



*The restored cascade at Peaseholm Park. For further information see p19.
(Photo © Friends of Peaseholm Park)*

Yorkshire Gardens Trust AGM Saturday 26 March 2022

After two false starts due to the pandemic the AGM was held at Bramham Park starting at 10.30 am. It was held in beautiful spring sunshine by kind permission of Nick and Rachel Lane-Fox. The approach through the park was stunning and the attendees were happy to be able to reassemble after meeting on Zoom for two years. The morning meeting was held in the fine Long Gallery facing the garden, well arranged into three areas for meeting, lecture and lunch. We were surrounded by portraits from the 18th century including the builder of the house, Robert Benson, 1st Baron Bingley and James Fox, his son-in-law. The business side of the AGM was chaired by Nick Lane-Fox in the absence of both the Chairman, Chris Webb and the Vice President, Caroline Legard. The Chairman's address was read in his absence and appears in full at p2. The official Minutes of the AGM

will be produced by our Company Secretary, Gillian Parker.

Madalyn Hughes read through the financial statement

and recommended the reappointment of the auditors.

The good news was that there was a small surplus in the accounts partly because with few members requested repayments for cancelled visits and there were low administration costs.

Vicky Price thanked her events team volunteers

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and reported on activities, many of which had to be postponed or cancelled during the pandemic. There were few requests for small grants, so all members were encouraged to think of places that needed them in particular small public parks. Sheffield Library and Rotherham Cemetery have applied for grants.



Members enjoying their delicious lunch

The Committee were re-elected as were two new trustees, Gillian Parker and Brendan Mowforth.

Research and Recording lead Louise Wickham, gave her report. Of most importance is that the committee have decided that the whole of Yorkshire will now be included within their remit and special attention will be given to places where there are known archives.

Conservation and Planning lead, Val Hepworth gave her report and added her thanks to Nick and Rachel Lane-Fox for the superb venue. The Conservation team of volunteers were thanked by Val. They have a big workload giving advice on planning applications affecting Registered Parks and Gardens. Val retired at the AGM after many years' devoted hard work as Chairman of the Committee and was thanked for all her efforts.

We heard about a Historic England/Gardens Trust study day coming to Lotherton Hall in June, offering free places to students to encourage the younger generation.

So much is going on in the Yorkshire Gardens Trust in its 26th year; the covid pandemic did not slow down their activities.

Jane Ingham

Photo: © Ian Hepworth

YGT AGM 2022: Chair's Address in absentia

I am annoyed, and not a little vexed, to be absent from our first in-person AGM since I joined YGT in 2020. Unsurprisingly, I am a victim of Covid, as so many people have been, though indirectly in my case because of a family infection contracted recently; and I have chosen to accept that I should not take a risk on other people's behalf. Besides, if I attended and someone subsequently contracted Covid, I would feel responsible and guilty. This address is being read for me, and I'm indebted to Nick Lane Fox, the reader.

Rather than focus on the last year alone I wanted to talk more widely about YGT since the pandemic, look briefly at our relationship with the Gardens Trust, say thank you to everyone who makes my role as chair enjoyable, interesting, and wonderfully supported, and to look at some of the matters we will be dealing with in the next year or so.

When Covid-19 was recognised and began to spread rapidly and uncontrollably everyone had to adjust, and everyone worried about Covid having a negative impact on membership organisations, particularly those, like YGT and the other gardens trusts, with an older age profile. While many businesses suffered (and some are still recovering), YGT (again like similar membership organisations) has continued to

be active and to flourish. We have emerged from the lockdowns with our membership numbers intact; we have learned to use the Zoom platform to conduct our meetings (lowering our carbon footprint and reducing the time that committee members need to devote to meetings), and to deliver online events, which have boosted our income and reached new audiences. In our recent Unforgettable Gardens series with the Gardens Trust we have had attendees from USA, Canada, France, the Netherlands and the length and breadth of our country; obviously, that would not be possible in the course of our ordinary in-person events. We are returning to in-person meetings for at least some of our meetings, and have an exciting series of active in-person events this year, but it's unlikely that online events and on-line meetings will disappear altogether: they are too useful, convenient and wide-reaching to abandon.

Online events have been greatly facilitated by the Gardens Trust, which has been helpful and supportive to us and the other county garden trusts throughout this period. They have helped us in other ways, too. Regular county chairs' meetings have helped us to keep in touch with one another as a group, and to give us a sense of perspective. Now, Yorkshire is known for thinking well of itself. But I must confess that at these meetings I have been struck every time by the way our Trust seems to do more, on a bigger and wider scale,

and with more energy than our peers. That is entirely due to our active trustees, committee members and the myriad of other active volunteers who keep us going.

The reasons we have continued to flourish are partly the inherent value and interest of what we do, and partly because of the persistent hard work, imagination, creativity, and inventiveness of all our committee members and active volunteers. It is invidious to single out individuals (though some will stand and be recognised in a few moments) because our effort is collaborative; but it is important to recognise the immense work of our various groups. Events has given us continuing reasons to be engaged; conservation and planning continues to impress nationally, offering expert help regionally, participating insightfully on national consultations, and examining and responding to hundreds of planning applications in the course of a year; our Newsletters, hard copy and online, keep us informed and educated; our Schools group reaches more schools, and a wider profile of schools, than I think any other county garden trust manages to do, and successfully keeps hold of its member schools over periods of years; research (despite the inherent difficulty of archives, our holders of primary sources for garden history, being open only to a limited range of online queries for the last two years) have continued to work using materials online and to hand, planning new investigations and new approaches to their work; and we've continued to give grants to historic gardens projects in Yorkshire, as well as revising our criteria and publicising their availability.

From my point of view this has been a productive and positive period, and it is important to say thank you to everyone who has helped to keep YGT alive and well: the trustees (obviously), committee members, volunteers; and, of course, you all as members, without whom our work would be impossible.

We have several issues facing us that I need to mention before closing.

Firstly, we need a new Chair of our Conservation and Planning Committee. Val Hepworth is stepping down after many successful years though, thankfully, she is continuing to manage our Planning Responses. Chairing Conservation and Planning is not an onerous task, it is interesting, and you will learn new stuff and meet new people if you decide to take it on; please, think about it. It is a vital component of our work: talk to Val, or any other committee member to find out more, or phone or email me.

Research is re-starting as archives allow in-person visits again; and we have room for more volunteers.

I would say this, given my job, but this is one of the most interesting and long-lasting contributions you can make to the wider appreciation and understanding of historic designed landscapes.

Our current Business Plan is about to complete, and we are creating a Development Plan to succeed it. We will be asking all our members to comment and contribute; you can do this after we share our draft plan, or you can tell me what you think we should be doing now.

We have a new website in preparation, and shortly to launch. It will be easier to navigate, offer online booking for events, and contains lots and lots of information and links to gardens and garden history.

One of the big issues facing us is planning reform, the introduction of biodiversity net-gain and the impact of new felling licences on our planning work, already heavy. We (along with everyone else, from ecologists to developers to conservers of built and natural heritage) are not sure how these initiatives will affect our work, either in quantity or its character. If you have thoughts on these matters (or develop thoughts as time passes) we need to hear from you.

Rewilding, tree planting and the importance of access to open spaces are all ideas that appear in the media, social and otherwise, daily. They have become part of everyday discourse and have the potential to be positive for the work we do. But they also have the potential to be immensely damaging. I suspect we will have to work with allies, inside and outside Yorkshire over the next few years to make sure that the distinctive voices of the county gardens trusts are heard, and attended to, to ensure that these ideas are guided in the right direction.

Finally, those of you who have read Robin Wall Kimmerer's mesmerising book *Braiding Sweetgrass* will recognise her description of North American indigenous people's belief in reciprocity as a critical component of humans' relationship to the natural environment. She extends this to consider the notion of gifts as a mechanism for recognising and cementing human to human relationships, and our relationship with the non-human living beings with whom we share the planet. For me, YGT, in its work with gardens and other historic designed landscapes, and its collaborative approach to all its work, is a living and flourishing embodiment of this way of being, and I am grateful to be a part of it.

Chris Webb
Chair

The Great Formal Layouts of Gardens and Parks 1610-1740

David Jacques' lecture at the AGM of the YGT, 26 March 2022

Introduction

David Jacques brought to his talk an immense catalogue of knowledge about the historical development of landscape design. He is an independent scholar and consultant in historic landscapes, parks and gardens and is a specialist in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century landscape history. His 2017 publication *Gardens of Court and Country* provides a comprehensive overview of the development of the English formal garden from 1630 to 1733.

David began by considering certain aspects of the development of landscape design in England across the period of 1610 to 1740. His talk was very well illustrated with a well-researched collection of (nominally) contemporary illustrations, many being by, or in the style of, Kip and Knyff.

His talk presented an illustration of how the gardens and landscape around English houses across this period had developed:

- Beginning with little more than functional grass, followed by the addition of functional defined areas
- This was followed by the development of more elaborate features (parterres, canals, etc) but still as adjuncts to the main dwelling, and seen/enjoyed from the dwelling, often advertising wealth and power
- Finally, we saw the development of landscape design which saw the house as a feature within the landscape, encouraging rides and walks over the park

The English Garden

Starting with The English Tradition pre-1660 we saw that people often developed existing gardens adding grass and gravel squares; the garden was not planned as a whole. Parterres a L'Anglaise had designs made of cut turf and grass known as plats, often with a statue in the centre. They may have had a border of flowers around the edges or a separate flower walk. Avenues and bowling greens became popular additions.

Looking at many birds' eye views we considered Grand Designs such as at Wilton House where, following the restoration of Charles II in 1660, Grand Gardens began to be made again. Wilton showed the French influence, where the parterres were later turfed. Rational planning influences from the Protestant Netherlands introduced modest and seemly gardens

At Althorp by 1700 there was a moat and forecourt, geometrical, double avenues, gateways, all planned as a whole. But at Windsor Castle glacey (grass) slopes set off the castle where the moat was no longer needed for defence.

Burlington House in London had a large garden behind it with two squares and four grass plats. Euston Hall had orangeries, topiary, statues and clipped greens such as phillyrea, holly and cypress.

David drew our attention to a key event in the development of topiary in England. Prior to 1683 clipped bushes and hedges such as those planted at Euston Hall were widely used. In 1683 the winter frosts caused such severe damage that alternative evergreens had to be found, and yew became the best alternative. Clipped cypress, so often seen in earlier illustrations, disappears. He also noted that we might adopt the term "clipped greens" instead of "topiary" as it was the established term of the time.

At Ingestre Hall in Staffordshire Sir Christopher Wren probably altered the older garden, made two Courts, stables and offices and even designed the church in the grounds. David noted that contemporary writers promoted the health benefits of exercise, indeed encouraging more strenuous walking, etc. and parterres were ideal for this. At Ingestre a parterre was provided for such exercise, but a flower border was still maintained.

The Advertisement of Power

Where and when opportunity arose landscape design increasingly played a role in the demonstration of power and wealth for example amongst Royalty and the Court and the use of, parterres, canals and cascades became widespread. St James's Park had a long canal built by Charles II in the 1660's and later a canal a mile long was built at Hampton Court Palace, the longest in Europe at the time. A cascade was planned for the new Greenwich Palace to be viewed past the Queens House, with giant steps as in France. Unfortunately, there was insufficient water supply for the jets. Le Notre's one and only sketch for a landscape in England is of this cascade but he only made a sketch and Charles ran out of money. William of Orange at Hampton Court constructed parterres in the Daniel Marot style of gravel and box inverted. He wanted 13 fountains but again there an insufficient head of water, only 13 feet. Later, a steam engine was installed to pump the water. Sadly, due to costs, Queen Anne cancelled these projects. Nevertheless, The Privy Garden was a trend setter with its cut work, its statues of river gods and view of the River Thames.

On a smaller scale Wimbledon Manor had clipped greens, pencil thin and round headed trees, silver holly. At Cassiobury, terraces of the Earl of Essex were designed by Moses Cooke and altered by Charles

Bridgeman with George London. They included woodland walks, a lime avenue and “an excellent collection of the choicest of fruits”

Other houses and palaces where we saw gardens develop included Denham Place, Bucks where by 1706 plans were shown with over 60 pieces of sculpture, a geometrical canal and an elaborate walled garden. Melbourne Hall, in Derby was designed in the manner of Le Notre, as was Kiveton Park, where the Duke of Leeds also borrowed ideas from his French book. By 1700 Marlborough House in London shows grass, no statues, no greens, no broderie. Whitehall Palace used the River Thames as its water walks.

