



YORKSHIRE GARDENS TRUST NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 48

Spring 2021



*A 'cloth of gold': corn marigolds in high summer. Please turn to p. 20.
(Photo credit: Penelope Dawson-Brown)*

Notes from the Editor

As we endure another lockdown, perhaps Spring is finally on the way, after the recent freezing weather. I hope that all our members continue to cope with the trials and tribulations of the pandemic and are looking forward to better times ahead.

There are obviously no reports of visits in this issue, but our new venture of offering lectures by Zoom has been extremely successful. As mentioned in the December e-Bulletin, we started with Mark Newman's excellent talk on the 350th anniversary of John Aislabie's birthday on 4 December 2020, with an in depth account of his work at Studley Royal. Alison Brayshaw has produced a detailed report of his lecture at p. 28. The lectures in the John Farrer series were also very well-received and I am grateful to Moira Fulton, Gillian Parker, and Patrick Eyres for undertaking the difficult job of writing them up.

We should also express our grateful thanks to the Events team of Maddy Hughes, Vicky Price and Pat Gore, plus Gail Falkingham, for their hard work in putting the lecture series together and, in particular, to Maddy for her excellent, calm and clear introductions, Gail for her relaxed questioning style and Vicky for hosting some of the lectures.

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They came across as a very professional team who had been doing this kind of thing all their lives, rather than having been dropped in at the deep end!

Chris Beevers and Penelope Dawson-Brown have once again stepped into the breach and provided articles for us. Penelope has written about cornfield flowers, based on her own field which she has nurtured for many years. I hope that Chris's ideas for columns on interesting old photos and extracts from various archives on matters relating to landscapes and garden history will result in contributions from members.

Chris Webb has written his inaugural column which reports on what our Council and committees have been doing during lockdown.

The Conservation and Planning Committee has been particularly busy in the face of not one, but four, planning consultation documents. (See Val's report at p.5 and Geoff Hughes' digest of the documents on p. 12. During the pandemic, the Research and Recording Committee has taken the opportunity of reviewing its working methods, and has decided to extend its remit to cover the whole of Yorkshire (see report at p. 14).

My thanks to Louise and all our contributors who, between them, have completely allayed my fears that we would have so little material for this Newsletter that it might not be worth publishing.

Christine Miskin

Editor

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YGT: Ways to Keep in Touch

For general and membership queries: visit our website www.yorkshiregardenstrust.org.uk and click the 'Contact' tab or simply email secretary@yorkshiregardenstrust.org.uk.

Existing members can use the contact details shown on your membership card.

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

Event bookings: currently suspended due to the pandemic; please see p. 44 for future plans.

YGT Membership Renewals are Due

YGT annual memberships are due for renewal on 1 April 2021. 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.

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From the Chair

"And what is the use of a book," thought Alice, "without pictures or conversation?"

That famous sentence by Lewis Carroll could be applied analogously to Yorkshire Gardens Trust in the year of pandemic lockdowns. For what is the use of YGT without access to gardens or meetings of our members? The gardens are there, but the flowers in them bloom unseen by most of us; and conversations take place but are unheard and unshared for the most part. Like Alice, our thoughts form, but are not communicated outside their thinker's mind. There the analogy breaks down, at least in part, for the internet has helped to rescue us. We can travel to gardens we could not hope to reach in person, even after the pandemic ends; Zoom and other communication platforms have allowed us to meet and converse and argue and plan. Both these modern inventions have helped to reduce our consumption of scarce resources in a world we all now see as too close to the limits of what it can sustain.

The reports from our subcommittees show that we have made good use of our enforced isolation. Internet-based lectures have attracted larger audiences than we could have hosted in a physical venue, and also enabled attendees to go back over what they heard and saw to review and consider further. They have brought us more income than the equivalent in-person event, too, so we have more to spend on YGT activities. Some events, that depend on access to gardens, have had to be postponed, but the **Events Team** is confident that, when it is safe to resume social contact, they will flourish again. By the time we can visit once more, some gardens will have benefited from the rest that forced closures have brought, but the financial implications will be serious, perhaps causing some to close for good. Rievaulx Terrace and Temples is a particular concern, and we have continued to work with The Gardens Trust to attempt to influence the National Trust's decisions relating to gardens and designed landscapes.

We have had time to see that our **Website** requires new features and functionality, so we are planning a redesign over the next 12 months or so. Our website is already the home of huge amounts of information – see our Research Reports, for example – and we plan to add more information and make it more accessible. High on the list of desirable features is a search function that can unlock detail that would otherwise be hidden.

