



**The sun shines for visit to
Howsham Mill
Tuesday 17 September 2024**



Members gather at the mill

Introduction

After several days of indifferent weather, interspersed with bouts of heavy rain, a grand sunny day found around thirty YGT members gathering at Howsham



Admiring the gothic restored features

Mill, nestled in a bend of the River Derwent in the folds of the hills south of Malton. For some of us an unknown place and indeed we approached from the east on little-used roads with grass growing in the middle and through a rail crossing with an inattentive gate-opener. It can be exciting to arrive at a place that is not always easy to find. After parking near a fine early 19th century bridge across the Derwent, we made

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our way under the bridge along footpaths following the river and there on an island we came upon a surprise view of gothic Howsham Mill and its weir. We were to learn of a restoration project at this site that is little short of astonishing. To this day there is no road access.



Canal and lock at Howsham



Val Hepworth introduces Martin and Elaine in the restored mill

Industrial development at a bend in the River Derwent

Members were greeted by Martin Phillips and Elaine Gathercole from the Howsham Mill Renewable Heritage Trust and enjoyed coffee and biscuits. After we had explored the buildings, the weir and the two Archimedes screws actively generating energy, we gathered in the superbly restored mill with full lecture facilities. This is a very impressive space with great French oak beams. Val Hepworth, the

organiser of the day, introduced Martin and Elaine and then Elaine gave us a fine illustrated history of the mill.

In short, a mill and weir have probably been in place for a thousand years with the mill becoming the Gothick building we were sitting in around 1757. It had continued being a working mill until the mid-20th century. In the 18th century Howsham Mill was at a key point of the Derwent Navigation system, which was established by an Act of 1702. The river was made navigable from the River Ouse to Malton, a distance of 38 miles. A canal with lock cut across the bend in the river at Howsham leaving the mill on an island. A key aspect of Elaine's research had been the discovery of a series of sketches in Manchester Art Gallery by John Nattes (c.1765 – 1839), an early topographical artist and watercolourist. These provided useful historic views of Howsham Mill and the canal system in its heyday. Boats (Yorkshire keels and sloops), initially pulled by men and only later by horses, carried coal up towards Malton and corn down to the Ouse. At its height it probably saw over 20 vessels a week passing through.

Martin outlined the projects for both the restoration of the mill and the implementation of the Archimedes screws. After the talks we split into two groups and were guided around the mill to inspect remnants of milling days (there had been at least two pairs of milling stones), the restored buildings and the working Archimedes screws placed at the edge of the weir. The bend in the River Derwent at Howsham is idyllic today with the beautifully restored mill, fishermen on nearby riverbanks and swans meandering below the weir.



The Archimedes screw

Decline and Restoration

The onset of decline in the boat traffic along the Derwent navigation began with the arrival of the railways and indeed, George 'Railway King' Hudson (1800-1871), involved in the development of the York to Scarborough railway, was born in Howsham.

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Eventually the navigation rights were revoked in 1935. The mill eventually became redundant too and ceased operation in 1947. It then stood empty and was threatened with demolition in the 1960s and was only saved by being listed in 1966. Continued neglect led to serious dereliction and it being roofless by 1976. What happened next is a remarkable story.

Dave Mann and Mo MacLeod discovered the site and bought the roofless shell of the mill in 2003 and, after deciding it could not be a family home, a different goal was envisaged with the Howsham Mill Renewable Heritage Trust being established in 2004. This had the aim of once again utilising the hydropower of the site, the restoration of the mill buildings and creation of a sustainable energy centre. Work planning, clearing and stabilising the building began in 2005. A new water wheel was installed in 2006, the first Archimedes screw (the first in the UK) arrived from Germany in 2007 (after having to persuade the Environment Agency it would not be disruptive to the plants or animals of the river). A second screw was installed by a Polish company in 2017. Restoration of the building began in 2013 and this is a singular achievement with superbly restored architectural details including finials and topped with a recreated Diana sculpture. The interior is equally striking with modern features such as underfloor heating and facilities enabling it to function as an events centre.

The challenges and sheer logistics of restoration would have daunted many. To this day there is no road for mechanised transport to the mill, so the screws had to be brought to the site by pontoons floated from Howsham Bridge. Materials for the rebuilding were brought by horse and cart. There were many struggles and setbacks on the journeys, both in the installation of the screws and the restoration of the building and its gothic features. A non-exhaustive list includes obtaining regulatory permissions, navigating the vagaries of securing funding from various sources, thieving, vandalism, serious flooding, contractual problems, failed bearings and broken axles, and waiting for wagtails to finishing nesting.

The vision from 20 years ago has been realised and it is a tremendously impressive restoration with effective use of the site's hydropower, enabling a vibrant self-sustaining activity and pioneering centre for renewable energy. The mill provides electricity to Howsham Hall, nearby homes and to the grid. The trust has an income of c.£60,000 per year and has hosted thousands of school children. The journey to establishment of the sustainable energy centre and the award-winning restoration is set out in Martin Phillips' book *The Story of Howsham Mill*.



Glimpse of Howsham Hall from the haha



Consulting maps of the parkland

Exploring the wider Howsham landscape

After lunch it was time to look at the wider landscape. We were led by Val Hepworth, who had researched the history of Howsham Hall and Park 20 years previously for a potential stewardship application. Her report on the history of the estate is full of fascinating detail and can be found in the Spring 2024 YGT *Newsletter*.

We left the mill across a 2015 swing bridge replacing an earlier swing bridge and walked over The Holms – water meadows – and then, with permission, we walked up to the front of the Hall. The south front of Howsham Hall being described in Pevsner as ‘one of the sights of the East Riding.’ The Howsham landscape began as a medieval deer park belonging to Kirkham Abbey, and over 1,000 acres in the area were granted to Thomas Bamburgh in 1575 and the Jacobean House was built by his son William in c.1610.



