

## YGT Website September 2010

### Conservation and Planning: In The Green

It has taken ten years to make gardens 'green' again. In 2000 the Government's planning guidance defined gardens as previously developed or brownfield land on a par with factory sites, industrial estates and the like. To many of us concerned with gardens and green spaces this was nothing short of disastrous and led to the term 'garden grabbing' as much inappropriate development and loss of historic and green urban areas ensued. The percentage of new homes built on previously residential land - which includes back gardens - has increased to 25 per cent, up 14 percentage points since 1997, when only one in 10 homes was built on similar land.

During my term as chairman of the Association of Gardens Trusts (AGT) the Association was very active in promoting a change in legislation to take gardens out of the brownfield definition, supporting Lorely Burt's (MP for Solihull) bill in 2005 and again that of Greg Clark (MP for Tunbridge Wells) in 2006. The Association nominated Greg Clark for the e-Politix Heritage Champion's Award which he won and Kate Harwood and myself were invited to the House of Commons. The AGT then supported another attempt at a private members bill, this time by Caroline Spelman MP in 2007. All little steps, amongst those of many others, who felt the same. Until recently it seemed as though we would never get any real change to the definition for garden land in the planning system. Another lost cause sorely felt by many communities. Then on June 9<sup>th</sup> Greg Clark MP, now Minister of State for Communities and Local Government announced decentralisation of the planning system by giving Local Authorities the opportunity to prevent overdevelopment of neighbourhoods and 'garden grabbing'. Only ten years...but we've made it! The Government has amended Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (PPS3) with the following changes:

- private residential gardens are now excluded from the definition of previously developed land in Annex B and
  - the national indicative minimum density of 30 dwellings per hectare is deleted from paragraph 47.
- Together these changes emphasise that it is for local authorities and communities to take the decisions that are best for them, and decide for themselves the best locations and types of development in their areas. Local Planning Authorities and the Planning Inspectorate are expected to have regard to this new policy position in preparing development plans and, where relevant, to take it into account as a material consideration when determining planning applications. So despite the fact that this welcome change in PPS3 is sadly too late for many urban areas and development pressures are now reduced, at least communities will have a stronger hand in future, which is all to the good. Patience is a virtue! Only ten years!

The new Planning Policy Statement (PPS) Planning for the Historic Environment is now PPS5 and is available at [www.english-heritage.org.uk/pps](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/pps) or [www.culture.gov.uk/reference\\_library/publications/6763.aspx](http://www.culture.gov.uk/reference_library/publications/6763.aspx)

Four organisations with interests in historic parks and gardens are undertaking a feasibility study: **Parks and Gardens Data Services, The Association of Gardens Trusts, The Garden History Society, The Garden Museum**. The aim is to identify the activities of the four organisations where they can most practically and cost effectively work together. There is no question of a merger, but English Heritage is keen to see more synergy between the four organisations, so the funding that is available can be allocated more effectively.

**The Parks and Gardens Database** is still active and 'live' with Rachael Stamper at the helm, albeit as a part time project manager. She is aided by Maria who works on data entry, again in a part time capacity. Fortunately funding has been sourced from grant giving trusts to enable the work to continue until a Phase 2 can be funded. Contact Rachael for further information at [rs549@york.ac.uk](mailto:rs549@york.ac.uk).

**Wind farm noise** - A Government-commissioned study to review the assessment and rating of noise from wind farms is getting under way. Consultants Hayes McKenzie is carrying out the work which is due to be completed by the end of the year.

**Heritage Alliance** (formerly Heritage Link and of which we are a member via AGT) has been campaigning hard. David Cameron has finally replied recognising the value of the Alliance and its members. His letter thanks members for “the crucial role they play in advocacy for our country’s heritage’. The Heritage Alliance will certainly be making sure heritage is kept on his radar!

**Workhouses** - National Archives have just/recently released records relating to workhouses which can be searched on-line.

Earlier this year the YGT conservation sub-committee was invited by the **Friends of Beaumont Park** chairman, Peter Turner, to visit the park and help them with their forward thinking and suggestions for historically appropriate planting particularly in the shaded wooded areas of the park. Historic parks like Beaumont need some sort of conservation and management plan which everyone; local authority, friends and volunteers can work to with a shared vision. This must be based on good historical research, assessment of significance and should allow the park to develop in the best way to meet contemporary needs yet with an eye to the past and with schedules of work and priorities.