Woodland gardens

Woodland had long been used as a for the supply of domestic fuel by coppicing and therefore woodland near houses often appeared as “clumps”. As coal became widely available then woodland became more ornamental.

We looked at the development of avenues in the Grand Design. Early avenues could be seen passing through clumps of woodland for example early winding paths in Bulstrode Park, and Ray Wood in Castle Howard by 1773.

Anticipating our imminent walking tour at Bramham Park and its garden we were shown an estate plan of 1710. The gardens had been laid out between 1698-1731. David pointed out that the garden design was developed around a different axis to that of the house, making the house one of the features of the landscape. It is thought that Lord Bingley himself designed the gardens and his daughter Harriet added statuary, the Chapel and the Gothic Temple. (The Gardens Trust visited it in July 2001)

Other examples of later landscapes provided by David included:

- Blenheim Palace, where the landform was planned by Queen Anne’s gardener Henry Wise who planted formal gardens, a wilderness and some of the parkland himself possibly helped by Charles Bridgeman and Stephen Switzer. Charles Bridgeman also worked at Sacombe Park in Herts but was best known for his work at Stowe including the earthworks of the 1720s.
- The First Cascades at Chatsworth were built in 1725 and added to later.
- At Hall Barn, Bucks the grounds were influenced by Versailles and included a ha-hah or sunk fence. John Aislabie, the owner’s stepfather, laid out The Grove with its straight walks, statues and follies.
- In 1730 the owners at Castle Hill in Devon built a sham castle above the Palladian mansion, plus follies, statues and temples in the grounds as well as formal gardens.

- Later ideas of Bridgeman (died 1728) are shown at Houghton Hall, including his new ideas of natural landscape. He designed a Ride around it, a several thousand-acre rural park, with gates, a pond becomes a lake, and the forecourt becomes a lawn.

Conclusion

You can see that we had a quick tour of England through the eyes of the engravers of the early eighteenth century. We learned about parterres and plats, clipped greens and topiary.

It was time to move on into the landscape of Bramham Park and see how Lord Bingley had applied the knowledge acquired on his Grand Tour.

Jane Ingham

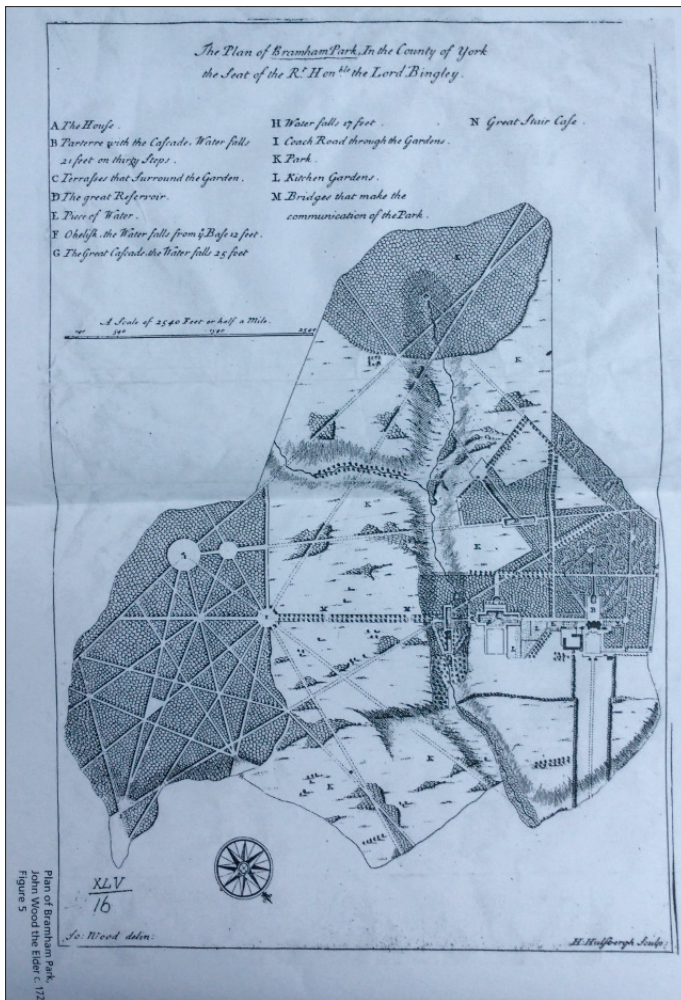
YGT Tour of Bramham Park Saturday 26 March 2022

YGT Tour of Bramham Park Saturday March 26 2022

After an efficiently served and enjoyable lunch, members assembled at the entrance steps for the tour of the grounds with the owner of Bramham Park, Nick Lane Fox. We were very fortunate not only to have an unseasonably warm and sunny day for our tour, but also to have such a knowledgeable and enthusiastic guide to these important historic landscape gardens.



*Nick Lane Fox at start of tour
(Photo: © Philip Ingham)*



Plan by John Wood 1728

Bramham is the earliest surviving landscape garden in Yorkshire, being created over 300 years ago, with few subsequent changes to its original lay-out. It still contains its pre-1730s avenues, vistas, canals, cascades, intersecting rides, and tall clipped hedges, while the later additions of temples, obelisk and garden ornaments only serve to enhance the design shown in John Wood's plan of 1728.

Nikolaus Pevsner wrote "Bramham is a grand and unusual house, but its gardens are grander and more unusual. They are with Hampton Court and perhaps one or two others the most remarkable example in England of the planning of a park in the French manner of Louis XIV."

For anyone interested in garden history it is an inspiring experience to have the opportunity to explore this remarkable historical survival.

We started our tour at the garden front of the house beside the cascade, which was restored in 2013/4. For details of the Restoration Project see below. When we visited Bramham for a Study Day in May 2014, organised by Susan Kellerman, the cascade was in a plain grass enclosure but now the grass has been replaced by a more historically appropriate setting of a cut work parterre



The Cascade

(Photos: © Philip Ingham)

Our tour then continued to the Chapel, originally built as a temple by James Paine in 1750-62. It contains two fine marble statues of Robert Benson, the first Lord Bingley, the creator of the gardens and his daughter, Harriet Lane Fox.



Chapel at North End of Terrace under restoration

(Photo: © Philip Ingham)

From the Chapel we walked along beech lined avenues past the garden ornament known as the Four Faces to the T Pond. This pond, created in 1730 as a reservoir for the Cascade, was repaired in 2011/12 and restored to its original appearance. Our next stop was at the Gothic temple, built in 1750 and based on a design by Batty Langley. The interior still contains

its contemporary tables, stools, mirrors and fine plasterwork.



T-Pond

(Photo: © Philip Ingham)

At this point Nick Lane Fox suggested that those prepared for a longer walk should accompany him, while the less energetic could continue a more leisurely exploration of the grounds on their own. Most of the party, including at least one octogenarian, opted for the longer walk to Black Fen and its network of early 18th century allées. We walked along the side of the ha-ha, past recently cleared woodland walks to the Obelisk, which was designed by John Carr in 1768 to commemorate the early death of Robert Lane Fox, the son of Harriet and George.



Beech Allees

(Photo: © Philip Ingham)

The Obelisk stands in the centre of nine allées, all of which we were told, still contain the early 18th century culverts installed to improve drainage. From there we walked to the Round House, c.1750, a temple probably based on Kent's Temple of Ancient Virtue at Stowe. Here we posed on the steps for the traditional group photograph before viewing the semi-derelect interior. The plaster has fallen from the ceilings and walls after lead was stolen from the roof in the 1960's, though enough has survived to make restoration possible, when funds permit.



Group photo taken at

The Round House aka the Rotunda

(Photo: © Philip Ingham)

From the Broad Walk we continued to the cascades which descend from the Obelisk Pond (so-called after an obelisk which once stood in its centre). The restoration of the lower part of these cascades, much of the stonework of which still survives, is part of a long-term restoration plan. Walking alongside the Obelisk Pond we then went into a hedged enclosure towards a Gothick style building, known as the Museum. Surprisingly it was built in 1848 to house a collection of curiosities, at a time when the house was derelict after a fire in 1828 and the family lived elsewhere. From the Museum we walked past a newly created formal grass, gravel, and shrub garden, back to the former kitchen pavilion where we had a welcome cup of tea.

Having visited the gardens several times over the last 20 years, it is heartening to see grounds so well and carefully maintained with a constant rolling programme of intervention and maintenance, so that its unique historic character is being preserved for future generations to appreciate and enjoy.

Moira Fulton

Notes from the Editor

Following our interesting visit to see the snowdrops at Wentworth Woodhouse in February, our 2022 season continued with the glorious Spring-like day that greeted those members who attended the AGM at Bramham Park on Saturday 26th March. Unfortunately, our Chairman, Chris Webb, was unable to attend due to the presence of Covid in his family. However, Nick Lane Fox ably conducted the business meeting of the AGM. Two new trustees were welcomed: Brendan Mowforth and Gillian Parker. The AGM was followed by an erudite talk given by David Jacques, a prominent academic and author with a kaleidoscopic knowledge of the historical development of landscape design. David's subject was *The Great Formal Layouts of Gardens and Parks 1610-1740*. This was followed by a delicious lunch supplied by Nick and Rachel. After lunch members stepped out into the glorious sunshine for a tour of the extensive grounds led by Nick himself. We are most grateful to Nick and Rachel for their excellent hospitality at Bramham Park. Reports on the AGM and David Jacques talk have been very kindly written by Jane Ingham and on the tour of the grounds by Moira Fulton and appear at p.5 of this *Newsletter*.

We are looking forward to a re-arranged visit to Boynton Hall shortly and then our visiting season gets into full swing.

Over the past few weeks we have presented, in association with the Gardens Trust, a number of extremely stimulating Zoom talks about Yorkshire Gardens in their *Unforgettable Gardens* series. These have been very well-received.

This Newsletter contains the usual round-up of our committee work and our Chairman's Report to the AGM. We include the report on our visit to Cantley Hall, the home of Lord Kirkham, near Doncaster. Although this visit took place last July, we felt it was important that the report should appear in the Newsletter, as it is our journal of record. Cantley Hall's importance lies in the fact that it is a private garden which very rarely allows visitors, and it is of significant interest. The Hall and grounds have been extensively renovated by Lord Kirkham and his team and we enjoyed an excellent tour. Chris Beevers organised the day with her customary skill and attention to detail and she has also prepared the report which appears at p.23.

Following on from our 25th Anniversary issue last Autumn, Vicky Price has continued her examination of our Newsletter archive and produced a most interesting collection of extracts from the reports of our visits. She has discovered that more than 250 visits have taken place during our 25 years of existence. It is a remarkable achievement, and I am impressed by the quality of the write ups. Visits. Part 1 of her article appears at p.16 and it will be concluded in the next issue of the Newsletter"

Gail Falkingham has undertaken the difficult task of writing up the second talk given by Mark Newman on the Aislabie's of Studley Royal entitled *Journeys continued: Studley Royal under William Aislabie*. The first talk: *Genius of the Place: John Aislabie's personal style at Studley Royal* was written up by Alison Brayshaw in the *Spring 2021 Newsletter* at p.28. Both these talks were of excellent quality and we are so lucky to have Mark Newman as our resident expert on Fountains and Studley Royal.

I hope all our members will enjoy a wonderful summer of garden and parks visits and thanks to the Events Team for organising such a stimulating programme.

Christine Miskin
Editor

Conservation and Planning

A Poem as Lovely as a Tree

I wonder if you find, like me, that as we get older our minds return to poems, rhymes and phrases that we learned as youngsters. Sometimes verses come into my head quite unexpectedly; words that have never seen the light of day for decades.

In the last Newsletter I wrote about the colours of nature and thoughts from Walpole, the Gilpin's, and the forester CY Michie on the husbandry, landscape, aesthetics, and climate mitigation of planting trees.

My mind so often turns to my enjoyment of trees and their vital importance to everyone. As we hear about the terrible conditions of the people of Ukraine, I cannot help but also feel extremely disturbed about the devastation of their rich landscape and everything that once grew there so successfully, including the woodland, street trees and public parks.