Members inspect the south front of Howsham Hall

We then returned along the drive that leads up to the Hall, paused to consider historic maps and the contemporary views and then set off due east directly across The Paddock or parkland that lies to the south of the Hall. We were viewing some of the significant changes to the landscape made by Nathaniel Cholmley (1721-1791) in the 1750s to 1770s. This involved the removal of more formal parterres and the implementation of an English style landscape, and one probably planned by Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown (1716-1783). Improvements at this time required the removal of the western half of Howsham village and the construction of a ha-ha to enable the Hall to look out upon unobstructed views of the parkland landscape. We walked along the line of the ha-ha now largely obscured by trees as indeed were views of the Hall. A key feature of the improvements to the landscape at this time incorporated the 1750s Howsham Mill to the south-west to act as a Gothick eye-catcher. The mill and walled gardens and stables to the south-east are all possibly by John Carr of York (1723-1807). Other Gothick eye-catchers included a boathouse - but for us exploring the landscape 250 years later there was to be no catching of the eye by Gothick follies or finials. Vistas that once connected the buildings of the designed landscape in possible geometric design are now obscured by trees or like the Gothick Bambro’ Castle observatory (see link to The Folly Flâneuse below) have been demolished and lost.

Howsham Hall stayed in the hands of several related Yorkshire families until 1948 when it was sold for the first time since the sixteenth century and at around the time milling ceased. By the late 20th century, the estate was in decline with few sympathetic uses and little attention paid to its historic significance. However, from 2007 onwards a new owner has reversed the decline of the Hall and the landscape mirroring the remarkable rescue and restoration of

the mill. Howsham Hall now hosts luxury events such as weddings and afternoon teas.

Members ended the tour at a junction near the former stables, now well maintained and residential, the entrance to Howsham village and by a tidy planting of fastigiated trees lining the road to Home farm. Some members returned to the mill; others wandered up through Howsham village back to their cars near Howsham Bridge. It had been a fine and memorable day and one in which we could marvel at the perseverance and successful efforts towards restoration – both mill and the wider landscape, which are currently in an excellent state of stewardship looking into the future.

Many thanks are due to Martin, Elaine and Val for what was a revelatory day. The sun had kept shining too.

Further reading

Val Hepworth, (2024) *Howsham Hall, Near Malton: ‘The view from the windows is very pleasing’* YGT Newsletter Spring 2024, p8-11

Martin Phillips, (2022) *The Story of Howsham Mill*, New Generation Publishing.

Howsham Mill Renewable Heritage Trust, <https://www.howshammill.org.uk/visit/>

The Folly Flâneuse, <https://thefollyflaneuse.com/bambro-castle-howsham-north-yorkshire/>

Paul Knox & Malcolm Pickles

Images by Paul Knox



Castle Howard Visit with Ukrainian Refugees Saturday 13 April 2024



Natalie and Victor at Castle Howard

Introduction

We gathered in the Courtyard Entrance at Castle Howard on a fine but chilly April day to welcome our Ukrainian guests, some 28 in number mostly young and living in York. They are excited to be here and grateful to YGT for sponsoring this much-looked-forward to outing. Their leader, Paul Wordsworth, Trustee and co-ordinator of City of Sanctuary York, has accompanied them on the coach which stopped to pick up our chairman, Chris Webb and Peter Goodchild, a vice-president of YGT.

The House

With much anticipation, we walk to the great house which, under the instructions of the 3rd Earl of Carlisle, enlisted his friend John Vanbrugh (1664 – 1726) with the help of Nicholas Hawksmoor (1661-1736) to design a building which today is revered for its dramatic baroque architecture.



Peter Goodchild addressing the group

We halt in front of the main entrance whilst Peter explains its long and fascinating history including the filming of *Brideshead Revisited* which they take a particular interest in! We are grateful to one of the group, who offers to be our translator. Behind us, on the mown grass, certain surreal sculptures challenge the eye. These are the works of renowned contemporary sculptor Tony Cragg, more of which we shall see later in the House.



Tony Cragg sculpture inside Castle Howard

We are warmly welcomed by the staff and proceed into The Great Hall. All eyes sweep up to the Dome, masterpiece of Antonio Pellegrini which, even to those of us who regularly visit the house, never ceases to marvel at its splendour.

We split into groups slowly snaking our way through the lavishly furnished corridors and rooms where its sculptures, paintings and porcelain treasures are displayed to startle and surprise. The famous 17th century Delft Tulip Pagoda Vase, centrepiece of the Museum Room, draws much attention. Few know of its purpose and are fascinated to learn that it was designed to display Dutch florists' tulips: flowers whose fame and flame-coloured markings raised the price of just one single bulb to extraordinarily high levels, even as much as 5,200 guilders (more than three times the average annual earnings of a Dutch merchant at that time) bankrupting many a besotted collector.



Delft Tulip Pagoda Vase

During our tour of the house, we meet Dr Christopher Ridgeway amidst a display of vibrantly coloured Cragg sculptures. Christopher is head curator at Castle Howard and we listen with interest as he embraces the artistic virtues of exhibiting modern art forms within the Baroque interior. Our guests share mixed feelings but they, as I did, delight in their impact.

I spend much of my time with Natalie and her son, Victor. Both speak good English, so I get to hear of their personal story in fleeing from the war in Ukraine. It is heartrending but I see such hope in the lives they are carving out for themselves here with the help of City and Sanctuary.

As I lead them into the Long Gallery, Natalie walks on and seats herself at one of the grand pianos where she places her hands on the keys and begins to play. She enters another world, and we are deeply moved by her performance. Though I cannot remember the

piece she played, it would have been applauded in the grandest of concert halls.

Her son follows, a tall young man with elegant fingers who has inherited his mother's talent. It was a most beautiful experience and one I will always cherish. I think to myself how blessed he is to have escaped fighting for his country in Ukraine because of his age.

I can only thank and praise the Howard family, on their behalf, for inviting visitors to play in such beautiful surroundings.



Victor playing the piano

I ask Natalie if she is professional pianist. She simply replies, “music has always been important in my life, but I have not touched a key since I fled Ukraine with my son”. I am moved by her words as we enter the private Chapel with its sumptuous pre-Raphaelite interior and sit quietly with others in the group.



Interior of the Chapel

The Grounds

We make time for tea on the lawn before walking through the faded daffodils to The Temple of The Four Winds. I was thankful to Peter and Chris for explaining the design and history of this great monument with its splendid views of the Palladian Bridge set in the sweeping landscape of the Howardian Hills.