One of our more active groups is the **Conservation and Planning Committee**, which considers and responds to around three planning applications,

from all over our county, each working week. This is skilled and time-consuming work, which demands a good eye, considerable knowledge and a diplomatic approach if our responses are to be heard and acted upon. These responses are public documents but are largely hidden from view on the websites of the relevant local planning authority, attached to the application the report relates to. Until now we have had no way to make them more easily available to people who might find them useful, not just in relation to a particular application, but as a quarry of ideas and knowledge that can be applied to similar applications elsewhere. We intend that the new functionality of our website will enable us to make our planning responses both available and searchable in a single, obvious place.

Similarly, the work of our **Research and Recording Committee** deserves to be better known. There are just under 40 lengthy site reports on the website and more in preparation. The latest report, for the Terry family garden at Goddards in Dringhouses outside York, was uploaded this year. Our improved website should enable site visitors to search the reports more easily and to make comparisons between sites.

Despite our concentration on digital planning and virtual meetings and events, YGT has not forgotten that the internet, for all its magic, cannot reproduce the qualities of physical objects and places. We shall return to real visits to real gardens, and real events welcoming real people as soon as we are able. We continue to value and support traditional ways of disseminating knowledge about historic designed landscapes and gardens. YGT has awarded a grant to support the publication of the first monograph on the garden and landscape designer Thomas White (1739-1811), which we expect to be published in 2021. Deborah Turnbull's book re-addresses White's contribution to nationally important designed landscapes in northern England such as Harewood, Sledmere, Burton Constable and Newby Hall. In recent years there have been several books on Brown and Repton, together with one on their contemporary, Richard Woods. White though, for all his prominence while he was working, and the important landscapes he designed that are still extant, has no monograph. This book will put the omission right, making an important contribution to our knowledge and appreciation of gardens in general, and Yorkshire gardens in particular.

Chris Webb
YGT Chair

HM Government has awarded funding of £1.5m to 23 local authorities to create, improve or expand their local heritage list; both West and South Yorkshire are included. These lists recognise heritage sites of local significance and give them some protection. Historic England requires councils to involve the local community in identifying sites to include. So this is an unmissable chance to nominate important landscapes which you think should be recognised and protected.

Local heritage lists

About half of all local planning authorities (LPAs) have produced lists of heritage assets, which are non-designated but locally important historic buildings and sites. Not all of these lists are

adopted as part of the Local Plan, but inclusion on the list is a material consideration when the LPA is deciding on a planning application; this is because inclusion of a heritage asset on the local heritage list means that its conservation is an objective of National Planning Policy.

Campaign Funding

Historic England says that councils must involve the local community in identifying sites to include on the list. So this campaign, which ends in late 2021, is a vital opportunity to identify unregistered historic parks, gardens or other designed sites. If you are aware of such sites in South or West Yorkshire please let us know so that together we can make a submission.

Anne Tupholme

An Appreciation of her Time with YGT

We are so sorry to have to tell you about the recent sudden death of Anne Tupholme, following a short illness. Val Hepworth and Jane Furse have written the following short appreciation of her work with us and a fuller obituary will appear in a future Newsletter.

Anne joined YGT in the late 1990's and quickly became a devoted member of the Conservation and Planning team. Many of our planning responses have been embedded with Anne's research, illuminating the significance of a site, and enabling YGT and the Gardens Trust to give highly-respected commentaries to Historic England and the planners.

Anne had a PhD in mathematics, teaching at Bradford Girls Grammar School and this mental rigour was very evident in her research. She was also passionate about wild flowers; spending holidays abroad with like-minded botanists and being active in surveying with Bradford Naturalists particularly in the Yorkshire Dales National Park; a landscape that had a great draw for her.

In February 2002 Anne organised our first YGT visit to a Registered cemetery; the wonderfully sited Underhill Cemetery in Bradford. It was a blizzard of a day but absolutely memorable for the fifteen members who braved the elements. Anne quickly followed this by highlighting to YGT the plight of the Arts and Crafts gardens of Whinburn, Keighley. Anne wrote about Whinburn in our early Newsletters; briefly in No 11 and a much longer article in No 13 (Autumn/Winter 2003).



Whinburn is less than a mile from what is now Cliffe Castle Museum; another historic site that Anne researched and knew well; it was her work which led to Whinburn being put on the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens and similarly with St Ives Park, Bingley.

The restoration of the waterfall at Parcevall Hall, near Skipton, where Anne almost single-handedly raised more than £13,000 to rectify the 'engineering-solution' work that had been carried out, will be a lasting tangible legacy amongst all the other projects where she gave her time and energy.