Only this week; 'I think that I shall never see/a poem as lovely as a tree', came into my mind and, using the power of the internet, I discovered that the short

poem entitled *Trees* was written by an American writer and poet called Alfred Joyce Kilmer (1886-1918) and published in the collection *Trees and Other Poems* in 1914. At the time of his deployment to France with the 69th Infantry Regiment during World War I, Kilmer was considered the leading American Roman Catholic poet and lecturer of his generation. He was killed by a sniper's bullet at the Second Battle of the Marne in July 1918 leaving behind his wife Aline Murray, also an accomplished poet and author and four children; one little girl had died aged five from polio. Deep in the Nantahala Wilderness, in the southwest corner of North Carolina is the Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest, one of the last stands of virgin hardwood forest in eastern United States.

I understand that Joyce Kilmer's early works were inspired by, and were imitative of, the poetry of Algernon Charles Swinburne, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Aubrey Beardsley, WB Yeats, and others. In 1912 he became a special writer for the *New York Times Review of Books* and the *New York Times Sunday Magazine*. He continued to write poetry whilst in France, the most notable was *Rouge Bouquet* (1918) which commemorated the deaths of two dozen members of his regiment in a German artillery barrage on American trench positions in the Rouge Bouquet forest. How times have not changed: very salutary.

However, with a much happier outcome, as I write there is a new documentary being shown in Sheffield about the successful campaign to stop the city's mass street tree-felling programme. A spokesperson for the film said: "*The Felling* is a David and Goliath story about how a small group of residents in one of Europe's greenest cities battled to stop a powerful city council and giant multi-national corporation from chopping down thousands of healthy street trees as part of a massive £2.2bn private contract to maintain the city's highways." Thankfully the council has since changed course and adopted a strategy to save more trees. (See also details of the new book about the campaign at p.35).

The Local Authority Treescapes Fund and the Urban Tree Challenge (UTCF) have reopened with more than £9m to be allocated to successful applicants across both funds as part of the Government's wider drive to treble tree planting rates across England by the end of this Parliament and plant 30,000 hectares of trees across the UK per year by 2025. Forestry Commission chairman, Sir William Worsley, said: "Together these funds will help to promote resilient tree growth in England for generations to come, whilst simultaneously addressing the twin challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss."

We must all be in favour of such initiatives but it is so important to have the right tree in the right place. As statutory consultee for all planning applications affecting historic parks and gardens, the Gardens Trust (GT), and YGT here in Yorkshire, hope that local authorities will consult us so that we can help with advice; collectively we have a good deal of knowledge and understanding about our urban historic parks and gardens. Last November we were pleased to be notified of new woodland creation as part of UTCF at **Beaumont and Greenhead Parks**, Huddersfield via the Forestry Commission. We responded, writing:

"Many of Yorkshire's public parks were developed and laid out to a particular design incorporating the natural topography of the site (this is particularly apparent at Beaumont Park but is also a part of the design of Greenhead Park), embellishing it with sinuous and peripheral walks, hard landscaping such as steps, terraces, viewing areas, conservatories, shelters, and monuments, designing flower beds, shrubberies, and tree planting. In the Victorian period the tree planting was often done on earth mounds to give added height and interest to the design, a technique promoted by the designer JC Loudon (1783-1843). The tree species and their arrangement in avenues, clumps and boundary planting were to enhance the recreational experience of those enjoying the park; giving views and vistas, elements of surprise and incidents as people progressed through the park. **It is therefore important that the historic design is recognised and underpins any new tree planting otherwise the significance of the park becomes eroded.** We strongly recommend that the park's management plan (which should have a fundamental basis in the understanding of the design and the park's evolution) is used to determine where new trees are planted and the most appropriate species. The Friends of the Park should also be consulted. In terms of Greenhead Park, there are many trees in the park, with planting having continued over recent years. One location proposed is alongside a curving path which is possibly appropriate, but the other location is a slope which already has many young trees."

We also suggested that the planting arrangement and spacing should be carefully considered, taking into account the area that will be required for the trees when they are at maturity. We received a pleasing response from Kirklees Council... and hope that the parks will greatly benefit from new carefully considered planting.

We were also consulted by the Woodland Trust in December 2021 about some tree planting at **Smithy Ridge Farm, Yorkshire Sculpture Park**. This was a

very sound proposal to plant a new avenue adjacent to the existing avenue and to produce an area of open woodland with a similar aesthetic to that shown on early OS maps.

Over the autumn and winter, the consultations from the Forestry Commission (FC) have all been for North Yorkshire estates: **Newburgh, Howsham, Houghton Hall near Market Weighton and Nun Appleton**. Our member, archaeologist Linda Smith, retired from her work at North Yorkshire County Council and has been invaluable in advising me.

Nun Appleton is very interesting but also, as many of you will know, is very private. Its history stretches back to at least the 12th century when it was a nunnery. Following the Dissolution, the property passed to Sir Thomas Fairfax (1521-99) and his descendant Thomas, Third Lord Fairfax who, as General Fairfax, commanded the Parliamentary forces from 1654-1650 when he retired. It is this mid-17th century period which is most interesting from a historic designed landscape and garden standpoint, although we understand little seems to survive above ground. Like John Aislabie at Studley Royal in the early 18th century and many others, Fairfax spent his retirement laying out his gardens at Nun Appleton designing them formally with a military theme. Andrew Marvell, tutor to Mary Fairfax dedicated his poem *Upon Appleton House* to her father, General Fairfax and emphasized the natural beauty of the site and the formal gardens. The park developed later during the ownership of the Milner family in the 18th century and later in the mid-19th century when Lady Milner also made a formal garden with a fishpond. A little later she created a terrace along the south side of the house and linked the smaller parts of the garden together, along with draining the park and ordering the embankment of the River Wharfe. When Nun Appleton was in Fairfax ownership the land was described as 'a noble park with splendid oak trees', and the Andrew Marvell poem mentions shady woods and woodland with mature trees. From our knowledge and map studies we were able to give advice on the planting within the Registered area and its setting. We had a very nice response from the Woodland Officer who felt that our suggestions would be particularly helpful.

The Forestry Commission (FC) began consulting the GT on felling and thinning licence applications for Registered Parks and Gardens about eighteen months ago. Prior to that there had not been any preliminary contact about the information that we would need in order to give informed advice. This has presented problems due to the quality and lack of information that was being sent with many of the

consultations. The GT Conservation Committee has just been told that there is to be a six-month secondment from Historic England (HE) to the Forestry Commission to free up capacity to produce draft guidelines on the FC consultations. We are hopeful that this will be a real help.

Also encouraging is that the GT Conservation Committee has a new member, Jo Barnes of the National Trust, who is expert on biodiversity net gain (BNG), so hopefully things are starting to take shape on the greener side of GT conservation.

In the last Newsletter I mentioned that YGT had responded to the **Harewood Estate** draft PA2 Feasibility Study. To start in January 2023, the Estate intends to apply for a Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier Agreement using recommendations and findings from the study.

Recently YGT has also given advice to the consultants preparing **Conservation Management Plans for Temple Newsam and Lotherton Hall** and we await the outcomes for both important historic estates that are part of Leeds City Council's portfolio.



Lotherton Hall

North Yorkshire and York

Turning to specific planning applications we have just heard that the application for **Marske Hall** in Swaledale, which was refused by the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority has gone to appeal.

The planning application from the **University of York** for the formation of an all-weather surface with underground anchors for a marquee within part of the **Vanbrugh Bowl** at Vanbrugh College has been approved, but with modifications and restricted timing that should make the changes less damaging to the significant 1960's university design.

The saga of the conversion of the garage into a dwelling at **Moreby Hall** continues with yet another consultation. We remain concerned about the potential impact of extending and converting a small

building that is essentially within the park and was not designed or built to be a habitable dwelling and have requested that, if permission is granted, Selby DC removes permitted development rights, so that future residents would need planning permission for those changes that usually fall under permitted development rights.

At Scarborough, the iconic **Holbeck Clock Tower**, donated by Alfred Shuttleworth in 1911 and erected to commemorate the coronation of King George V is on the Esplanade at the main entrance to Holbeck Gardens at the southern end of the registered **South Cliff Gardens**. The Clock Tower is listed Grade II and contributes to a collection of structures and shelters within the wider park. We supported the comprehensive repairs which will allow continued public use of the historic, principal route through the tower into South Cliff Gardens.

Other good news is the repair to the roofs of **Ripley Castle** and to the lean-to bothies on the north wall of the Walled Garden. The bothies and associated structures are Grade II* listed and are currently on HE's Heritage at Risk register. They are important as part of the historic working and garden pleasure area that includes the Orangery, garden wall and pavilions.



Ripley Castle roof repair



Rear of Orangery

Also at Ripley Castle we have had two planning applications for the car parks. The main car park is outside the registered park and garden, and we thought the display signs would not cause any harm, but we had concerns about the signage, cash points etc proposed to be installed in the Castle Courtyard and the car park near the Castle Courtyard. There was no mention of the possible impact of the proposals on the many designated heritage assets, no Heritage or Design and Access Statement. We felt this was a poor quality submission/proposal for Ripley Castle, such a very fine part of Yorkshire's built heritage within a registered park and garden.

The planning application in support of new toilet facilities, alterations to improve visitor circulation through the south end of the east range and into the main house, and public display of the clock at **Norton Conyers Hall** was detailed and carefully considered. We had no objection and support the endeavours to generate revenue for the future of Norton Conyers.

We also had no objection for two applications for **Rudding Park**: changes at the driving range and the erection of a combined heat and power centre with an access drive.

Applications related to holiday accommodation continue with the proposed extension of the existing touring caravan site and 45 holiday lodges at **Constable Burton Hall Caravan Park** and the creation of a glamping site and the siting of a tree house at **Sutton Park**. Both applications had been well-prepared and overall we had no objections, but we mentioned some concerns and gave advice, particularly on the wildflower meadows where the seed should have local provenance. A flowering meadow can be quite difficult to establish and maintain: needing mowing only after flowering (say late July into August depending on flowering species in the mix), to allow seed to fall.

Middleton Lodge near Scotch Corner recently requested retrospective planning permission for canopies within the Courtyards of the Coach House (retrospective) and the Stable Block. We had some reservations that despite the limited intrusion with the fixings, the canopies are large and interrupt the views of the listed building (by John Carr or John Foss c.1780) from within the courtyard and are visible from the pleasure grounds beyond to the north-west and above the wall to the south-west opposite the walled garden. We have concerns that the canopies may become a permanent feature, which would continue the harm to the heritage assets for a long period. We advised that if retrospective planning permission is granted it is temporary and is reviewed regularly.



Middleton Lodge: Courtyard from NW showing canopies

Many of you will know that the new design in the formerly derelict walled garden is by Tom Stuart Smith and has been a great success.



Middleton Lodge: Fig House from the South

The setting of **Allerton Castle** at Junction 47 of the A1(M) is now destined to be very much degraded. We spent a good deal of time giving advice on these proposals and strongly supported the detailed and carefully considered HE advice for both the Employment Park, and the Flaxby Leisure Park (with up to 350 holiday lodges, hotel, indoor and outdoor leisure facilities etc.). These developments have been given permission by Harrogate Borough Council.

South Yorkshire

Apart from Boston Castle public park, the planning applications have been for the major estates of Wentworth Woodhouse, Wentworth Castle, and Cannon Hall.

Wentworth Woodhouse has taken up a considerable amount of time with an initial consultation last September about the change of use of the Camellia House to a café event space, changing place pod, bin

store, disabled car parking; demolition of teaching accommodation and provision of a new car park together with temporary coach parking etc. We were grateful for advice from Patrick Eyres, Karen Lynch, Jane Furse and others. This application was followed by another consultation in December that took time but was followed by more documentation and work on a further two additional responses. Although we support the aims of the Wentworth Woodhouse Preservation Trust to sustain this nationally important heritage, we had not seen the landscaping masterplan and remained concerned about several proposals connected with the Camellia House and the car parking.

Thankfully Roger Lambert had recently been to **Wentworth Garden Centre** so was able to agree with the retrospective planning application for the formation of a vehicle circulation area with the laying of crushed stone and aggregate and associated planting, a no objection.