Tea on the lawn

The final treat was circumnavigating the Neptune Fountain as it spewed its plumes of frothy water high into the heavens. The genius of William Andrews Nesfield (1793-1881) which continues to entice and excite visitors from all over the world, none more so than our Ukrainian friends.

They are hurried to the coach, snatching every last moment of this beautiful day which will always hold happy memories, for both them and for us.



The Neptune Fountain

Conclusion

I would like to express my gratitude to YGT for sponsoring this special event and for the generous hospitality of the Howard family. My thanks also to Dr Christopher Ridgeway and Ammie Jones who helped me plan the visit in its initial stages, and to Peter and Chris for their company and wealth of knowledge expounded throughout the day.

I especially would like to thank Reverend Paul Wordsworth, Co-ordinator and Trustee of York City of Sanctuary (UK's first Human Rights City) for his help and acknowledge his tireless work in helping Refugees living in York. His compassion and wisdom are an inspiration to us all.

Finally, and most importantly, I thank our Ukrainian friends for their company and friendship throughout the day and hope and pray that peace will soon return to their beautiful country.

Penelope Dawson-Brown

Photos © Penelope Dawson-Brown

Knarborough: Forest and Castle

Friday 6 September 2024



Nidd Gorge

Introduction

On 6th September, summer unexpectedly returned to Yorkshire, and I revisited a town I knew as a small neighbour, half a century ago. Our select group of YGT members convened at COGS, the hospitable and clearly popular community centre attached to the Methodist Church, in the town centre for the morning's introductory talk by David Rhodes. David formerly worked in Harrogate District's team of architects and conservation officer (those were the days!) and knows the area intimately. This gave rise to his personal crusade for the re-creation of the ancient Forest for modern times, of which he revealed more over the course of the day.

If you have not been to Knarborough, its *raison d'être* is the Gorge, a dramatic geological feature, visually emphasised by the viaduct built in 1851 for Leeds and Thirsk Railway which crosses the Nidd. Its very name, Chenaresburg, as given in Domesday, identifies it as a defensive settlement. Long before this, a Roman road passed by, from Manchester to Aldborough via Ilkley, whilst Bede cites a decisive career event in the life of Bishop Wilfrid, at a synod near the Nidd in 705. In ensuing years, caves in the steep sides of the Gorge accommodated hermits, and a rather different clientele came to hear famous or infamous seers' prophecies.

The Forest of Knarborough

So, what of the origins of the forest of Knarborough? In the first place the term 'forest' generally understood nowadays as a place with a lot of trees, either long established woodland or more recent plantation, also has an older meaning. OED gives us a (*woodland*) area, esp. owned by the

monarch, kept for hunting and having its own laws and officers. If you know the New Forest or the Forest of Dean, these were named in the same sense. David focussed on the local complexities with a map indicating the extensive area covered, essentially to the west of the town of Knarborough and including that 'cuckoo in the nest' as he delightfully described the refined and elegant spa of Harrogate, with its central green Stray and mineral springs and wells, some of whose beneficence I once dispensed!

Redefinition came with Enclosure in the 1770s. This has left its mark on the Forest, literally in the placing of forty-nine stones marking the metes and bounds, of which a fair number survive in situ. This can be seen against Jeffereys' map of 1770, while 'modern' development has included several reservoirs for public water supplies. Yet the area also embraces Ripley Park's 900-year-old oak.

This distinctive and fascinating past pales beside the recent complexity of national forests. This officially recognises the importance, and aims to promote, forest as a new form of accessible leisure resource and rather than feeding into shipbuilding for national defence or as pit props and telegraph poles, sees the planting of trees as a means of storing carbon dioxide to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In addition to the National Forest across the Midlands, a Northern Forest is envisaged, incorporating five designated 'forests' from Merseyside to the Humber, with an ambitious target of planting 50 million trees over the coming quarter-century. (To find out more, see endnote). The venerable Knarborough Forest has a significant position within this new identity, which will in turn raise issues of existing historic industry within the Forest as well as planning controls for new building, and inevitably which trees to plant where. Approaching anniversary celebrations may give an impetus to some clarification: who is to implement, manage and co-ordinate this project? Here I will not attempt to detail the various national, local and voluntary bodies involved, but refer you to David himself, whilst as I listened, I began to feel a successor to Anthony Trollope was needed to do justice to this spider's web of bureaucracy.

At this point we were released into the town for a lunch break. I headed for the Market Place, where I enjoyed my sandwiches beneath the remains of the market cross, sharing a bench with a friendly civil engineer, Jack Metcalf, the most famous past Knarboroughian, before strolling past several blue plaques to our next meeting place.



Remains of Knaresborough Castle

Knaresborough Castle

The afternoon session was held inside the remains of the Castle. This has been a public park since 1897, and clearly a well-used and well-kept one. Some attempts have been made to preserve such features as the sallyport, the complete circuit of the outer wall – delineated in part by more recent planting – and the central division – suggested by stone paving. More recent history accounts for an avenue of trees, giving rise to one of those classic preservation dilemmas: to which period, if at all, should we reset the historic site? The castle was slighted after the Civil War, and as seen now contains two buildings: the courthouse, housing the town museum, and a sole upstanding tower. This had its part in national events when Edward II enhanced his father's building to the tune of £2,174 between 1307 and 1312, not for himself but as a gift to his favourite the Gascon, Piers Gaveston. This 'design of great sophistication' as described by Pevsner and Peter Leach was achieved by master mason Hugh of Titchmarsh with Hugh of Boudon as local project manager from York Minster, using all the best materials. This gift only added to Piers' unpopularity and in due course it reverted to the Crown, becoming part of the Duchy of Lancaster, as it still is. It is said to have been a favourite residence of Queen Philippa, wife of Edward III, and I wondered fancifully if she instigated any form of gardens here, as Queen Eleanor did when accompanying her husband Edward I to his Welsh military strongholds. While comfort might be found alongside defence, the undoubted significant feature of Knaresborough Castle from its earliest days is the view it commands extending westwards across the Nidd, and that is what duly became Knaresborough Forest.



