



## Yorkshire Gardens Trust Conservation and Planning July 2009

### **Small Grants Scheme**

This month (July) we launch the seventh year of our small grants scheme; something that we can all be proud of at the YGT. I'm looking forward to receiving applications so that we can continue to help parks and gardens throughout Yorkshire. Two thousand pounds has been allocated again this year. We make the application for our grant as easy as possible and the form is available on our website ([www.yorkshiregardenstrust.org.uk](http://www.yorkshiregardenstrust.org.uk)), the Yorkshire and Humber Historic Environment Forum website ([www.yhhef.org.uk](http://www.yhhef.org.uk)) and via mailings to our local authority and societies' contacts. Please spread the word! A telephone call or e-mail and I can send out a form. The closing date is the 30<sup>th</sup> November 2009.

Just to refresh your memory: all but one of our allocations from the 2007-8 scheme have now been given and we're just waiting to hear from York Gate Garden, Leeds on progress with the replacement stone carved dolphin. The Friends of Beaumont Park, Huddersfield have spent their grant on the work for the pond at the Cliff Cascade, ([www.fobp.co.uk](http://www.fobp.co.uk)), the Derwent Riverside Project, Castle Garden, Malton have carried out the tree work, Dales Plants and Gardens Project (Richmondshire Museum & Dales Countryside Museum) now have their display cases and we're looking forward to arranging a visit in 2011/12 to Whinfall Quarry Garden, Sheffield to see the replanted rhododendrons which should be well established by then.

Currently we are distributing our 2008-9 grant: £800 to Cannon Hall, Barnsley, £700 to the Ancient Society of York Florists and £500 to Cantley Community Centre (Trust), Doncaster. Cannon Hall and park was the home of the Spencer (later the Spencer-Stanhope) family who made their fortune in the local iron industry and who employed John Carr of York to enlarge and redesign the house, and the designer Richard Woods to landscape the park and gardens, in the mid eighteenth century. Since 1957 the hall and park have been open to the public run by Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council, and our grant is going to the Friends, as matched funding, to replace three eighteenth century stone balls set on plinths on the south front of the hall, overlooking the park.

The Ancient Society of York Florists (ASYF) held their first Florist's show in 24 Colliergate, York in 1768 and the Society is still going strong; an amazing achievement. To celebrate and promote this great Yorkshire horticultural heritage we are giving matched funding for a plaque to be made and placed on the building in Colliergate. The York Civic Trust is arranging the practicalities such as the planning required, and the plaque itself will be funded by the ASYF and the YGT.

As a charitable trust, our objectives cover the education of the public on matters connected with garden land, which besides our heritage of gardens and parks also includes urban open spaces. We therefore felt that this year we should support an application from a community centre in Doncaster. Cantley Community Centre serves a varied area of housing, works from an old infant school and has a partnership with a local centre for adults with learning difficulties, who are working to transform the rather bleak surroundings into a community garden. Jenni Howard has been liaising with John, the enthusiastic Community Centre Manager, and thanks to her persuasive powers with English Heritage Outreach and Dan the Head Gardener at Brodsworth Hall, she has been able to transport a trailer-load of spare plants destined for the compost heap, to the developing garden at Cantley. We are also giving funding for garden tools.

In this tranche of grant applications we had one from the Abbeyfield, Esk Moors Committee at Castleton for help with their new garden. It has taken almost twelve years for a small group on the North York Moors to realise their ambition for locally based accommodation for the elderly. Esk Moors Lodge has now opened, built on a brown-field site near the Esk Valley railway. The garden area amounts to some 0.6 acres and is being designed and built by local volunteers. The Council of the YGT decided that we would support this application outside the small grant scheme and make a special grant of £250 to buy fruit trees for the proposed orchard. Member Jenni Woods, who has been involved with the project since its inception, says that the garden is slowly taking shape; over 100 trees have been planted, the lawns turfed, paths paved and the herbaceous border planted up. If you are visiting the Esk valley do go and see how the garden is developing.

## Conservation and Planning

It seems that we have been chivvying forever to get the park at St Ives, Bingley onto the English Heritage Register, so it is very pleasing to write that it was finally added to the EH Register at Grade II on 28 April 2009. However on a less happy note, within the last year an early nineteenth century shrubbery adjacent to the site of the former Green House (a conservatory built in 1824) has been removed. This was in an area no longer open to the general public, which had apparently no management plan for the grounds. It had been allowed to become totally neglected and strewn with rubbish but the garden still contained shrubs possibly dating from the nineteenth century. The landscaping of this area was most likely to be from the early 1820s when Adam Mickle III (1781-1827) and the Backhouse Nursery had both been involved with laying out the new grounds of the mansion for Walker Ferrand. Hopefully a mistake like this will not occur again as a new management strategy is about to be developed for the whole estate with Bob Thorp, the newly appointed Tree and Woodland Officer for Bradford, playing a key role. We do hope that the excellent research work carried out by Anne Tupholme, and her considerable expertise, will be used by Bradford MBC to secure a more historic approach to the use of this park.

In the last newsletter we wrote of our concerns about the reconstructed waterfall at Parcevall Hall. We are expecting that the design for a more sympathetic re-working of the waterfall will be finalized very soon and that the daunting task of finding funding for this project will commence. Next year will be the 50th anniversary of the death of Sir William Milner so it would be especially appropriate to mark this occasion by completing the final stage of the major restoration of his gardens. Already we have £100 ear-marked from donations but would v much like substantially more. If you can help YGT in any way with this, then please let either Anne or myself know.