We were very pleased to support the structural repair to the internal stone treads of **Keppel's Column** from Rotherham MBC.

At **Wentworth Castle** we have not had any further news about the application to replace the existing bungalow called Pine Lodge. We have been consulted on the change of use of Home Farm buildings from residential institution to short term residential letting units. Here our concerns are largely centred around the continued public access to the gardens of this Grade I historic park and garden.

We have been consulted about works at **Cannon Hall**, Barnsley (Registered Grade II). Jane Furse and I agreed that the change of use of the currently unused Garden House/Display House on the eastern end of the terrace from the south front of the Hall would not be harmful. We suggested that the interpretation could be modified to explain the 18th century build and use of the Garden House buildings by the Spencer family as summerhouse and display house. Jane pointed out that the western room has the remains of the two oval windows; on the eastern side return it is blocked in but visible on the exterior elevation, whilst the oval window on the western side is completely blocked in but visible beneath the rendering/paint on the inside. These oval windows are likely to be where John Spencer looked outdoors from his Garden House/summerhouse as shown in a painting of the period. Due to Jane's extensive research, we were also able to offer information and advice for the rebuilding of the leaning garden wall at the walled garden, repairs to loose and unstable stonework of the plunge pool, and possible repair of the cascade in the wider area of pleasure grounds at Cannon Hall.



Cannon Hall: Summerhouse and Display House

In 2019 we responded to an application from Yorkshire Water for works to their reservoirs within the north-eastern boundary of Grade II registered Boston Park to which we had no objection. There has recently been a further application, and after consulting with the Friends of Boston Castle and Parklands we had no objection.

West Yorkshire

Whilst writing about water, Jane represented YGT remotely at a meeting looking at an urban pollution management (UPM) scheme for Yorkshire Water, called Dearne Reach 1, in which one of the options considered, to achieve compliance with the river quality standards, consists of relocating a final effluent outfall onto a new discharge point located downstream of **Bretton Lakes (Yorkshire Sculpture Park)**. Thankfully HE's Chris Mayes is involved with the discussions.

Following an earlier consultation in July 2021 we had a full application for six houses on the site of the former mortuary at **Utley Cemetery**, Registered Grade II. Utley Cemetery was opened in 1857. The designer is unknown, but its listing notes its enjoyment of the landscape setting of the site on its north facing slope overlooking the Aire valley. The application was still without a Heritage Statement, and thus not compliant with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) para 194 (July 2021). Nevertheless, the locations of the proposed dwellings had been revised to be some 6m or 7m further away from the Cemetery wall to the benefit of the registered site. Roger had looked carefully at this application and gave further advice.

Park Avenue along the southern boundary of **Roundhay Park**, registered Grade II, appeared again in November; the demolition of two dwellings and associated outbuildings at 6 and 6A and the construction of a residential care home for the elderly. We gave advice and thought that, because of the trees along the northern boundary, the proposals

would not impact on the significance of Roundhay Park.

Last September we were asked for advice about the redevelopment of Greenhead College at Huddersfield which lies across the road from **Greenhead Park**, registered Grade II. This was followed by the planning application in October. We thought that there will inevitably be some impact on the Registered Park and Garden and its listed buildings particularly the Grade II listed Conservatory (c. 1930-31), the Grade II listed Boer War Memorial and the recent Sikh Memorial that are sited at the eastern end of the park, to the north of the proposed development. We were pleased to note that the new building is proposed at four storeys and will sit one storey below the former school building which will minimise the visual impact on Greenhead Park. The student hub will also act as a green buffer between the building and the Park.

Jane again enabled us to give specialist advice about the listed building application for west garden works and revised bin store design at **Ledston Hall**. Our main concern was the proposal to break through the northern wall of the western garden where a very old glasshouse stood until the 1950's. The glasshouse was most likely to have been constructed during the eighteenth century due to its form and unusual staggered floor plan. We strongly advised a preliminary archaeological investigation and recording of the old glasshouse area, including any surviving footings/hot air ducts/fireplaces and the addition of any such findings to the Wheeler Trust's archaeological report. We suggested a hedged enclosure to screen the bin store.

Whilst we had no objection in principle to the changes proposed at **Temple Newsam Golf Club House** we had some concerns about the additional visual impact of the proposals on Temple Newsam Park and requested that the materials and colours are subdued for the windows, doors, the railings and the furniture to be use on the terraces.



Friarwood Valley Gardens, Southgate: View into the Park through the railings due to be restored by friends

Finally, some members will remember the lovely visit that we had to **Friarwood Valley Gardens**, Pontefract a few years ago, so we were pleased to receive a planning application for the installation of decorative gates to the main Southgate entrance. The Friends also plan to repair and renovate the Southgate wall and railings and we are very supportive of their initiatives and their care of these mid-20th century gardens on a site with a very long and interesting history.

With the help of YGT's 'planning team' I will continue to lead on the GT/YGT's responses to planning applications: these are the major part of our efforts in Conservation and Planning. After many years I retired from being the Chairman and Conservation administrator at the AGM, and hope that someone will take on this enjoyable but much less onerous role.

My thanks to the planning team: Win Derbyshire, Jane Furse, Geoff Hughes, Susan Kellerman, Roger Lambert. To David Rhodes for his expertise on Harrogate BC area, help from Peter Goodchild on

Harewood and Temple Newsam and Chris Webb for advice on York.

Edwardian Gardens Day at Lotherton Hall, Wednesday 22nd June 2022 with Leeds City Council.

Our experts will be Mette Eggan, landscape architect from Norway, Dr John Grimshaw, Director of the Yorkshire Arboretum, Jane Furse, landscape architect and historic garden specialist and Chris Flynn, Head Gardener, Dyffryn, NT of Wales. We are giving free places to heritage horticulture apprentices and students and staff from Leeds CC. The full cost is £40 and there are a very few places remaining. The programme and booking form have been in previous *Newsletters*.

Do get in touch with me if you are interested. Tel: 01748 822617 e-m: val@hepworthskeeby.co.uk

Val Hepworth

Conservation and Planning Committee

Photos © Val Hepworth

Ripley Castle © David Rhodes

Gardens Trust News



**YORKSHIRE
GARDENS TRUST**

Call for new GT Trustees

The Gardens Trust is calling for expressions of interest from people who would like to join the Board or one of the Trust's Committees or Groups. This is because several Board vacancies will be created in 2022 by term limits. The Gardens Trust is managed by a Board of up to twelve Trustees, who are nominated by the existing Board and elected by members of the Trust at our Annual General Meeting. Trustees serve for an initial term of three years, renewable to a maximum term of six years.

Gardens Trust Yorkshire Weekend 2022

This event is definitely going ahead from Friday 2nd until Sunday 4th September and is open for bookings at: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-gardens-trusts-yorkshire-weekend-2022-tickets-146795807211>

More details are available in our February e-Bulletin and on the Gardens Trust website. Several of our members are already heavily involved in giving guided tours, and lectures.

If any members would like to help, please contact **Vicky Price** at: dvickyprice@waitrose.com



The Events Team - What we do

The Events Team has organised a full programme for 2022 and we hope there will be something to encourage all members to come and join us at some time. As a team we do not sit still and already we are busy planning our 2023 programme, hopefully for more and better events

When people join the YGT we hope that they will find an event which interests them in the programme and come to it. We make visits to all kinds of designed landscapes and we try to include events across the geographic spread of Yorkshire, to include almost hidden landscapes like Whitley Beaumont, well-maintained historic gardens like Bramham, council-run parks, cemeteries, specialist nurseries, and private gardens. Our aim is to ensure that each event provides an "added extra" which people would not be able to experience if visiting on their own. This will often be a specialist tour or access to an otherwise private area.

Our new website has information about the next event on the home page and easy links to details of the whole Events Programme. Whilst a few events are exclusive to members only, most are open to non-members and it will be good to see if non-members visit our website, apply for tickets, enjoy an event and join the YGT. We recognise that existing members are great advocates of our activities, and we hope that you will all encourage your friends and family to join you at events.

Our success with social media has been limited, mainly due to the lack of experience and confidence of the Events Team. We realise that to gain access to new members we need to have a Facebook page, do Instagram and Twitter and feed in snippets of information and great photos. If anyone would like to join us and help with social media, we would love

to hear from you. The Gardens Trust has much social media experience and training material to share, so you would not be starting from scratch.

Over the past few years, learning how to run Zoom talks in collaboration with the Gardens Trust has been a real success. It has proved an excellent way to keep in contact with members during the pandemic, as well as adding something else to our programme for the winter months. Our last series about Yorkshire landscapes and gardens in the Unforgettable Gardens series had 125 people buy a ticket for the whole series, attendees coming from as far away as Lithuania. The talks covered Castle Howard; Hackfall and Kirby Fleetham; Durham City, and designer Tom Stuart Smith's modern gardens at the Hepworth Gallery in Wakefield, Middleton Lodge in North Yorkshire and Mount St John near Thirsk. We have reached new audiences - I posted a link on our local gardening WhatsApp group and one friend who signed up said that she had really enjoyed the talks, but she had never thought about historic garden design before, and they were an eye-opener. There is work to be done, spreading the news...

As ever we are always on the look-out for volunteers who would like to join our small, friendly team. We pick brains, keep our eyes and ears open, share ideas, consider new projects and then meet, sometimes in person and sometimes on Zoom, to discuss and decide where we would like to visit and what we would like to do. No experience is needed except a willingness to explore and learn about new places, stout shoes and a good waterproof coat. If you are interested, please contact me for a chat.

Vicky Price and the Events Team:
dvickyprice@waitrose.com

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

You are reminded of the following events which are due to take place over the next couple of months:

Saturday 14th May. 1.30-3.30pm Ildborough Roman Site (English Heritage) and Aldborough Manor Garden, Front Street, Aldborough, York YO51 5ES

The gardens of Aldborough Manor contain extraordinary archaeological surprises extending from Roman times to the early 20th century. The village stands on the site of the Roman town of Isurium Brigantum, a key administrative centre in the Roman occupation of the north. The long history of this fascinating landscape, owned by the Lawson-Tancred family since 1832, with shared English Heritage guardianship today, is still unfolding and this promises to be an intriguing and exciting site visit.

It will include a tour of the Roman site by a Friend of Roman Aldborough guide, and a talk about the newly developed Roman Garden followed by a visit to Sir Andrew Lawson-Tancred's private garden, with refreshments. Cost £10.00 for EH members, non-EH members £15.50 with no concession, and £15.00 with concession.

Organiser: Chris Beevers

Thursday 19th May. 1.30–3.30 pm - Goddards, 27 Tadcaster Road, York, North Yorkshire YO24 1GG (National Trust)

An opportunity to enjoy two bespoke tours at the 1927 five-acre Arts and Crafts garden, designed by George Dillistone, adjacent to the former Terry family home.

Gillian Parker, a postgraduate research student in garden history at the University of Sheffield, as well as a garden volunteer at Goddards, will discuss its history in the context of Dillistone's other work, drawing on her recent research. Tom Longridge, Goddards' Head Gardener, will discuss his recent restoration work and reimagining of parts of the garden, both of which have been driven by Goddards' history. The property is open from 11.00-16.00 and event participants are welcome during those times for private viewing. Picnics are allowed in the meadow area. There will also be a limited offer of teas, coffees etc available from NT catering.

Cost: £10.00 NT members, £16.00 non-NT members

Organiser: Maddy Hughes

Wednesday 25th May. 7.30pm - YGT/Yorkshire Philosophical Society Biennial Joint Lecture: Tempest Anderson Lecture Theatre, The Yorkshire Museum, Museum Gardens, York YO1 2FR

Our biennial joint lecture with the Yorkshire Philosophical Society is Thomas White (c 1736 – 1811) Redesigning the Northern British Landscape and will be given by Louise Wickham, based on the newly published book she has written with Deborah Turnbull.

For those who may wish to attend this lecture, but are unavailable to attend on Wednesday 25th May, Northumbrian Gardens Trust have invited YGT members to their Annual Lecture, (which will be the same lecture by Louise), on Thursday 10 November 2022 at 19.00 at the Newcastle Literary and Philosophical Society, Bolbec Hall, 23 Westgate Rd, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 1SE. Members wishing to attend should register in advance with Martin Roberts, Martin Roberts martin.fleece@gmail.com.”