David Rhodes explaining the history of the Castle

Conclusion

So ended the YGT visit to Knaresborough. To some, this day may seem to have consisted more of 'history' than 'gardens' in a botanical sense. Yet it may well be a pointer to one of our future roles, not only in regards to public parks and designed landscapes, but in the creation or re-creation of Forest as climate concerns intensify.

This thought-provoking day led me, among other directions, to the Northern Forest website, which lists its components, includes the 2023 Five Year Impact Report prepared by John Moores University, and some fascinating accounts of current projects. You can find it at

<https://thenorthernforest.org.uk>

Finally, Vicky Price and David Rhodes should be thanked for our well-organised day.

Helen Caffrey

Photos © Maddy Hughes

Notes from the Editor

As the rush of seasonal preparations get underway, I would like to wish all our members a very happy Christmas and all good wishes for 2025. We have had an excellent programme of visits arranged for us by our hard-working Events team and on page 12 you can read about the treats in store for us in 2025.

For members who have experienced difficulties with the Eventbrite system, I am pleased to report that the Committee is reintroducing the traditional booking arrangements to work alongside the Eventbrite system in 2025.

This *e-Bulletin* begins with a report written by Paul Knox and Malcolm Pickles of the excellent visit we enjoyed on a glorious Autumn's Day to the delightful restored mill at Levisham, which was hidden so deep in the North Yorkshire countryside that some of us had difficulty finding it!

Helen Caffrey kindly offered to write up our visit to Knaresborough Forest and Castle which was ably led by David Rhodes, who has an encyclopaedic knowledge of both the old forest boundaries and the plans for the future of this area.

Penelope Dawson-Brown provides a touchingly personal view of the visit organised in co-operation with Paul Wordsworth, Trustee and co-ordinator of City of Sanctuary York, for a group

of Ukrainian guests who live in the York area, to Castle Howard. We are all indebted to Penelope, Peter Goodchild and Chris Webb for their hard work in organising and participating in this very successful event.

David Morgan, Head of Properties in the North for the National Trust, was persuaded to contribute an article describing the recently opened new Mediterranean Garden at Beningbrough Hall. He also includes details of plans for future developments of the gardens at the Hall.

It has been an extremely busy year for our Planning and Conservation Committee, who have been fully engaged in the controversial ongoing planning application by the National Trust at Studley Royal, and also with a planning application which threatens to harm the setting of the delightful gardens of Tudor Croft, the home of our members Mike and Gel Heagney in Guisborough.

Our other committees have also been hard at work and their next reports will appear in next *Spring's Newsletter*.

Christine Miskin
Editor

Gardens Trust News



Unforgettable Gardens Book Launch

A huge thank you to everyone who attended the launch of our fabulous new book *Unforgettable Gardens: 500 years of Historic Gardens and Landscapes* at Cowcross Street in October. Following a marvellous presentation by Editor Susannah Charlton we celebrated the publication of our first ever book alongside contributors involved in its creation. Members can order it online using the special GT Members' code UNFORGETTABLE20 for a 20% discount and it will also be available in book shops.

GT Voted an Appointing Body to the National Trust Council

Excellent news just in is that the GT was successful

in being voted as an Appointing Body to the National Trust Council at their recent AGM. The Gardens Trust gathered an extraordinary 54,220 votes from National Trust members, demonstrating the value that they place on historic parks and gardens and the role that the Gardens Trust can play. We are delighted by this opportunity to work more closely with the National Trust to nurture the best possible future for its parks and gardens. More details can be found at [Voting results from the AGM | National Trust](#) In the next few weeks we will be selecting the GT's representative - please email enquiries@thegardenstrust.org if you are interested.

Notes from the Chair

The Gardens Trust and County Garden Trusts

Following from my column in the last *Newsletter*, I can report on the meeting of County Gardens Trust chairs I attended on behalf of YGT, held at GT headquarters in London on 22 October.

There were 19 CGTs represented, 5 GT trustees, a GT Committee member and 3 GT officers. with Linden Groves (GT's Head of Operations & Strategy) chairing and Catherine Ford (Administration & Membership Officer) taking notes. I took my own notes, so what follows is an amalgam of my notes and Linden's summary, compiled from Catherine's notes.

We were set up in a circle, so it was easy to talk and to give way to other speakers. I think everyone present said something; a couple of CGTs read out short statements prepared by their absentee chairs. Most people were long-serving chairs, former chairs or other county officers. Two were relatively new to chairing and to the CGT network. We had chances to gossip beforehand and at lunch, and I was 'doorstepped' by people after the meeting.

It was intense, productive and positive. Nearly everyone present said that we need to work more closely as a network, both in general and in particular, and that links to, and support from, GT is crucial.

One practical outcome will be regional meetings attended by GT to really get into the ways we can strengthen and widen GT/CGT relationships. Regions are asked to organise these. After the meeting closed Lancashire said they would be keen to work with us. Cheshire, Cumbria and Northumbria weren't present but would be obvious partners.

Our discussion ranged widely. Linden noted that some CGTs are doing well, but others are struggling with problems such as volunteer capacity. Meanwhile GT has its own problems, including insufficient funding and in some cases (notably for London GT, as emerged in discussion) confusion over which organisation people are joining.

Linden reminded us that 2025 is GT's 10th birthday and hoped this might signal a new phase in our relationships; that we are stronger together. This very much reflects on the views we expressed in our circular letter to members and CGTs before the GT AGM. Following on from that point, we were pleased to hear that GT has just received funding from Historic England to help GT address its sustainability issues. The funding will cover the scoping stages of

a project for a refreshed strategy for the CGT-GT relationship, to be designed collaboratively with CGTs. Our meeting was the first step in the discussion.

The relationship project will include surveys to find what CGTs need, how we think we can/should work with each other and GT, regional meetings including GT, then discuss and analyse the themes/ideas that have emerged to write an application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund to test and implement our proposals. Linden stressed that this will be a collaborative project intended to deliver benefits for all.