Meanwhile Penelope and Caroline K have been to **St Nicholas**, Richmond, to begin the photographic record; first in April when the daffodils, so late this year, were still in bloom [see photo taken in the orchard], and then again to catch the roses towards the end of June. St Nicholas has often been referred to as ‘The Hidcote of the North’, and working with the owners Keith and Jilly Schellenberg, we feel that it is important to capture the garden at the beginning of the twenty first century. The record will be deposited with the YGT archive at The Borthwick Institute for Historical Research, York University.

At **Parcevall Hall**, the only English Heritage Registered park and garden in the Yorkshire Dales National Park, Anne has done brilliantly and the restored cascade in Tarn Ghyll Wood is a triumph. We are certain the late Sir William Milner would approve its sensitivity and aesthetic qualities. This effort from Anne is a real milestone for the Trust. She masterminded and carried out the fund-raising against difficult odds, sorted out grants, and the specialist to do the work and helped financially.

It now seems unlikely that the trustees will be commissioning a management plan for **Kiplin Hall** near Richmond despite all our work. However we can gain some consolation in that the workshop and work on the brief last year has greatly helped Dawn (curator) and Marcia (administrator), and kept the gardens in focus with the trustees. A professional part-time gardener, Chris Baker, began work in April two days/week, and already has a band volunteers working under his direction in the gardens, is drawing up schedules of work and is keen to be involved with research and to embrace the historic nature of Kiplin. Marcia has recently found some more 19<sup>th</sup> century information on planting lists and work carried out on the vinery and conservatory. The ‘orangery/conservatory walk’ and seating area that I wrote about in the last newsletter is now on hold, as during clearance and preparatory work under the direction of Mike Heagney (YGT member & owner of ‘Gardens Revitalised’), two cistern/tanks were uncovered which must have served the conservatory. The footings for the conservatory which first seems to appear on 1st Ed Ordinance Survey map of the 1850’s have also been revealed. The Heritage Lottery Funded work on the peninsula woodland and lily pond finished in May, and Chris Baker has been planting the latter with more designed landscape type plants rather than those purely for nature conservation, as it seems likely that historically the pond had a designed nature. Jane visited with me in May looking particularly at the walled garden walls, the demolished conservatory and the long range of derelict vinery/peach houses against the south-facing boundary wall. Fighting years of brambles and tree growth she discovered that it was a Richardson of Darlington range. Dawn, Marcia and Chris are very grateful for her insights.

We have recently had news of two consultations; **Gledstone Hall** for Five Wind Turbines adjacent to Brightenber Hill, Craven which would impact on north front of Gledstone Hall, a Lutyens house and Jekyll designed garden, has been refused on appeal. Similarly **Weavers Cottage, Settle** for a bungalow and bin store has also been refused.

Those members who visited **Goldsborough Hall** near Knaresborough in April will have enjoyed the avenue of limes planted by the Royal Family and others during the time of Princess Mary, Countess

of Harewood, in 1920's. Mike Heagney, Martin Page and Joan Sewell have all been able to shed some light on the lime variety planted called 'Handsworthensis'. At the time of planting the firm which held the Royal Warrant to supply "Trees and Seeds" to King George V was Fisher, Son & Sibray Ltd. of Handsworth Nurseries, Bowden Housteads, Handsworth Road, Sheffield. They were an impressive company employing, in 1886, some 200 workers with a stock list of over half a million plants and were operational from 1743 to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. They probably supplied many other trees and shrubs as well and specialised in holly varieties. They certainly raised *Taxus baccata* 'Handsworthiana', *Rhododendron* 'Handsworth's Early White', *Cytisus handsworthiensis*, *Buxus sempervirens* 'Handsworthiensis', *Ilex aquifolium* 'Handsworthiensis' and *Ilex aquifolium* 'Handsworth's New Silver', the last four of which, at least, are still available today. Part of the nursery area may now be occupied by a supermarket

Following an enquiry to Nicola about a possible schools grant to help with restoring the historic glasshouse at **Gilling Castle** near Ampleforth (shown on an engraving of 1855) for school use, we have visited and Peter Blackburn-Maze has looked at the ancient wall fruit mainly pears, which he thinks is about 100 years old. Part of the glasshouse range is by Mackenzie & Moncur and other parts by Richardson of Darlington.