Anne's expertise and enquiring mind are a great loss to YGT conservation and research.

Conservation and Planning Greener Cities

Having been brought up on a hill farm and then by the seaside, when applying to university in the 1960s I was sure that I did not want to live surrounded by concrete in a city. The University Park at Nottingham was a revelation and sealed that university as the place where I wanted to study. Going into the city occasionally to shop I loved 'Slab Square' with its great civic architecture, so different from my home, but was glad to get back to the green of the campus. Nottingham City is now much more dense, high rise and claustrophobic with little in the way of greenness. Throughout Britain more than 15 million people suffer from poor access to green space. But what of the future? The pandemic has accelerated what was already happening: the shift to on-line shopping and the drift away from the office is creating an opportunity for greener city centres where people can live, exercise, socialise (eventually) and get close to nature. The Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust has set out a vision to transform the 1970's Broadmarsh shopping centre, now a redundant eyesore, into traditional parkland, ponds, allotments and orchards with open vistas framing Nottingham Castle and civic buildings. There's hope!

Closer to home, Leeds too has significant inequality when it comes to access to green space. Although rated last year as the third greenest of the UK cities by Essential Living's Green City Index, in a separate report from the Centre for Cities it was suggested that one in every twenty-two deaths amongst adults in Leeds is linked to pollution. Areas with more than 40 per cent of ethnic minorities have eleven times less public green space than largely white areas. In the poorest twenty per cent of households, nearly half do not have a car, making access to green space outside the city much more difficult. Yet as we know vast swathes of people have really appreciated local green space during the pandemic. This must be the way forward, rethinking our towns and cities, redesigning for the future, reworking our redundant shops and offices to make homes, making street parks, walking, cycling and running routes, investing in public parks and creating bold new green space. In time this will have a positive effect on reversing climate change, and on health and well-being. In my optimism I trust that the recent consultation that I have done on YGT's behalf with help from YGT Conservation sub-committee members, Geoff [Hughes], Roger [Lambert] and

Win [Derbyshire], *Supporting Housing Delivery & Public Service Infrastructure*, will be instrumental in progressing greener cities and towns but as ever the devil is in the detail, which we do not yet have and, as Geoff has written, there was no specific mention of parks and gardens. So, we must remain vigilant regarding changes to planning in England and fight our corner. I feel strongly that succeeding generations will thank us for promoting these changes to our environment which has been much blighted in recent decades.

A year ago, (Newsletter Issue 46), I wrote about the earlier report from Robert Jenrick MP, Secretary of State for Housing Communities and Local Government, *Living with Beauty*, the final report from the *Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission*. As I write at the end of January 2021, I understand that the word "beauty" will be included in planning rules for the first time, with a greater emphasis placed on how developments will look. Mr Jenrick has said: "We should aspire to pass on our heritage to our successors, not depleted but enhanced." So, I wait with bated breath... and wonder how "beauty" will be defined and delivered!

We are continuing our meetings on Zoom with much conservation and planning activity between meetings modulated by the Gardens Trust (GT) weekly list of planning applications. These normally come in from our GT colleague Alison on a Thursday evening. My stalwarts, Susan [Kellerman], Win, Geoff, Anne [Tupholme] and Roger give me advice and we can call on other YGT members who have local knowledge that we lack. Despite the pandemic, or maybe because of it, on average we have about three applications each week and interestingly have had examples of a new type of planning application, a reflection of the times in which we live, for changes to holiday parks within Registered Parks and Gardens (RPG's). These were for **Nostell Priory** and **Rudding Park** where permission was being sought for year-round occupancy of existing lodges, static caravans, serviced camping pods etc. none of which we thought would be a problem for the RPG.

The following are some of the other planning applications that we have responded to:

North Yorkshire and York

Some planning applications keep coming back to us, and the application retrospectively for a car park at Gilling East on part of the registered

Gilling Castle and within the Howardian Hills AONB was one such. YGT/GT, the Howardian Hills AONB Officer and the Ryedale Conservation Officer all objected, but by the third response we agreed with the landscaping proposals of mitigation from the Howardian Hills AONB Officer and also suggested that some of the planting includes evergreens such as holly, a native species and one historically used in designed landscapes. We also wrote that the designated heritage assets, as at Gilling Castle, are an irreplaceable resource and should be carefully conserved. It is incumbent on owners and tenants to take expert advice from their local planning authority before embarking on any changes to a heritage asset and it is even more important if those assets are within a specially designated landscape as here, the Howardian Hills AONB.