Conservation work

Val will report on some of the work of the Conservation Committee. All I will do here is note that ICOMOS have said that they will consider the revised application for an enlarged café and visitor facilities inside the Water Garden at Studley Royal Canal Gates. YGT's response to it is to say, 'not quite as bad, but still unacceptable', and you can read our detailed reasoning on the Harrogate Planning website.

We have also worked hard on an application to build an estate of 56 houses on open land adjoining Tudor Croft Garden in Guisborough. In this case we have submitted an application for Tudor Croft Garden to be added to the National Register of Parks and Gardens, as well as crafting an objection response to the application itself.

Chris Webb

Schools Report News Flash from the Schools Group

*In early November 2024,
the number of School members
was 81.*

*That has increased to 110
in December 2024!*

Events Programme for 2025



FEBRUARY

Our first event of the year will be on **Wednesday 12th February** with a visit to Mike and Gel Heagney's garden, Tudor Croft, in Guisborough where Mike will give us an exclusive tour of the garden and show us the many different varieties of Nivalis that he grows. There will be refreshments and snowdrops to buy.

MARCH

On **Saturday 29th March** the AGM will be held at West Tanfield Memorial Hall, about five miles to the west of the A1M, between Masham and Ripon. Our talk will be given by Dr Jan Harding, one of the researchers of the nearby Thornborough Henges which we will visit in the afternoon.

APRIL

The Saturday before Easter, **April 12th** there will be a joint visit with Northumbria Gardens Trust to Raby Castle, with a walk in the historic park, as well as a chance to see the redesigned Walled Gardens.

The Saturday after Easter, **April 27th** we will be visiting Hornby Castle near Richmond, to see not only the 'Brownian' landscape but also the archeology - a moated medieval castle, tower, L-shaped chapel and kitchen built on the site of late Saxon timber hall, being uncovered there by Erik Matthews and his team of volunteers.

MAY

On **Tuesday 20th May** we will be heading south to visit two adjacent parks in southwest Sheffield. Whinfell Quarry Gardens is an early 20th century ornamental garden developed in a quarry, and neighbouring Whirlowbrook Park, all of 39 acres, which is a landscaped garden originally built by Percy Fawcett in 1906. The garden was sold to his sister Lily Marguerite 'Madge' and her husband Sir Walter Benton Jones, who developed the grounds to include a Japanese rock garden, rose garden, rockery, shrubberies, two ponds and a lake.

JUNE

Two weeks later on **Thursday 5th June**, we have planned a visit to another 20th century garden, Parcevall Hall, near Pateley Bridge, for an exclusive tour with head gardener Phill Nelson. The gardens were created in a steep landscape by Sir William Milner from 1927 onwards.

Our summer picnic on **Tuesday 17th June** is at Skipwith Hall, between York and Selby with many thanks to our hosts the Forbes family. Please bring your own picnic and we will provide the strawberries and cream.

JULY

This will be followed two weeks later on **Tuesday 1st July** by the Summer Evening Party, which this year will be held at Helmsley Walled Garden. The executive director June Tainsh will give an introductory talk and there will be drinks and canapes and a stunning walled garden to explore.

On **Tuesday 15th July**, before the schools break up, we have planned a day out in Scarborough with a talk by Adrian Perry, Chairman of Scarborough Civic Society and a tour of the newly restored South Cliff Gardens.

AUGUST

In August, on **Tuesday 19th** there will be a chance to enjoy a 2-hour afternoon walk to explore the University of York Campus West designed landscape. This incorporates the physical remains of the early 18th century gardens and planting associated with the 16th century hall, in the 20th century designed landscape laid out from 1963-1980 to designs by architectural and design firm RMJM.

SEPTEMBER

We are ending the Events Programme with a day at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park on **Tuesday September 16th**. There will be an illustrated talk about the background to the historic landscape; managing the estate and the challenges this throws up, followed by lunch and guided walks to suit both the fittest and the not so fit.

There will be more details of all these events in the Events Programme which will be sent to you in the New Year. We will include a booking form for those members who prefer not to buy tickets electronically through Eventbrite, although there is obviously less work for us if you can buy your tickets this way. We hope that we will be putting on a series of Zoom talks with the Gardens Trust, but we have decided to delay these till September. We will, of course, keep you updated about titles, speakers and the dates for these.

If you would like to be part of the team who organise the events please contact Vicky Price dvickyprice29@gmail.com or Maddy Hughes madalynhughes@aol.com - we would welcome more team members. Most of our meetings are held on Zoom, though we like to have meetings in person when it is possible.

Vicky Price



Helmsley Walled Garden



Parceval Hall Gardens

A few reflections on the Yorkshire Gardens Trust stand at the Harrogate Autumn Flower Show

Introduction

This year, we were again invited by Nick Smith, the Show's Director for the North of England Horticultural Society, to have a stand at the Harrogate Autumn Flower Show. The show is held in the garden at Newby Hall and this year our stand was to be in the Grand Floral Pavilion, where the Chrysanthemum and Dahlia enthusiasts exhibit their stunning blooms and there are stands for local plant nurseries. Brendan Mowforth and I put our heads together to come up with an idea for a YGT stand. Brendan, thankfully, as a Trustee for Perennial as well as being a judge for 'Britain in Bloom' has a lot more experience than me in such matters. We decided on a simple stand using the two old pull-up banners and a large photograph as a backdrop, and Phillip Ingham kindly provided us with one of his photos of the garden at Bramham which was high enough resolution to use. All my photos taken with a mobile phone were just not good enough.

Preparations

On the Thursday of the Show week, Brendan, a few volunteers and I put the stand together. Thank goodness Brendan is tall as he managed to secure the wall banner to the high back rail, as well as providing potted chrysanthemums to decorate the stand. Joanna Pavey brought flowers to make our table look attractive, as we only had flat books and leaflets and copies of the information about YGT from last year's show's lectern stands.

Opening Day

The first day the Show was open there had been a frost overnight and we arrived to find the top of our table soaking and water still dripping off the marquee roof. Luckily, we had cleared all the paper items the day before. Due to bad planning, I had not organised the rota of daily volunteers so that someone else could come and set out the stand, and for three days I had to get up at the crack of dawn (for me, as I am not an early riser). If we do this again, I must organise the rota better.