A Brief History of YGT Events: Part 1

Introduction

When I first thought that reading all the *Newsletters* and extracting some short excerpts from the visit reports would be a good way to celebrate 25 years of Yorkshire Gardens Trust events, I had not checked to see how many there have been. Two hundred and fifty, give or take a few, and that does not include garden tours that were part of a study day. I certainly had not appreciated the wealth of information that is encapsulated in our *Newsletters* in all the reports, not just for visits, but from our conservation, schools and research and recording activities. The early editions are only available as hard copies, but from Issue 22 Summer 2008 onwards, they are available on the YGT website. I realise how fortunate we are to have expert garden historians, architectural historians, conservation experts, archaeologists and many others who have given their time to guide our visits. I need to thank all the kind hosts who have allowed us to wander round their gardens and trample through their estates, but our real gratitude should be reserved for all those people who organised these events through the years. Our events were halted by the Foot and Mouth outbreak in 2001, and during the current

Covid pandemic, but not by the weather. Stalwart members are made of sterner stuff, and they have braved torrential rain, wind, snow, and Arctic cold to visit historic gardens and landscapes.

Part 1. 1997-2000

Our First Event

Londesborough Park, Pocklington, 1997

“The Yorkshire seat of Richard Boyle, 3rd Earl of Burlington, Londesborough today exhibits the remnants of the East Riding's most important 18th century landscaped park and garden.

A Kip and Knyff engraving of c.1700 shows the formal garden laid out by Robert Hooke in 1676-9, as inherited by Burlington. In its place Thomas Knowlton, employed as gardener at Londesborough from 1726 till his death in 1781, assisted Burlington in the creation of a Rococo pleasure garden and in the extension and embellishment of the park with avenues, plantations, ponds and a great lake.”

Deborah Turnbull,

Newsletter No 1. Winter 1996/97



Londesborough Park. Kip and Knyff engraving

Other Early Events

Midsummer Picnic at Plumpton Rocks, 1997

“A visitor to Plumpton should not expect to find tarmac paths, immaculate lawns and flower beds or manicured woodlands. Instead, there is a fine lake surrounded by majestic rocks and ancient woodlands through which paths meander. In spring and early summer bluebells flower in the woodland areas to be followed by rhododendrons and later there is the beauty of the autumn and winter colours”.

Edward de Plumpton Hunter, *Newsletter No 1*.
Winter 1996/97



Plumpton Rocks

Visit and Social Evening at Old Sleningford Hall, 1998

“An early evening visit to an English garden, such as that at Old Leningrad, at the height of summer conjures up images of flowery summer frocks, relaxed figures strolling across green lawns against a profusion of colourful flowers in the herbaceous border, with dappled sunlight filtering through the still fresh green of stately trees. How cruelly can reality destroy expectations! Wellington boots, umbrellas and waterproofs turned out to be appropriate garb.

This beautiful early 19th century garden was veiled in a grey shroud of rain and mist that lasted throughout the evening.

But garden enthusiasts shrug off rain just as the ducks and other waterfowl did on Old Sleningford lake. Particular memories include the delightful lilac-painted summer house, sadly lacking the sunshine to set off its delicate charms; and down in the valley, the lushness of the lawns and planting round the lake; and the islands with their rustic pavilion hidden deep in dripping vegetation”.

Susan Kellerman, *Newsletter No 5. Winter 1998/9*

Visits aren't only arranged to historic landscapes and gardens.....

Wakefield Rhubarb Trail, 1999

“Suitably shod we then visited the packing shed where the sticks are trimmed, graded and packed by hand, and a forcing shed. A breath-taking experience as you step into the warm, damp darkness, lit only by a few candles, where pink stems and pale green leaves glow eerily in the huge shed. Here Janet [Oldroyd Hume] explained how the forcing process occurs, from crowns several years old, removed from the fields after they have been frosted (the problem of global warming and warmer winters means a shorter season) and placed by hand into closely packed beds. The warm, enveloping, silent darkness is punctuated by the soft sound of rhubarb shoots popping from the enveloping sheaths”.

Marlene Godfey, *Newsletter No 6. Spring/Summer 1999*

The Curse of the YGT – The Weather...! Cusworth Hall, 2000

“The torrential rain that accompanied the journey to Cusworth suggested that ‘the curse of the YGT’ was about to strike again but, apart from the odd spot, we were blessed with a bright sunny day... Dr Judith Roberts took up the story of [Richard] Woods involvement with Cusworth and its importance as a well-documented site. Here we not only had a record of what was carried out and a core of surviving landscape, but, through the survival of Woods’ Memorandum, we had an insight into his intentions... Part of Woods’ plan was to create a series of lakes that would give the effect of a meandering river at the foot of a very large expanse of concave slope. This was a particularly courageous and optimistic project as there was very little water available. Numerous boreholes were drilled in the hope of finding additional water supplies and at one time a windpump was planned. Judith again emphasised an area often overlooked by

garden historians, that of the use of tools, developed during the early industrial revolution, in landscape and garden creation. The importance of the lakes was emphasised by the fact that Woods, personally staked out their shape leaving subsequent construction to be managed by his foreman. The very significant amount of earthmoving required to create the slope was all carried out by hand. In fact, the slope is particularly complex, consisting of deliberate changes from concave to convex and enlivened by swells and platforms”.

Mark Wyman. *Newsletter No 8. Spring/Summer 2000*

Part 2. 2001-2010

Sewerby Hall – Midsummer Picnic, 2001

“Events have been difficult this year due to the foot-and-mouth outbreak. Many have been cancelled and most rearranged, The Midsummer Picnic was yet another victim. The original venue was to have been the Banqueting House at Hackfall but, in the event, Sewerby Hall in Bridlington turned out to be the most suitable alternative for a picnic...The Hall, a country manor house, was the work of John Greame between 1714 – 1720. It was built on the site of a medieval manor house and the drive was the original village street. The Estate was created through negotiation for the purchase of strip-farmed land that surrounded the manor... The east side of the house overlooks the ultimate in borrowed landscapes, what John Greame called the “German Ocean”. His successors added to the house and the additions included a magnificent 19th century conservatory known as the Orangery. The grounds contain pleasure grounds with a beautiful formal Italianate Garden containing fabulous monkey puzzle trees thought to be the oldest in England (over 200 years old) – the highlight of the gardens for me”.

Liz Neild-Banks. *Newsletter No 10. Spring/Summer 2001*

Not all visits take place in the countryside...

Hull Gardens and Suburbs, 2001

“Pearson Park, originally known as the People’s Park, was built on land donated by Zachariah Charles Pearson in 1860. It was designed as a setting for the middle-class houses which surrounded it and offered a “charming retreat for the townspeople in their hours of leisure”. Most of the Victorian features remain, and the park is still a very popular attraction, but many of the trees and shrubs need replacing, and the buildings and statues need repair. Because of this, the Local Authority has applied for a Lottery Grant in order to undertake major restoration work, and we were able to look at the plans that have been drawn up. Their aim

is to restore the Victorian features of the park, within the context of present-day leisure demands, not an easy task. We enjoyed a pleasant, guided tour through the busy park, admiring the impressive entrance arch, the beautiful statue of a young Queen Victoria and the delightful cast iron drinking fountain”.

Pauline Rawlinson. *Newsletter No 9. Autumn 2000/Winter 2001*

As well as urban parks, we’ve also visited cemeteries.....

Undercliffe Cemetery, Bradford, 2002

“Victorians went to the trouble and expense of designing cemeteries as parklands and Undercliffe was designed by a professional park designer, William Gay. The main feature is a promenade which reflects the social hierarchy of the living and includes what was known to the Victorians as the ‘select flat’. This was the flat, central area where the wealthy were buried in big plots with very ornate and impressive memorials. Artisans and shop keepers had smaller plots in more peripheral positions and the poor were buried in ‘Company graves’ in odd corners on the steep banks”.

Sylvia Hogarth. *Newsletter No 12. Spring/Summer 2002*

Stainborough Park, 2002



“After lunch we set off for a tour of Stainborough Park. As there is no set footpath it is not a walk for those unsteady on their feet. We clambered over wire and

through wooden fences to reach our destinations! Walking away from the house we went along the side of a field in which there were the remnants of the main approach avenue of trees with the Duke of Argyle's Column away in the distance. On through blocks of woodland, past the banks of the original lake, we unexpectedly came upon the Rotunda, now totally hidden by the trees of Ivas Wood but which originally would have visible as an eye-catcher from the house. Today the ravages of time and the attention of notorious local stone thieves have left its fourteen Ionic columns in a parlous state – and whilst you may explore the building, it is very much at your own risk! Another dilemma: restore or conserve as a ruin?"

Wendy Barnes-Jones. *Newsletter No 12. Spring/Summer 2002*

Hackfall, 2002

"The long-awaited visit to Hackfall, postponed in 2001, took place on what can only be described as a truly Italian Day. In 1792 John Byng, who 'unluckily' only spent two hours on a 'wet and gloomy' June evening, had advised an Italian Day should be devised for 'this inspection' then 'with wine and love to fill the scene, Hackfall will appear an Eden'.

Well, we had a gloriously sunny day on which to make our visit to this earthly paradise. Sunk deep below the level of an ordinary Pennine landscape lies this all but forgotten 18th century pleasure garden. Created in 1748, by William Aislabie of Studley Park, Hackfall is a most romantic and dramatic woodland landscape, situated on the steep slopes of a deep gorge, cut by the River Ure".

Pauline Murray. *Newsletter No 13. Autumn/Winter 2003*

More vandalism – this time in Scarborough Peaseholm Park, Scarborough, 2004

"The Park itself is in need of restoration – it isn't exactly neglected but it is in need of a make-over. It was opened in 1912 and had a Japanese-style layout complete with bridge, the latter guarded by two stone lions donated by Alderman Twentyman in 1928. The next year, the architect, George Anderson, designed a pagoda with a magnificent waterfall cascading from it over a rocky cliff. This pagoda has now been burnt down and, unfortunately, the works controlling the waterfall were damaged in the fire, so that only the rocks remain to be seen. A floating bandstand was erected and aquatic firework displays were held from 1922-1932. From 1927, displays of miniature naval battles have been held there, and are still being staged. The island on the lake cannot now be visited owing to the bridge needing repair. Work is continuing to keep everything from falling into disrepair – the lakeside was shored up to stop erosion and flower beds



Recent photos of the Japanese features in the park showing how well they have been restored!

(Photos © Friends of Peaseholm Park)

are regularly planted. However these are continually vandalised, not by youths (as one might think) but by grown men wanting to make money stealing whole beds of plants, particularly just before a car boot sale!"

Kay Dines. *Newsletter No 16. Spring/Summer 2004*

(Part 2 of this review will appear in the Autumn Issue of the Newsletter)

Vicky Price

Schools Report

How your Money Supports our Schools

I would like to give you an idea of how you are supporting our member schools, whether it's through subscriptions, legacies or other donations. Since last Spring, we have gained an extra 10 schools. Taking the average number of pupils in primary schools in 2018 to be 281, we may now be reaching an extra 2,810 children.

What have we offered those children and their schools over the last year? The chance of a workshop in school given by Wack's Wicked Plants; worksheets supporting them in their gardening; apple trees chosen with the help of Rogers of Pickering to suit the schools' areas; copies of *Gardening for Kids* by Dawn Isaacs, supplied and delivered by The Little Apple Bookshop in York; equipment including children's gardening gloves and rubber trugs (8 schools received a set of 12 trugs, which were snapped up within a couple of hours). Lastly but certainly not of least value, we offered four Grounds Development Awards of £300 each, which were given after careful consideration to schools showing a serious intention to improve their outside spaces for the benefit of their children.

What do the children and their teachers think? I thought I would report a few comments from the schools. The first is an update from Oxspring Primary School, near Barnsley. They were recipients of a Grounds Development Award last year:

"Hello there....so the wellbeing garden is all complete apart from the path grass seed....I thought you might like to see our progress....the children have been having lots of fun reconnecting, retreating, picking, smelling and eating the edible sensory plants and creating music on the instruments...plus most

importantly lots of smiles 😊"

This one is from Marwood C of E School, Great Ayton, North Yorkshire:

"Just a thank you from us for the lovely book that's arrived today. Our children have been making use of the gardening gloves you sent us last year and have been busy planting this week – broad beans, peas, potatoes and beetroot. Thanks again."

