 'bumper' edition! There is a lot going on with the Trust and this is reflected in the wide range of articles.

My position back as Editor is a temporary one and we are looking for somebody who is willing to take this on in future. All the technical bits of layout is now done by the printers, so all we need is someone who can liaise with the authors, copy edit and ensure all the material is delivered on schedule to the printers. So if you think you may be interested please contact me on 01977 663471 or louise.wickham@btopenworld.com

The copy deadline for the next edition is the **30 June 2012**

Louise Wickham

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Primary School over the Summer. The school has since received a £200 cash award and some junior Joseph Bentley gardening tools from the Trust, to help them create a new nature garden in their grounds. We wish them every success with their new project.

If you know of a school that might benefit from YGT support, please encourage them to join or apply for an award.

Nicola Harrison
nicola_a_harrison@tiscali.co.uk

Spring/Summer Events Programme 2012

- **22nd February, 10.30 am** - Yorkshire Rhubarb, Rothwell
- **6th March, 2 pm** - Monk Fryston Hall and Gardens
- **17th March** - Yorkshire Gardens Trust AGM, King's Manor, University of York
- **25th April, 10.15 am** - Study Day at Roche Abbey and Sandbeck Park
- **3rd May** - AGT Study Day at Studley Royal, see page 2 for further details
- **23rd May, 10.30 am** - Sheffield Botanic Gardens and Whinfell Quarry Gardens
- **29th May, 7.30 pm** – 'Tulipomania: Banking with Bulbs during the Golden Age of Dutch Culture', joint lecture with Yorkshire Philosophical Society
- **6th June, 10 am** - Pannett Park, Whitby Study Day
- **21st September** - AGT Study Day at Bretton Park/Yorkshire Sculpture Park, see page 2 for further details

Louise Amende – new Administrator for YGT

I have supported the YGT since the early days of the Trust. I moved away from the area in 2003 but now once again in Yorkshire, I am thrilled to be back as an active member: this time in a paid capacity as your part time administrator. I have lost a garden but gained a job supporting gardens so I feel rather fortunate.

As a family we have swapped our old, large garden for a small gravelled yard in central York. Our children were all born in our old home in the North East but there was a fair bit of activity outside too. Our house stood towards the back of its corner plot. In the rear and side gardens we had the usual family paraphernalia: composting bins, tumblers, a wormery and water butts, garish children's outdoor play equipment, a trampoline and a vegetable patch. The south facing front garden was considerably more formal. This I developed for both our own enjoyment and that of people passing on the bus.

Particular memories are of rejuvenating the four rose beds by exchanging the soil and planting 64 white *Rosa* 'Winchester Cathedral' (but sadly only partially overcoming replant disease) and of the more habitual but still pleasurable jobs. Clipping the lavender hedges surrounding each rose bed had its annual, scented reward. For us, as for most other gardeners, the year was marked by jobs outside: pruning the wisteria in August and February, clearing away bluebell leaves in June and vain attempts to tame a thuggish *Rosa mulliganii* each July.

Now we are in York and life has changed dramatically. Our elder son, 7, has become a Probationer Chorister in York Minster Choir, so increasingly our lives will revolve around service schedules. Our other son and his younger sister may well follow their brother but whether or not that happens, indoor activities will keep us well occupied. However, my love of horticulture has not diminished, so I am delighted to be here to support YGT with both my administrative skills and a continuing passion for plants and places. I look forward to meeting you at events.