This year the position of our stand meant that most of the visitors had to walk by as we were right in the middle of the Pavilion, next to the Human Gardener stage where Sarah Owen Hughes and Faith Douglas interviewed people from all walks of horticulture. Many visitors stopped to ask who we were and pick up a leaflet, especially on Friday and Saturday. A few joined up on the spot or left their names and

addresses. On Sunday, it seemed to be a very different audience and very few people stopped to talk to us. I think they were there for the shopping as at the end of the day there was a 'sell-off' and people hurried past us bearing huge bunches of flowers bought for next to nothing.

Thank you to all the volunteers for their help and company: Ros Forbes, Mandy Whitehead, Rosh Childs, Trish Leach, Jane Ingham, Peter and Sylvia Hogarth and Judith and Ian Christie. Ann Petherick and Joanna Smakman both offered advice about making our stand more attractive and how to engage better with members of the public. Something to think about if we have a stand at the Show again as publicity and event management are not something I know much about, so I hope we will be able to take advantage of their skills in the future. We also had help from three people who are volunteers at Helmsley Walled Garden - Ken and Carol Hughes and Eric Dunstone. The Show organisers very generously offer each of our volunteers a complimentary ticket to the Show and I hope everyone had a chance to visit the Floral Pavilion, the National Vegetable Society's Northern Championship fruit and vegetables as well the flower arranging displays in Newby Hall's principal rooms, or just to wander in the beautiful garden.

Conclusion

If we are invited back next year, I hope more new people will volunteer so we are not relying on the same people all the time. Nick Smith and the North of England Horticultural Society are very generous to us with a free stand and complimentary tickets. I think it is worth it.

Hopefully we recruited some new members, handed out the new YGT flyer and talked to lots of people who did not know anything about the Trust, but if we do, we need to consider who we are aiming at, and design the stand to do this, for which I will need help.

Vicky Price

Women in Landscape Design

Dear FOLAR supporter

Here's a New Year treat!
We are delighted to announce
our next series of exciting and stimulating
on-line talks,
in collaboration with
The Gardens Trust:
C20 Women in Landscape Design

The talks will focus on six remarkable women designers, starting on Wednesday the 8th of January, from 6 to 7.30 pm. For full details and to book your tickets click this link:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/c20-women-in-landscape-design-tickets-1086942587539>

The '6 Women' are:

Susan Jellicoe, Sheila Haywood, Brenda Colvin, Mary Mitchell, Marjory Allen and Marian Thompson

All contributed to the expertise, development and awareness of the landscape profession in many ways. Our equally impressive list of speakers includes Sally Ingram, Paula Laycock, Hal Moggridge, Joy Burgess, Wendy Titman and Bruce Thompson. Each knew, worked with, or researched one of these six remarkable women.

We look forward to seeing you there.

P.S. – join FOLAR here (just £25) and buy tickets at the reduced member rate for the next 6 months.

And do get in touch with any questions at info@folar.uk

Best wishes from FOLAR (*Friends of the Landscape Archive Reading*)



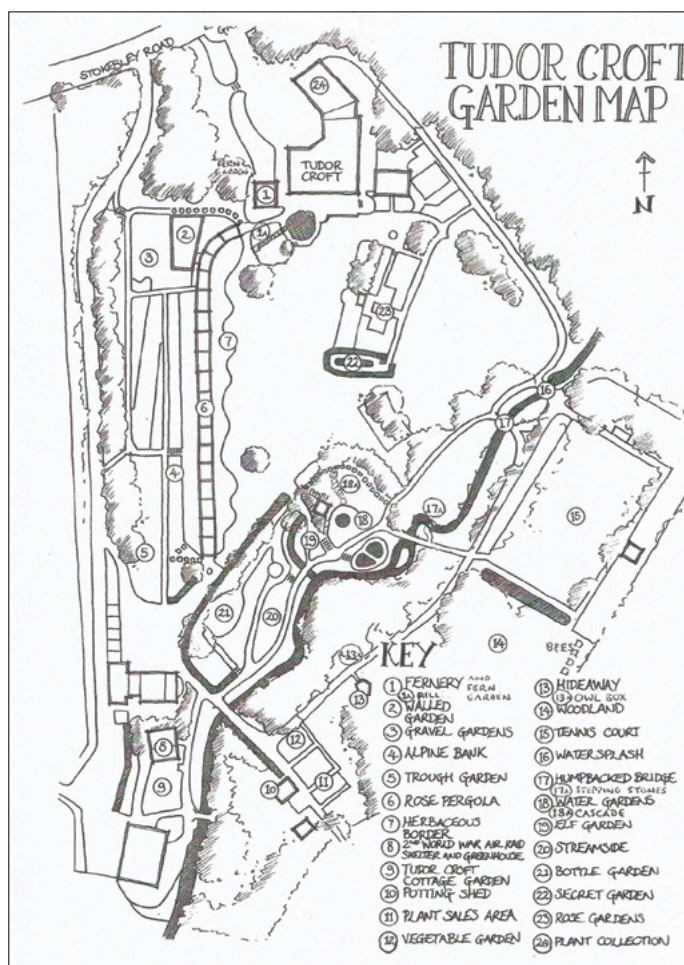
Tudor Croft at Guisborough and the Backhouse Nursery's 'Trademark'

I was going to write a few lines about the demise of *Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission*, that I mentioned in YGT's *Spring 2020 Newsletter Issue 46*, but I will leave that until the end of this brief note, and instead highlight Tudor Croft at Guisborough.