And lastly, from St Joseph's, an inner-city school in Leeds who received a Grounds Development Award a couple of weeks ago:

"Thank you so much. I wanted to say a huge thank you for your kind words about our plans for the area, it is so very under-utilised, and the grant will go to good use. Thank you for your ideas and suggestions. These will definitely be taken on board and used when we start the work. I will keep you informed – pictures both along the way and when the garden is completed, with children using it."

Finally, it is our turn to say thank you. On behalf of the Schools Group, I would like to give our thanks to Lucy Porritt who has reluctantly retired from our committee after eleven years due to other demands. We will really miss her practical contributions, humour, and inside knowledge of current primary-age children! Also, a huge thank you to Louise Wickham and the website designer for their patience with my fumbling towards a solution for the schools pages of our new website. I hope you all enjoy the results. Lastly, thank you for your subscriptions, legacies and donations. We would not be achieving all this without them.

Sue Lindley

Schools Committee



Four happy children with their YGT apple tree gifted in 2022

Visit to Cantley Hall

Thursday 8 July 2021

Introduction

It was felt that, due to Cantley Hall's importance and, as a site where visitors are rarely admitted, this report by Christine Beevers should be held over until it could be included in the Newsletter, rather than the *e-Bulletin*, as the former is regarded as our "record of historical importance"

Chris should be congratulated on obtaining permission for us to access Lord Kirkham's estate and also on the immaculate organisation of this visit].

Editor

Blessed with fine weather, 40 YGT members arrived at Cantley Hall with a mixture of curiosity and anticipation. This visit to a private South Yorkshire Garden and estate which few people had heard of, took place only four miles from Doncaster and by kind permission of Lord Kirkham. Little did we know what surprises were in store for us.

Following our arrival and with picnic lunches consumed, we assembled in the Stable Courtyard to be welcomed by Cantley's Head Gardener of 27 years, Ian Fretwell, and members of the gardening team: Catherine (the Walled Garden and Glasshouse manager); Scott, Robert, and David, who accompanied us on the tour and answered our many questions. Ian began by giving us a brief introduction to Cantley's history.

The Childers family acquired Cantley in the late 18th century, developing the gardens and estate well into the late 19th century. The Grade II* listed Hall was first built in 1785 for Childers Walbanke Childers, and then restored and rebuilt in the 19th century by William Lindley for John Walbanke Childers.

In the 20th century the Darley family, brewers from Thorne, lived at Cantley from 1929 to the 1980's. Lord Kirkham bought the estate in 1990 and immediately embarked on a comprehensive restoration programme, the results of which we saw throughout our visit.

"Under Starter's Orders and we're off"

The horse racing terminology is particularly relevant to the history of Cantley. Historically its western estate boundary and the edge of Doncaster Racecourse have always been near neighbours, their proximity varying with the changes in the size of the estate over time. Today the racecourse is still only two miles away.

The Childers family legend recalls that the running of Doncaster's famous St Leger race could be seen from the upstairs rooms of the Hall when it was held on the field below the park.



Hill's Doncaster Map of 1895 showing Cantley Hall and its estate, in relation to Doncaster Racecourse.

(National Library of Scotland)

During the first decade of the estate's restoration (1990-2000) a shelter belt was planted (part of a staggering total of 21,000 trees planted) to screen the parkland from the racecourse and from the mid-20th century urban development which has taken place.

The Formal Gardens

Entering the garden, visitors experience a stark contrast, moving from the hard landscaping of the stable courtyard to being immersed in the shelter of tree canopies and walking on the extensive grassed areas. There was a sense of surprise seeing the well-maintained lawns with an array of sculptures carefully placed for maximum effect; a modern take on the concept of an eyecatcher.

We progressed further into the gardens via the immaculately maintained gravel drive. As the drive curved towards the Hall a natural sculptural feature in the form of an old Sweet Chestnut tree, *Castanea Sativa*, attracted much attention. Its famously tactile bark invited a fair amount of sensory tree hugging.



Old Sweet Chestnut Tree: Castanea sativa
(Photo: © Ian Fretwell)

Approaching the main entrance to the Hall we passed the elegant Orchid House. The restoration design for this was based on the octagonal game larder previously on this site.



Orchid house

(Photo: © Ian Fretwell)

This was the first of many features highlighting the respect for the history of the estate and attention to detail which has underpinned Cantley's late 20th century restoration.

Reaching the Hall, we admired the long, uninterrupted views from the main door to the north and west across the parkland, stretching beyond the ha-ha.



Main entrance to Cantley Hall

(Photo: © Ian Fretwell)

The parkland is a mixture of woodland, informal groups of trees and pasture. During lockdown, Head Gardener Ian had discovered a less than peaceful aspect of the parkland's history. Between 1909-1918 it was used by the Army as a firing range for musketry practice.



6-inch OS Map. Surveyed 1849-1850. Published 1852
(National Library of Scotland)

The Ha-Ha, Sundial and Parterre

The Grade II listed u-shaped ha-ha, built "of river boulders coursed with *magnesian limestone rubble*" (Historic England listing), is clearly shown on the 1852 OS map. Thought to be late 18th century it forms a boundary for the gardens, running north-west-south of the Hall.

The Grade II listed sundial is clearly marked on the same map, reflecting its significance as a garden feature. An inscription reads 'W. CHILDERS 1842 CANTLEY' and 'DOLLOND LONDON'

Historically Cantley's formal gardens have consisted of the Hall being surrounded by lawns on three sides, with a single formal parterre containing the only significant herbaceous planting, a feature which continues today. With the sundial as a central focal point, the parterre's box edged sections are flanked by two long herbaceous borders, all providing colour and interest across the seasons. Trimmed yews and three holly drums give height and structure to this section of the garden.



The double herbaceous border

(Photo: © Ian Fretwell)

At this point, our horticultural interest gave way to aesthetic appreciation, exploring the sculpture collection 15 years in the making and which generated much interest and discussion. One member commented that sculptures had been used in the same way as a gardener would place trees and shrubs. The opportunity for independent wandering was much appreciated although corralling the group back together again was certainly a challenge for Ian and his team.

The Woodland Garden

The three-acre Woodland Garden with its winding grass paths re-focused our horticultural interests. A Eucalyptus tree collection (of about 16 species) had been the early focus of the woodland's development. We learned that if you put your ear against the trunk of a eucalyptus tree, you will hear what sounds like running water. The woodland's collection is now concentrating on Aesculus species with variously

coloured flowers, e.g., *Aesculus Californica* (shrubby form).

Another interesting woodland specimen was the Cherry Birch, *Betula Lenta*. When young, the bark of this tree is smooth. As it matures it becomes black with vertical cracks and can be mistaken for a cherry, hence the name cherry birch. The young shoots, when crushed, smell of wintergreen.

The roots of felled trees from across the estate had been put to good use to create a popular Victorian garden feature, a stumpery (similar to the one pictured here), echoing the sculpture dynamic of the Cantley landscape.



A stumpery (Creative Commons)

The woodland area really comes into its own in Spring with mass bulb planting (the possibility of a return visit perhaps?). Two old stone pillars mark the exit from the Woodland Garden and the re-entry to the formal gardens. The pillars are thought to be part of the original farmhouse entrance demolished in the 1930s and left in storage for the next 70 years until put to good use.

The Courtyard Gardens

The series of courtyard gardens developed since 1990 complete the circuit around the Hall. They have been constructed on the footprint of the east elevation of the Hall, demolished in the 1930s.

The planting of each courtyard area has softened the hard landscaping and created smaller intimate spaces with seating to pause and enjoy the complementary pairing of plants and sculptures. Two standard wisterias were an elegant feature of one courtyard garden and a seat with an original ginkgo biloba leaf design was an attractive focal point in another.

In his many years as Cantley's Head Gardener, Ian has enjoyed having the opportunity to experiment with the design and development of the courtyard gardens, along with the choice of planting appropriate for each site. He is hoping to develop the Stable Courtyard at some point in the future.

Master's Walk, the Arboretum and the Pinetum

The second half of our tour led us to the other side of the estate through the gate north of the main Hall entrance, to the Arboretum and the Pinetum, via the Master's Walk. This broad, straight avenue creates both a vista and a direct link between the pleasure gardens and the Walled Garden. By the early 1990's rhododendrons had almost obscured this major path. These were cleared to restore the Master's Walk.

Leading off the Master's Walk we followed the curved walks which weave through the Arboretum. These walks are clearly marked on the 1852 OS map. As a result of the Arboretum's restoration and rejuvenation it now hosts over 400 taxa of trees, including some of the old beech and sweet chestnut trees from earlier planting.

As we meandered through the Arboretum, we came across a series of glades highlighting something of interest: a sculpture, a structure, a concealed seating area or a tree or shrub of special interest such as *Sassafras albidum* with its distinctive shaped leaves and smell.



Sassafras albidum (Creative Commons)

Sassafras was traditionally used in the making of root beer, sarsaparilla, but it has now been replaced for commercial manufacturing by an extract from *Betula lenta*, the cherry birch we had encountered in the Woodland Garden

Finally, we arrived at the Pinetum planted c.1860-1880 and reflecting the Victorian fashion for collecting and planting coniferous plants, regardless of planting conditions, which at Cantley were less than ideal. Many of the Pinetum's original specimens had survived for more than 130 years according to tree ring counts. By the 1990's sycamore saplings had taken over and more than 350 of these were removed and new conifers added to the collection including *Cryptomeria japonica* 'Cristata' (cockscomb cedar) and *Sequoiadendron gigantea* 'Variegatum' (variegated wellingtonia). The Pinetum also serves a practical purpose providing shelter and protection for the

walled garden. A Camellia collection thrives in the Pinetum against a wall of the Kitchen Garden. Most of the specimens were supplied by Walkers, the well-known Doncaster nursery.

Diversions and Discoveries – the Fernery, Grotto and the Rider Engine

Towards the lower end of the Arboretum the visitor's interest is sparked once again by the revelations of the Fernery and Grotto, another typical Victorian aspect of Cantley's garden history.

Ian gave us a fascinating account of its discovery. Dating from around 1880 the existence of the Fernery was unknown to the Darley family who had lived at Cantley for 60 years. The designer and builder unfortunately remain a mystery.

In 1990 the first object that came to light was a small stone arch, thought then to be perhaps a grotto feature but which later turned out to be the entrance to a tunnel. By 1995 Ian and his team began tackling the overgrown area and specialist advice was sought to uncover further layers of the Fernery's history in what had turned into an archaeological excavation. Gradually the tunnel was cleared, the stone steps leading down to the entrance revealed, with the original paved floor having survived. Further rock features were discovered including an echo chamber and pool.

The Fernery is a compact, secluded space with a network of narrow paths winding round a series of island rockery beds on different levels. Accommodating a large group all at once was certainly a challenge but the dell-like atmosphere was intriguing. On the upper-level viewing mound a seat with an appropriate fern motif was the perfect place to pause and to enjoy the narrow vista which framed the house in the distance. There are now over 100 different species of ferns, which any Victorian fern collector would be proud of. *Adiantum japonicum* 'Ghost' was particularly distinctive.



Adiantum japonicum 'Ghost' (Photo: © Ian Fretwell)

The discovery of Cantley's Fernery is any garden historian's dream. For a Head Gardener, in practical and horticultural terms, even in the 21st century, the labour-intensive nature of its care and maintenance should not be underestimated.

The Rider Engine

Just across from the Fernery was an attractive Gothic designed, thatched summer house. Far from being used for leisure purposes it turned out to be home to a Rider Hot Air pump, an example of Victorian technological advancement, originally designed in America. Discovered in 1990 it was restored to full working order as demonstrated by Ian. It was thought to have been used to supply water to the Walled Garden, glasshouses, and the Fernery. Never has a piece of engineering had such an attractive storage unit.

The Walled Garden

We had finally reached the end of the Master's Walk and the stone-arched entrance to the Walled Garden, our last Cantley horticultural highlight. Exploring the beautifully restored 19th century two-acre walled garden, or sitting and enjoying a well-earned rest, this was a fitting finale for our visit. Catherine Rayner, the Walled Garden's manager, and her team were on hand to answer our questions.