Debates about renewable energy and proposed wind turbine developments will no doubt continue for a long time. The YGT Conservation sub-committee is concerned when proposals will have a significantly damaging effect on historic designed landscapes and their settings, so we were pleased that the Chelker wind turbines near Bolton Abbey were refused. However in view of the 'lucrative opportunities for farmers and landowners diversifying into wind farm projects', (Yorkshire Post 21<sup>st</sup> Feb), we can expect appeals and further threats to historic designed landscapes. In fact as I write we have just learned that the turbines project near Gledstone Hall in Craven has gone to appeal.

It was a great delight for the Conservation sub-committee to be invited by the National Trust (NT) to hold their recent committee meeting at Goddards in York, and to meet Raoul Curtis-Machin, the NT Gardens and Parks Advisor (North), and the Head Gardener at Goddards, Alison Green, who gave us a tour of the gardens. As an administrative centre for the Trust since the mid 1980's there have been limited resources for garden maintenance and so parts of the garden have been 'rationalised', however it was good to see that the 'bones' of George Dillistone's work with the owner Noel Terry remain. Dillistone came from a long line of gardeners and between the two world wars he was a prominent figure in landscape circles. He described Goddards as "a very fine series of gardens with plenty of interest through every foot". The house commissioned by Noel Terry ('Terry's of York') was to be Walter Brierley's last house; he died in August 1926 a few months before completion. The National Trust now open the gardens on weekdays during the season. It was good at this meeting to renew our links with the National Trust, started when Roger Carr-Whitworth was a member of the Conservation sub-committee in our early days, and we hope to work more closely together in the future.

Malcolm Barnett and myself have for more years than we care to remember, encouraged the trustees of Kiplin Hall near Northallerton to embrace the conservation and sensitive development of Kiplin's gardens and designed landscape. Particularly over the last ten years huge strides have been made with the Hall as YGT members will have seen on our visit in 2007. The recent improvements to the gardens and the HLF-funded project for the peninsula woodland, which we supported, are also very encouraging. During the winter we've been giving some more advice and help – including a session with long-handled loppers! [The shrubs are really flourishing and the fine railings are visible once more.] But our major effort has just taken place, when working with the curator, Dawn Webster and the administrator, Marcia McLuckie, along with Elaine Bird who works part-time in the gardens, Malcolm, Martin Walker and myself gathered together expertise for a day, to look more closely at the future for the gardens and landscape. Andy Wimble, English Heritage's Regional Landscape Architect, YGT Vice-president, Peter Goodchild and Arts and Crafts gardens specialist and garden designer, Melissa Hay, spent the day with us for a tour of the grounds and the hall followed by discussions, when we were joined by the land agent, James Fife. There was unanimous agreement that Kiplin should build on its heritage from the Arts and Crafts period and that this should lead developments in the gardens and increase the interest for visitors. We intend to develop our ideas and suggestions in a paper for the next trustees meeting.

In June English Heritage published this year's report on *Heritage at Risk* which includes 'Landscapes at Risk' and 'Conservation Areas at Risk'; [www.english-heritage.org.uk/conservationareas](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/conservationareas) and follow the links to parks

and gardens and the report for Yorkshire and the Humber. Parks and gardens in our region are in the highest percentage at risk category; 6.6% - 10.0%. One emerging theme across the North and indeed elsewhere is the number of Grade II sites at risk often through inappropriate development, which tends to reflect the lack of expertise in many planning authorities in recognising the vulnerability of historic designed landscapes. This is very worrying as regrettably English Heritage has no planning remit or funding for Grade II sites; something that we and other county gardens trusts have been concerned about for several years. Examples of sites at risk are landscape parks with their mansions, which have undergone change of ownership sometimes into corporate or institutional use but also through subdivision into various private ownerships. These changes have frequently brought incremental development, such as new buildings and car parks, which have eroded their character and interest. The conservation of historic features within designed landscapes, including built structures and parkland and avenue trees can be an expensive exercise, but the ultimate loss of these features inevitably threatens the significance of the landscape design. These problems apply equally to both small and grand landscapes. The villa grounds of Thwaite Hall, Cottingham were developed mainly in the 1870s/80s, but modified in the mid C20 to provide accommodate for the University of Hull and partly developed as a botanical garden. Problems with flood damage in 2007 and drainage problems are affecting mature planting and the lawns around the lake. In North Yorkshire, both the 20-hectare grounds of Eberston Hall and the 1250-hectare designed landscape of Castle Howard have also been included on the at risk register. In South Yorkshire, Oakes Park, Sheffield is at risk reflecting both the condition of the park and the poor condition of its early eighteenth and nineteenth century gateways and ornamental iron gates. Sometimes development beyond the boundary of a registered landscape can be just as harmful as construction within its boundaries; this is especially true where development would impact on designed views that extend beyond the designated site itself. In a changing environment these views can be easily lost or spoiled if the relationships between the historic park and garden and its setting are not appreciated. Even parks and gardens in the care of conservation organisations are still vulnerable to change within and beyond the registered area outside their guardianship. And we should also remember the extensive number of parks and gardens not on the English Heritage Register but of regional or local significance that are not included in this at risk survey. There is much to do and we should all help to raise awareness where we can.

Through our membership of the Yorkshire and the Humber Historic Environment Forum we are involved with the production of the annual report on the state of Yorkshire's historic environment, 'Heritage Counts'. We are very pleased that this year's report includes a case study featuring our visits with refugees in 2008.

Finally, our congratulations to Sewerby Hall and gardens, near Bridlington, which have been voted the best place to enjoy a picnic in Britain, for the second year running. The grounds at Sewerby Hall are pristine ... and the gardens are wonderful, so if you've never visited then now is the time to take your picnic rug and sandwiches and see for yourself.

**Val Hepworth**