You will remember that since 2021 (Planning Ref: R/2021/0986/FFM) YGT has been responding to planning applications submitted to Redcar and Cleveland Council planning authority for housing development next to and in full view of the wonderful Tudor Croft. There were further applications last year (R/2023/0746/RSM) and again this year, including one with a deadline for responses of 2nd December:

R/2023/0746/RSM: land off Trefoil close and Meynell Avenue Guisborough. Residential development of 56 houses with associated access, open space, landscaping, parking and drainage infrastructure (resubmission)

For some time, we have thought that the garden at Tudor Croft is worthy of being submitted to Historic England (HE) for the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England. Following YGT's trustee Gillian Parker's recent scholarly assessment of the Backhouse Nursery involvement in the construction of the garden in the 1930's, and the continuing threat of development, we thought that we must make an urgent submission. So, with the owners Mike and Gel Heagney's help and their absolute support we have gathered as much information as possible about Tudor Croft's historic, architectural and artistic significance and Chris has done the on-line submission. We have also involved Dr Kristof Fatsar, HE Regional Landscape Architect. Chris has written a strongly worded planning response explaining why Tudor Croft Garden is important and how the application would affect its importance. This can be read on-line by accessing the Redcar and Cleveland planning website at [R/2023/0746/RSM](#).



*Tudor Croft Garden Map
(Courtesy Mike and Gel Heagney)*

In YGT's letter to the planners Chris wrote: "Tudor Croft Garden is a rare survival of an inter-war suburban garden still intimately associated with the house it was built for in 1934. An up-to-date and sophisticated assessment by the leading scholar of gardens built by the York-based Backhouse Nursery shows that it is a nationally rare survival of an emerging new inter-war style. While sharing elements with the Arts and Crafts style, Tudor Croft is a living example of a suburban garden and associated house built by a successful industrialist in a style that is seeking to transition away from established full-blown arts and crafts and towards a less formal style more appropriate to the economic and social realities of the years after the Great War. The development of this new style was cut short by the declaration of war in 1939, so very few examples now remain of this significant inter-war movement.

Tudor Croft Garden invites comparison with Goddards, the Terry house and garden in York (1927) designed by Walter Brierley and with Winterbourne in Birmingham. Both are earlier, much bigger, and more firmly Arts and Crafts; but both are by

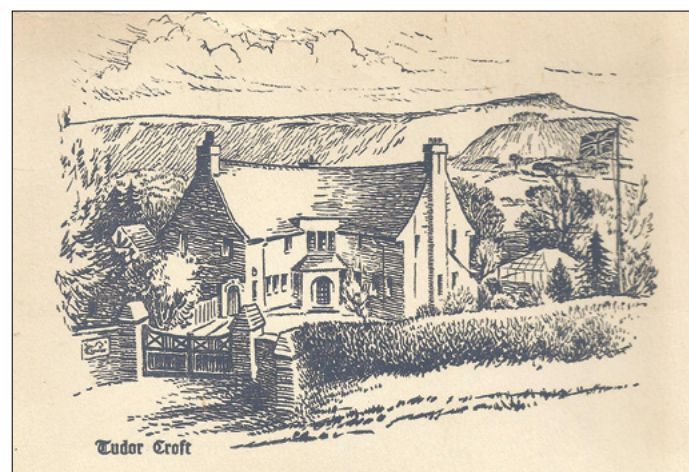
industrialists (the latter also moving his home away from the smoke), there are water and rock gardens, and engagement with the landscape beyond.”

Those of you who have visited Tudor Croft will know of the extensive Backhouse work including the Fern Cave, Water Garden and Secret Garden.

” The fern cave is an important example of a form that is almost extinct. It is like that at Southport Botanic Gardens. The rockwork is original. There are lead water pipes visible (though their buried connections are of modern, sustainable materials); they feed a fountain that falls to a grotto and pool, then along a rill to a second pool and grotto. Fountain and grottos are decorated with Comondale Pottery made for Tudor Croft. The cave has characteristic Backhouse features, including a signature rock atop the rockwork. The grottoes suggest that filmy ferns were grown. Historic England’s website lists only two filmy fern caves, one by Backhouse at Ellen Willmott’s Warley Place (collapsed) and one at Penjerrick (Cornwall).”



Tudor Croft 1938. View back to the house from south of the hump-backed bridge. (Courtesy Mike and Gel Heagney)



Tudor Croft 1930’s. View from the road. Note the fern cave to the right of the house and the hills, Highcliff. (Courtesy Mike and Gel Heagney)

You will see from the 2025 Events Programme that Mike and Gel have invited YGT for another visit to view Tudor Croft and its collection of about 350 different snowdrop cultivars, all labelled, on Wednesday 12th February 2025. When the snowdrops are flowering is a great time to see this garden because the detail of the design and the clever use of stonework is more visible in the winter and early spring. You will be amazed to see the Backhouse Nursery’s ‘trademark’ signature rock in the Fern Cave that, until Gillian went to visit, no-one had realised existed.

Returning to my introduction I recently heard that Matthew Pennycock, the Minister for Housing, is to close the Office for Place. This is essentially the organisation developed from Roger Scruton’s *Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission* and although we can argue against the proliferation of quangos and query the definition of ‘beauty’, its aim was to make the built environment more beautiful and community friendly. I had hoped that this initiative would overcome the proliferation of faceless, everywhere-and- nowhere developments that we see so much of, and which generate considerable public opposition. I had hoped that developers could be persuaded or indeed instructed to design homes and infrastructure buildings that paid some attention to local distinctiveness in build, materials, layout and general concept... but unfortunately my optimism has been short-lived. Angela Rayner, the Secretary of State for Housing has defended the decision to remove all references to beauty in the proposed revision of the National Planning Policy Framework saying that “beautiful means nothing really”. But beautiful means a lot to folk who live near it, or who do not get the privilege. I live near historic and beautiful Richmond, North Yorkshire, and I count my blessings every time I go into town.

Val Hepworth

Beningbrough Hall and the new Mediterranean Garden



New Mediterranean Garden

© National Trust/David Morgan

Introduction: the new long term management plan, 2016

The Beningbrough estate is located between the villages of Beningbrough and Newton-on-Ouse and came to the National Trust in 1958. Much of the current garden is a National Trust creation, planted during the 1970's and later. There was a need to create greater year-round interest as well as a desire to improve horticultural standards and take a holistic view of the garden, and in 2016 Chelsea Gold medallist Andy Sturgeon created a long-term vision for the nine-acre garden. The Beningbrough conservation management plan provided a framework of where there was scope to make change, as well as other areas to leave untouched. The vision gave a starting point to address the garden design that could be delivered in phases over several years.