Two long herbaceous borders frame the central path of the Master's Walk as it leads to the glasshouse range, skirting a reconstructed dipping pool. Bursting with flowers and foliage, the white achillea and statuesque grasses really stood out.



The Walled Garden
(Photo: © Chris Beevers)

Cantley's walled garden is remarkable not only because every characteristic feature of a 19th century productive garden has survived, but also for the impressive standard of its restoration and its on-going care and conservation.

Masked and socially distanced we were able to walk through the restored Foster and Pearson Glasshouse

with its peach house, show house and vinery. A second glasshouse was a reclaimed Messenger glass house spotted by a member of the restoration team at a local building project. It was brought to Cantley and re-built on the site of an old pit house.

The garden has continued to be productive and many YGT members were interested in the fruit and vegetable varieties grown. Between 1890-1910 the walls were full of fruit stock of many varieties. Before its 20th century restoration one plot of the garden was an orchard and large-scale fruit production was intensive. Cold frames and pits have all been restored. Today the productivity of the garden is put to good use with estate employees receiving weekly produce deliveries and the Hall kitchen using the estate produce daily.

Unfortunately, lack of time and Covid restrictions, meant the garden's other indoor service buildings such as the mushroom house, fruit room, garden store and potting shed were off limits, but knowing they were there completed the story of Cantley's Walled Garden.

One Final Surprise

We made our way back to the Stable Courtyard and were delighted to have the opportunity to meet and thank Lord Kirkham in person and to enjoy some

welcome refreshments, particularly the dainty cakes from Betty's.

Karen Lynch summed up YGT's appreciation for the special afternoon we had had and thanked Lord Kirkham and the Cantley staff for such a memorable visit. YGT gave a donation to Lord Kirkham's chosen charity, the Macmillan Cancer Charity, in appreciation of this visit.

What had made this visit so memorable? As well as **what** we saw, it was as much about **how** this had been achieved that created such a lasting impression. The people and team dynamics, the right people coming together at the right time, bringing different skills but sharing their vision and enthusiasm, and the sheer hard work involved was inspirational.

The conservation of Cantley as an historic park and garden is an important achievement and a source of pride for South Yorkshire. Lord Kirkham recalled walking his dogs across Cantley's parkland one rainy day, when a rainbow appeared, prompting him to reflect "why would you want to be anywhere else?" As we left Cantley to return to the hustle and bustle of urban life outside its boundary walls, we could not have agreed more.

Chris Beevers

Journeys continued: Studley Royal under William Aislabie 1742-81, an online talk by Mark Newman on 24 February 2021

Introduction

In February 2021, Mark Newman, the National Trust's Archaeologist for Yorkshire and the North East, gave an online talk for The Gardens Trust as part of their *'nforgettable Gardens* lecture series. This was a companion piece to his earlier presentation for YGT in December 2020: *'enius of the Place: John Aislabie's personal style at Studley Royal*, given to commemorate the 350th anniversary of John Aislabie's birth on 4th December 1670, as reported in *Newsletter No.48, Spring 2021*, by Alison Brayshaw.

The focus of this second talk was John's son William Aislabie (1699-1781), how he adapted, changed, and progressively expanded Studley Royal into one of the greatest designed landscapes ever created. Over an enthralling and entertaining hour and a half, Mark shared the results of his latest research, illustrated by a range of historic maps, documents, paintings, drawings, and photographs, as well as archaeological evidence and LiDAR images. We followed William's exploration of new and emerging fashions in garden design and landscaping taste during the forty or so years after he inherited the property on his father's death in 1742.



Portrait of William Aislabie, MP for Ripon, which hangs in Ripon Town Hall, unknown artist

(© Ripon City Council, CC BY-NC-ND)

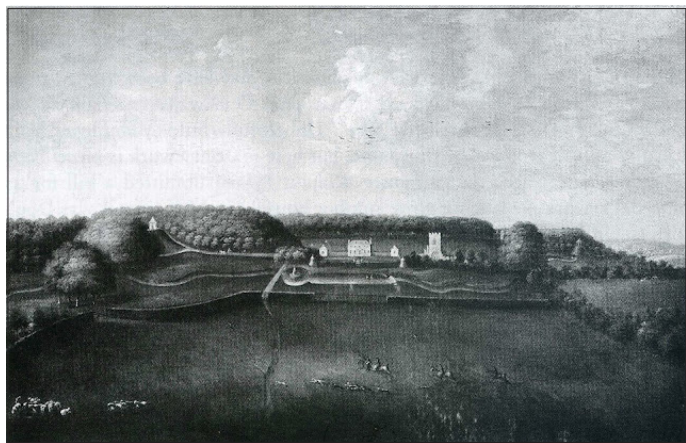
William Aislabie

Despite not having had a university education, nor completing his abortive Grand Tour, William held

powerful ideas about garden design and knew how to take best advantage of landscape and topography. He learnt from his father and, where he lacked first-hand experience of Continental influences, he made up for this via his excellent contacts in the world of trade, and through books. We heard about William's family, his marriage in 1724 to Lady Elizabeth Cecil (1707-1733), daughter of the 6th Earl of Essex, and the tragic death of his wife and his two youngest children from smallpox in 1733.

Kirkby Fleetham

Although William spent much time at Studley, from 1724 his marital home was at Kirkby Fleetham, some 15 miles to the north-east. He began his first great landscaping project here in 1742, using the funds that he gained access to following the death of his father that year. Kirkby Hall and surrounding landscape are depicted in a mid-18th century painting attributed to Balthasar Nebot, who painted much of the Aislabie Estate. Here, William erected several garden buildings along a narrow, linear, woodland scarp through which the Hall was approached, overlooking the washlands of the River Swale below. This characteristic of moving through a woodland, with glimpses of the landscape beyond, to experience and enjoy the changes in landform anticipates similar work that he would later carry out at Studley.



Kirkby Fleetham Hall and gardens, photo of painting attributed to Balthasar Nebot c. 1750.
(Original in private collection).

Studley Hall

Studley Hall stood in the northern part of the present parkland until gutted by fire in 1946. Developed from the manor house of the former medieval village, it was first the home of the Mallory family, and then the Aislabies from the 15th century. Between 1728-1732, a new stable block was built nearby, at a time when John Aislabie originally planned to abandon the old home in favour of a new house at the northern end of the lake; however, this was never built.

A painting of the Hall c.1752/4, shows the major refurbishments carried out by William, indicating

that he was happy to stay on this site, even though it did not have views over the designed landscape. In 1745, he had married for the second time, to Elizabeth Vernon (1722-1780), a relative of his stepmother. In 1746, accounts record two payments to Daniel Garrett for his drawings. Garrett, known for his Gothick taste in garden buildings, and for his renovations of older properties, was in practice in the north of England by the 1740s, having previously been clerk of works for Lord Burlington. The makeover at Studley Hall appears to have entailed an extension to the existing house and its encapsulation with a new Gothick front. A further phase of development was carried out in the 1760s, when Thomas Robinson of Rokeby, a distant cousin, added a Classical pediment.

We were given a teaser of Mark's new book on the subject, his research whilst on furlough leave being a positive outcome of lockdown. I am sure I am not alone in eagerly awaiting its publication.



Studley Royal, from Morris's County Seats, 1880
(Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons)

Commemoration in the landscape

In the early 1740s, after his father's death, William explored the theme of commemoration in the landscape at Studley. He had a design for a pyramid drawn up, which appears to have been constructed by the mason Robert Doe, although its location has never been found. Sometime later, a classical rotunda was erected on Tent Hill, though this had disappeared by 1768/70. Located during archaeological excavations in 1999, this structure was precisely the same size and had the exact same circular foundation as the Tuscan temple at Rievaulx Terrace near Helmsley. There are similarities too with the Castle Howard mausoleum, also completed by Robert Doe, who does most of the hard building works in the landscape at Studley between the 1720's and his death in the 1760's.



The Tuscan temple at Rievaulx Terrace that may have been like the rotunda built on top of Tent Hill, Studley
(Photo: © Gail Falkingham)

Respect for his father's work

One of the features making Studley so important is the survival of the structures and buildings that John created. William was very respectful of his father's work and focussed his attention on expanding the designed landscape outwards. Rather than losing earlier features as new work took place, Studley accumulated successive new garden fashions as they emerged. There are, however, some adjustments, for example, in 1749, William changes the dedication of John's Temple of Hercules (political symbolism referencing the House of Orange) to the Temple of Piety. The Temple was originally based on Palladio's descriptions of the Temple of Piety in Rome. The name change is seen as a reflection of William's filial piety, this respect for his father epitomised in the bas-relief roundel placed in the interior bearing an image of the Grecian daughter Pero, breastfeeding her father Cimon. Further family references are introduced by William, softening the earlier political and erotic symbolism of John's era, such as the new roundels depicting his two daughters in the Banqueting House (formerly Temple of Venus), and 'milady's busto' in the Octagon Tower by Giuseppe Cortese.



Studley Water gardens as designed by John Aislable, the Moon Pond and Temple of Piety (formerly Temple of Hercules) and Octagon Tower in the distance
(Photo © Gail Falkingham)



Studley Water gardens as designed by John Aislable: statue of Galen/Euryalus, the Crescent and Moon Ponds and Temple of Piety (formerly Temple of Hercules) in the distance (Photo: © Gail Falkingham)

Chinese Garden in the Seven Bridges Valley

We heard from Mark how William created at the far end of the Valley one of the earliest and largest Chinese gardens in England, covering 43 acres, now largely in private ownership beyond the boundaries of the current National Trust landholding. The first reference to this is a letter of 1743 from Lady Hertford to her son mentioning that Mr Aislable had sent a man to look at their Indian 'bungola'. William clearly had the connections to be aware of the very latest design ideas for garden buildings; he would also have had access via Lord Burlington to Ripa's engravings of Chinese landscapes, the best source of information about Chinese gardens at that time. Whilst John was happy to make use of the natural topography on its own merit, William's Chinese theming is significant as a new way of exploring and unlocking natural landscape using the concept of *sharawadji* (the Chinese idea of beauty without order).

William's extension to the gardens along the Seven Bridges Valley can be seen in a beautiful painting of *The Chinese Woods* by Balthasar Nebot, painted between 1746 and 1762. This shows a ting, a small, Chinese-style pavilion at the top of the slopes, used for contemplation, only the base of which survives today. There is also a Chinoiserie bridge and a level terrace with a whole series of interlocking walks up the valley slopes. The valley sides are constrained by a fence line composed of 7ft-high blocks of tufa for fence posts, only a few of which survive, but can be seen in the Nebot painting – 63 sets of rails and uprights are mentioned in the accounts. Mark also suggested that there may once have been a tall pagoda at the eastern end, which would have provided not only a reference point in the landscape from the approach to the gardens from the southeast, but also a great view over the surrounding estate landscape of agricultural fields

and woodland.



One of the bridges in the Valley of the Seven Bridges at Studley (Photo: © Heather Holdridge - CC-BY-SA-2.0)

The New Access Routes

William next turned his attention to the approaches to the property, opening up the landscape and the journeys in and out. This included the avenue, established by his grandfather in the 1670's, with Ripon Minster as its distant focal point and 'The Baron's Way', the limit of the Archbishop's Liberty of Ripon. William puts in a new route between these two, taking the visitor on a journey through open countryside, separating them from a landscape populated with people, thus removing the designed landscape from the ordinary world. Mark showed us Robert Doe's design for a little lodge at Studley, later known as Duck House, which turned up coincidentally amongst architectural drawings held at Wallington. Associated with this, a meandering waterway with a series of weirs along it, decorated the visitor's journey into the estate.

Hackfall

William's next focus was the experience of journeying between Studley and Hackfall, lying six miles to the north-west. In between was another garden at Laver Banks about which we know much less, where walks and rides were cut through the woodland around a bridge across the River Laver. Originally, the route to Hackfall followed existing roadways through Kirkby Malzeard and Grewelthorpe. By the late 1760's, however, William was buying rights of way across private land, again avoiding the populated landscape, removing the visitor from the everyday experience to arrive at Hackfall, described as a 'fairyland'.