We discovered from the TV programme, 'Who do you think you are?' that Bruce Forsyth's great grandfather was an assistant gardener at Gilling. His name was Joseph Forsyth Johnson (1840 - 1906). He was 21 when he worked at Gilling and this could well have been approaching the time when the McKenzie & Moncur/ Richardson glasshouse was erected. He went on to become curator of the Botanic Gardens at Belfast before he sailed to North America where he achieved fame as a landscape gardener designing several parks including one at Brooklyn. YGT hopes to help the school at Gilling Castle with work on the pear trees this coming winter.

The YGT is coming across many historic Richardson glasshouses often in an extremely poor state (or sites where they have now gone) and has been loaned a copy of one of their catalogues c1902. For this we are very grateful to Alison, the Head Gardener at the National Trust's Goddards in York. Members of the conservation subcommittee along with Alison are to visit the marketing director at Amdega (formerly Richardson) in Darlington in October. We hope to see the original catalogue and discuss mutual help between YGT and Amdega regarding historic glasshouses, catalogues etc.

**Heritage Open Days** – With Sally Childes of Nidderdale AONB, I led a guided walk at Swinton Park near Masham on the Friday morning. Despite the showers a small group enjoyed exploring this very interesting parkland and 'rugged Picturesque' landscape of lakes, trees and huge rock groupings made by William Danby father and son from the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century until the son's death in 1833. And on the same day several YGT members were invited to a special event to celebrate the restoration work at **Hackfall** just a few miles away. This is an 18<sup>th</sup> century designed landscape on the precipitous banks of the river Ure and of international significance, which has been rescued from the brink. It is now cared for by The Woodland Trust alongside the Hackfall Trust who started the efforts to save it.

Finally it was a great delight for Malcolm and I to attend the official opening of the newly restored/reconstructed productive garden at the rear of **Ripon Workhouse** in June. We congratulate everyone involved with this marathon task which has taken at least six years. The Master's Accounts 1889-1923, indicate much activity in the garden in the spring and autumn, though cartloads of manure are quite often in June and July. Well the garden in 2010 looks wonderful no doubt after much activity and manure!

## Small Grants Scheme

Our new scheme for 2010-2011 was launched in August and this year the YGT Council have agreed to allocate £3,000 to the fund. The closing date will be 30<sup>th</sup> November 2010. The form is on the website, and the Yorkshire and Humber Historic Environment Forum website.

From 2007-8 Scheme Re **York Gate** – We have now given the grant and hope to have a YGT visit to inspect the dolphin in April 2011.

The official unveiling of the plaque celebrating the **Ancient Society of York Florists (ASYF)** on the wall at 24 Colliergate, York, took place in June (2008-9 scheme). The ASYF is the oldest horticultural society in the world and the fact that it survived two World Wars, a time when gardens and greenhouses fell into decline, is remarkable. This could not have been possible without Arthur Robinson who, during his long term as Secretary, inspired both committee members and exhibitors with his enthusiasm. At the age of 90 Arthur recently retired so it was particularly apt that he was able to unveil the plaque.

From the 2009-10 scheme, in addition to offering grant to **Duncombe Park**, the **Shuttleworth Gardens** at Scarborough and **Parcevall Hall**, we have agreed to offer £800 towards the purchase of historically accurate plants for the West formal garden at **Beningbrough Hall** and the interpretation of this area. The grant for the restoration of the cascade at Parcevall has now been taken up. Chris Perry of Scarborough & District Civic Society says the Civic Society is holding fund-raising events in October and November specifically for the Shuttleworth shelter and they are determined to succeed. They are very grateful to YGT because we were the first to offer a contribution which got the ball rolling. They were very touched when the local Police Community Support Officer came on his day off to join volunteers weeding the border adjoining the shelter.

As was reported at the AGM we are also delighted that via our contacts at the Association of Gardens Trusts, a family trust in Oxfordshire wants to help with our work in Yorkshire and has sent a cheque for £3,000. This family trust is particularly interested in helping Cantley Community Centre, Doncaster, Brunswick Organic Nursery, York and an allotment scheme in Hull. We have already given Brunswick just over £1000 for trolleys, lawnmower, and a watering system and £560 to the Hull group for a shed. The trust is also interested in helping the elderly and the conservation sub-committee has given £150 to help with wheelchair access to the garden at the Esk Valley Abbeyfield housing project at Castleton on the North York Moors.

**Val Hepworth**