Having planted 300,000 spring bulbs along the Ha ha walk in 2016 in a nod to the tricentenary of the building of Beningbrough, and the installation of a Pergola Garden in 2017 on the site of a former

glasshouse, the vision was taking shape. A two-year hiatus followed due to lockdown and the building of the next phase was delayed.

The building of the Mediterranean Garden, adjacent to the hall and on the site of the Edwardian rose garden was delayed two years, and during this time visitors were invited to help remove the current planting scheme and take something of Beningbrough home with them. For some of our supporters this was too good an opportunity not to miss and several enthusiastically embraced the invitation arriving with wheelbarrows.

Garden excavations during 2021–2022

Mark Newman, Archaeologist for the National Trust in the North, collaborated with the Channel 4 Great British Dig team to film at Beningbrough and during their excavations in 2021 they revealed a substantial 17th century brick foundation, about 1m wide and 14 courses deep running east-west. In addition, two pieces of high-quality plaster scroll-work, which may have been part of a significant late 17th century garden building, were uncovered. A year of further excavations by an archaeological group from Thornton-le-Street, Roads to the Past, brought to light a variety of footings, deep landscaping, hedge-planting ditches, ceramic fragments and decorated wall plaster depicting fruit and foliage; all dated to 1716 or earlier, again revealing the presence of significant 17th century gardens.

The spirit of place for Beningbrough is *A place of changing fortunes and re-invention*. The ownership of the property has changed hands several times and with it the gardens have been swept away and replaced and developed. It is therefore fitting that we create a new series of gardens that can accommodate the growing audience but also delight as well as adapt to climate change.

New Mediterranean Garden

Inspiration for the Mediterranean Garden was taken from the Italianate Baroque architecture, and it replaced a previous Italian border designed by Graham Stuart Thomas. YGT visited and commented on the planning application supporting a new design of modern appearance, which North Yorkshire Council approved in September 2023.



(YGT Members visit the garden
© National Trust/David Morgan)

Following this, and with contractors onsite for several months over Autumn 2023 and 2024, the build was hampered by one of the wettest winters on record. (The irony of building a Mediterranean Garden was not lost on us!) Volunteers and staff planted over 4,000 new plants and trees, some grown to order to meet the NT peat free policy and ordered two years previously from local nurseries. (3,500 of these plants are on the RHS pollinators list whereas in the previous garden only 10 plants featured.) They represent Mediterranean climate zones from around the world, from South Africa to Chile to Australia and the Mediterranean itself.

In addition to the planting, hard landscaping has played a significant role in the creation of the new

garden. Water has been re-introduced, in the shape of a rill, running along a wall, that subsequently flows into a new pond with stepping stones. Low walls emerge from the slope and boulders situated around the site give a flavour of a hillside in the Mediterranean. Accessibility was also improved through the creation of new paths, including the path along the Ha ha that provides much improved circulation through the garden.

In August 2024 the garden was opened to fanfare in the national press and on the BBC, resulting in sixteen consecutive days of visitor numbers usually associated with a Bank Holiday. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive and is inspiring visitors how to adapt their gardens to climate change.

The long-term vision of the garden is also informing the themes of the exhibitions in the hall. Open until March 23, 2025, in partnership with the British Museum we are exhibiting *The Botanical World of Mary Delany*. With just paper, paint and scissors, Mary Delany transformed ordinary materials into extraordinary, inspirational botanical artworks. Beningbrough is the first UK venue of this touring exhibition, in which high quality photographs allow more of Delany's specimens to be seen.

The work on the garden vision continues in 2025 with plans to revitalise the Wilderness followed by the American Garden in 2026.

David Morgan
General Manager, York Area Properties

Recently Published Books

The English Landscape Garden

Tim Richardson

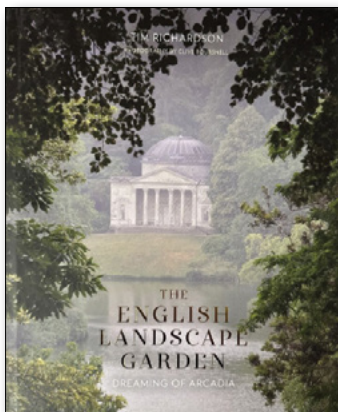
London, Quarto Publishing, 2024

Hardback, 320 pages

Illustrations

ISBN 10: 071129092X / ISBN 13: 9780711290921

£40.00



“Smooth lawns, glassy pools, cool garden temples, mysterious woodland glades, evocative statuary. The 18th-century English landscape garden offers a transcendent vision of Arcadia, a world of rich escapism peopled by gods and goddesses, young

lovers and dairymaids, poets and philosophers. This sumptuous, beautifully photographed volume celebrates this quintessentially British creation,

arguably its greatest art form, taking you on a tour of 20 of the finest surviving gardens, including: Studley Royal (Yorkshire), a dreamy valley garden which culminates with a view down and across the ruins of a Cistercian Abbey Stowe (Buckinghamshire), the great politically motivated garden of its day, boasting the ensemble masterpiece that is William Kent's Elysian Field.; Chiswick House (London), Lord Burlington's experiment in neoclassical architecture: Petworth (Sussex) - of 'Capability' Brown, who eschewed the symbolism of earlier generations but created instead his own powerful vision of pastoral Arcadia at Hawkstone Park (Shropshire), designed to elicit a thrill of fear in visitors as they traverse rocky precipices and encounter live hermits. Including much new research and specially commissioned photographs, this is a book to dive into and be transported to an idyllic dream realm. *The English Landscape Garden* is a beautifully photographed celebration of the best of the 18th century English landscape garden - a quintessentially British art form that influenced the rest of the world”

Yorkshire Gardens Trust

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Forthcoming YGT Publications

Publication	Copy deadline	Publication date
Spring Newsletter	28 February 2025	21 April 2025
July e-Bulletin	1 July 2025	21 July 2025
Autumn Newsletter	15 September 2025	21 October 2025
December e-Bulletin	1 December 2025	21 December 2025

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

Letters to the Editor are welcome; please send them by email to cemiskin22@gmail.com

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