Acquired in 1738 by John Aislabie as an agricultural and quarrying resource, little was done at Hackfall until the late 1740's, when William became active until the late 1760's. Here, he created a series of remarkable garden buildings, placed amongst the dramatic local topography with remarkable views from the heights

above, plunging down into the depths of the gorge of the River Ure below. Whilst there was a farmhouse where tea could be taken, Hackfall does not have a separate residential base. Mark emphasised that this is not another Aislabie garden, it is all one construct, the point of which is the journey through the landscape.



Buildings at Hackfall: Fisher's Hall (left) and Rustic Temple (right) (Photos: ©Gail Falkingham)

Acquisition of the Fountains Estate

William turned his attention back to Studley when he acquired the Fountains Estate from the neighbouring Messenger family in late 1767, something the Aislabie family had aspired to for some time. Both sites had been open to visitors before then, but the landscape between them had never articulated this. In early 1768 William removed the rotunda from Tent Hill, the summit was levelled and a tent placed on top. A range of new features was created around the lake below, including the White Seat and the Temple of Fame, built by 1770, and a new water feature to the southeast. Mark commented how busy this part of the landscape became, as William was trying to find the right way of reading this area. He emphasised that the point of the visitor journey through the designed landscape was contrast, moving between areas of distinct character that feel completely different from each other.

With the Abbey, William does something completely new, it is the first modern-style presentation of a monument, understanding the architecture, showing it to best advantage and restoring detail. After William's death, he was criticised by Gilpin, who did not like what he had done with the Abbey as it was not considered to be Picturesque, it was too tidy. However, Mark's view was that it was not because William did not understand the Picturesque, it was because this was not what he wanted to do here.



Fountains Abbey and distant view from the Water Gardens to the east (Photos © Gail Falkingham)



Temple of Fame, Studley (Photo: © Gail Falkingham)

Picturesque beyond the Abbey

Elsewhere on the Estate William engaged with the landscape in different ways and in a more Picturesque fashion. This included the Middle Walk Arch and

Garland Bridge, both intentionally built to look as if they are falling down, creating the concept of antiquity. Similarly, there was a Rustic Cottage on the other side of the valley, which was demolished between the two World Wars. This was part garden building and part staff accommodation, overlooking the walk from Studley to Fountains, where visitors were allowed to eat their picnics. The undercroft of the Abbey was also framed with a rustic arch, and potentially used as a summer house.

Further west, along the River Skell, William acquired additional woodland to join up existing landholdings to extend his rides and walks to Skell Bank Wood, which now lies beyond the National Trust landholding. At Rough House, a pre-existing Georgian farmhouse with a beautiful view across to the Abbey, the building was encased in stonework excavated from the Abbey and used as a tearoom. In 1774, new bridges were built in this area, as well as new field walls concealing the road. This was a piece of designed landscape in its own right; the view eastwards from Rough House to the Abbey was sketched by the artist JMW Turner in 1819. Mark drew comparisons with the ideas of Shenstone at the Leasowes, the concept of the *ferme ornée* and the value of the rustic in the landscape. He also showed a number of 18th and 19th century paintings of views of the Abbey, with the common theme of grazing cattle in the foreground. This was a conscious and deliberate choice by William, complementing the Picturesque structures in the landscape surrounding the Abbey, but contrasting with the unexpected, manicured treatment of the interior of the ruins.

Blois Hall

William's final intervention in the designed landscape was to extend the view through the axis of the central avenue laid out by his grandparents in the 1670's, beyond Ripon Minster and out to a new farm called Blois Hall (aka Blows Hall Farm). This was built to a model farm plan over three storeys, taking the vista from Studley out to five miles. Blois, in France, was as far as William reached on his Grand Tour with his cousin Thomas Robinson in 1720, another one of his geographical jokes?

William's achievements

William died on 17th May 1781, in his early 80's, the designed landscape at Studley having reached its height in his lifetime. As his sons predeceased him, he was succeeded by his elder daughter Elizabeth, known as Mrs Allanson, who mainly lived in Twickenham and acted as a distant landlord for Studley. Greater change in the landscape was made by his granddaughter, known to us as Mrs Lawrence, who was succeeded by the Earl de Grey of Wrest Park and latterly the Marquis of Ripon. Over this time,

the property was reduced to the core area that the National Trust looks after today.



Monument to John and William Aislabie and their family in Ripon Cathedral (Photo: Gail Falkingham)

William has been dismissed in the past as achieving nothing but his father's wish of acquiring Fountains Abbey. However, as Mark showed us, William's achievements were far greater. He extends the designed landscape along the Skell Valley, makes the largest Chinese Garden in Georgian England and absorbs elements of the surrounding agrarian landscape into the garden experience. The magnificent landscape at Hackfall was his creation, the great journey between there and Studley being as much a part of the experience, including Laver Banks. He ultimately adds the Abbey to the estate and was thinking of pushing the designed landscape even further west along the Skell Valley.

Comparisons between John and William Aislabie

Mark concluded with a slide comparing and contrasting father and son:

- Role of Studley Royal House: choice of site is so different, John had envisaged a new site whilst William's vision is moving outside the boundaries of the Park, so the existing house is better suited to that.
- Scale and scope: John is thinking big, but William's vision is vast.
- Relationship with the natural world – different in quality - John is at the forefront of valuing natural landscape and embracing it within his design, whereas, whilst William shares these values, he embraces the bigger countryside as well.
- Respect for the past: both are concerned to conserve the work of previous generations.

- Augmentation: both add new aspects.
- Contemporary tastes
- Strong meat: John is not afraid of being strong, William is made of gentler things
- The Kinetic Experience, stills vs video: John is a man of his time concentrating on the idea of the garden being about set pieces in a single place. William is also alive to this, but focussing more on the experience of the journey between places.
- Garden or designed landscape - estate landscape as art? – William experimented more and is much more comfortable with the idea of estate landscape as art.

Conclusion

As his title had promised, throughout this thoroughly riveting 90-minute presentation, Mark took us on a journey in three different ways. Thematically, we were introduced to William's exploration of new and emerging fashions in garden design and landscaping taste through the latter part of the 18th century. Physically, we were taken on a journey through extensive tracts of designed landscape, through Studley to the Seven Bridges Valley, to Hackfall and the Skell Valley, and further afield to Blois Hall, far beyond the area of the Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal Estate managed by the National Trust. And, perhaps most exciting of all, we were made aware of the journey of discovery that Mark's recent research has taken him on, the gift that keeps on giving!

We are so very fortunate to have such a significant and beautiful landscape as Studley within Yorkshire, and even more so to have Mark to present these two wonderful talks telling us the story of its development. Mark's enthusiasm for, and encyclopaedic knowledge of, the Aislabies and their landscaping designs brings the subject to life so clearly, and gives us so much to think about, not only when visiting the Fountains and Studley Royal Estate, but also when visiting and researching other 18th century designed landscapes. That Mark's quest for knowledge continues, leading to new discoveries and interpretations is incredibly exciting, and I look forward to more talks and updates on the subject in future. It is over 300 years since John Aislabie first began his works at Studley, I wonder what he and William would make of the gardens and our interest in them today? I hope they would be extremely proud of their achievements and the legacy they have left behind for us all to enjoy.

Footnote

Further details about both John and William Aislabie and the designed landscape at Studley can be found in Mark's book for the National Trust: *The Wonder of the North, Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal*, 2015, Woodbridge: The Boydell Press.

Gail Falkingham

Recently Published Books

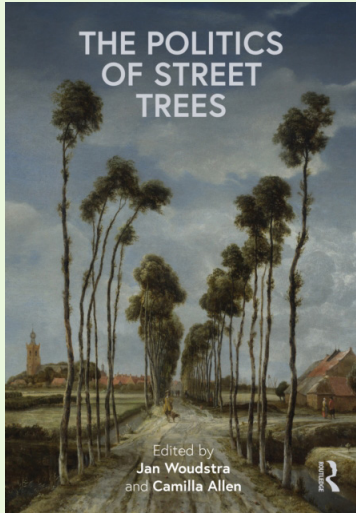
The Politics of Street Trees

Edited by Jan Woudstra and Camilla Allen

London, Routledge, 2022

ISBN 978 0 367516 28 4. £34.99

432pp. Paperback.



“This book focuses on the politics of street trees and the institutions, actors and processes that govern their planning, planting and maintenance. This is an innovative approach which is

particularly important in the context of mounting environmental and societal challenges and reveals a huge amount about the nature of modern life, social change and political conflict.

The work first provides different historical perspectives on street trees and politics, celebrating diversity in different cultures. A second section discusses street tree values, policy and management, addressing more contemporary issues of their significance and contribution to our environment, both physically and philosophically. It explores cultural idiosyncrasies and those from the point of view of political economy, particularly challenging the neo-liberal perspectives that continue to dominate political narratives. The final section provides case studies of community engagement, civil action and governance. International case studies bring together contrasting approaches in areas with diverging political directions or intentions, the constraints of laws and the importance of people power.

By pursuing an interdisciplinary approach this book produces an information base for academics, practitioners, politicians and activists alike, thus contributing to a fairer political debate that helps to promote more democratic environments that are sustainable, equitable, comfortable and healthier”.

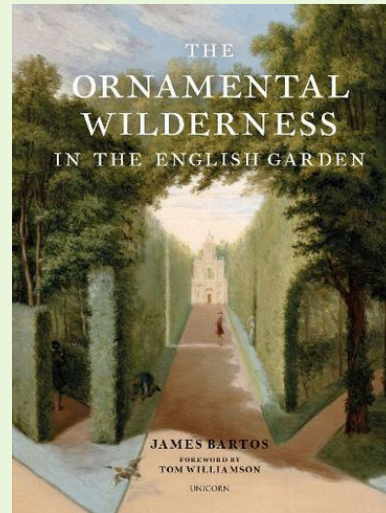
The Ornamental Wilderness in the English Garden

By James Bartos

London, Unicorn Publishing, 2022

ISBN 978 1 144134 5091. £30

296pp. Paperback



“In this wide ranging and comprehensive survey of the designed landscapes of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, James Bartos argues convincingly that ornamental wildernesses

should be viewed as distinctive design features which, when linked across an extensive terrain, took on the character of the whole landscape.

As a result of this striking analysis, our understanding of the celebrated layouts at Wrest Park, Chiswick and Stowe, and many more besides, must be revised. Contrary to the received wisdom that wildernesses led inexorably to the more informal parkscapes associated with William Kent and Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown, it was only when they were dismantled in the mid-eighteenth century to provide more loosely controlled, open glades and greensward that the English Landscape Style emerged. This ground-breaking study ranges in its literary compass from classical authors through contemporary writers on gardens and gardening to modern critical authorities, while its visual focus on design manuals and individual gardens and landscapes is presented through a wealth of engraved prints, maps and present-day photographs”.

[**Editor’s Note:** Dr James Bartos was until recently Chairman of The Gardens Trust]

YGT Membership Renewals are Due

YGT annual memberships are due for renewal on 1 April 2022

For data protection reasons (GDPR), we are unable to contact lapsed members and therefore such memberships will be cancelled, with no reminder sent.

To continue:

- Those who pay by standing order need take no action
- If you pay by cheque, please send your membership fee (made payable to Yorkshire Gardens Trust in full) to: YGT Membership Secretary, 14 Huntington Road, York YO31 8RB. Thank you.

Gift Aid and standing orders: We encourage these; forms can be found at bit.ly/380GxJd, or by requesting one using the address above, or emailing membership@yorkshiregardenstrust.org.uk.

Thank you for your support of YGT which makes a pivotal difference to all that we achieve together.

Forthcoming YGT Publications

Publication	Copy deadline	Publication date
June e-Bulletin	1 June 2022	21 June 2022
August e-Bulletin	1 August 2022	21 August 2022
Autumn Newsletter	1 September 2022	21 October 2022
December e-Bulletin	1 December 2022	21 December 2022

Please send items for inclusion to Christine Miskin: cemiskin22@gmail.com

Letters to the Editor are welcome; please send them either by email to cemiskin22@gmail.com or by post, via the address shown below.

YGT Contact Details

For general and membership queries: email secretary@yorkshiregardenstrust.org.uk.

Or, if you are already a member, use the 'phone numbers on your membership card to give us a call.

Or you can write to us c/o The Secretary, YGT, 14 Huntington Road, York YO31 8RB

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