In early January, Karen [Lynch], a YGT follies expert, alerted me to a planning application on my home patch in Wensleydale for **The Mount or Polly Peachum's Tower** – see separate article on p. 42. She thought that the date suggested in the planning application for building the Tower was inaccurate and remembered that I had done some research on the Bolton Papers at North Yorkshire County Record Office many years ago. I was able to send a report on my research to both the planners and Historic England (HE) who are looking at the possibility of listing the Tower.

Last September we were pleased to be consulted on the careful restoration of **Nun Appleton Hall** (Listed Grade II, and parkland and gardens Registered Grade II) to make a family home. We advised that there should be a method of recording and preserving any historic features identified/discovered during the works; a historic garden specialist/landscape architect should be engaged to determine the design for the suitable landscaping scheme around the Hall; and that a Conservation Management Plan should be developed for the RPG, to restore the heritage asset and to be a lasting legacy from the present owner.

At Scarborough, the prominent Esplanade Hotel listed Grade II lies within the Conservation Area and overlooks the registered **Valley Gardens and South Cliff**. We had no objection to the sympathetic external refurbishment. Similarly at **Norton Conyers**, where the park, pleasure grounds and garden are registered Grade II, on the north-east side of the Hall (listed Grade II*), we were supportive of the clock being repaired, albeit with probable new workings. It is shown in a painting by Nicholas Dall of 1774. If we can have our planned event at Norton Conyers this summer, we will be able to see the work in progress.



Norton Conyers from western area of South Lawn
(Clock Tower is hidden behind House).
(Photo credit: Val Hepworth 2016)

The situation for **Allerton Castle** is unfortunately much less rosy. We have had a raft of planning applications that have the potential to further damage the RPG and its setting. From North Yorkshire County Council there is an application relating to a landscaping scheme for the landfill site near what I call 'Dante's Inferno' ie the incinerator; part of the RPG and in its northern setting. This will go some way to improving the site, but we feel that there are still concerns. Two other planning applications are also concerning: Environmental Impact Assessment and Scoping Opinion for the development of a Business Park, to the South West of Junction 47 of the A1(M), at Flaxby. Then in January, four planning applications each one for a large agricultural building, on land between the A1M and A168 immediately north of Junction 47 of the A1M. Although they are beyond the Registered Park boundary, they are again within the wider setting of Allerton Park. You will not be surprised to know that Allerton Park remains on the Historic England (HE) 'Heritage at Risk' register: <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk/search-register/list-entry/26153>

On a positive note, we have had two well-documented and considered planning applications for changes where the RPG of **Mulgrave Castle** meets Sandsend, with the proposal for a new car park (150 vehicles). By a quirk of the boundary, the junction onto the A174 and access road/track is within the Scarborough BC jurisdiction, whereas the application for change of use of the Mulgrave Estate sawmill timber yard to a visitor car park with associated works at East Row is within the North York Moors National Park Authority. We suggested public toilets and also interpretation boards to explain the significance of Mulgrave Castle's historic designed landscape, its early history etc., and the history of Sandsend.

I wonder how many of us know that we have a Thomas Mawson garden in the Yorkshire Dales National Park. I certainly did not until we had a planning application for the erection of 50 dwellings (16 open market, 17 affordable/social rented, 17 affordable shared ownership) with external works and landscaping at land off Station Road, Sedbergh. The **Queen's Garden** at Sedbergh was added to the HE Register of Historic Parks and Gardens in 2012 at Grade II. It lies across the A684, almost opposite the proposed housing site and a short distance to the west of Sedbergh Conservation Area. The garden was commissioned by the local landowner Mrs Upton-Cottrell-Dormer from Thomas Mawson (1861-1933) the most renowned English garden designer of his time, a town planner and acknowledged as the founder of modern landscape architecture and garden design. Opened in 1902 Queen's Garden is a good example of a public garden laid out as a memorial to Queen Victoria and remains substantially intact. Mawson's design makes use of the natural topography by using the highest, central point of the symmetrical layout as the site of the memorial cross (listed Grade II). The garden was designed to be enclosed and inward/southward-looking by heavy planting on the north of the site (which it still is), as it was always anticipated that it would become an urban park, swallowed up by the expansion of Sedbergh. With the closure of the railway station, expansion of the town slowed down and the garden was left rather isolated and somewhat neglected on the western fringe of the town. We had no objection in principle to the plans for housing but made some suggestions on the landscaping and in view of the Conservation Report for Queen's Garden commissioned by Sedbergh Parish Council in 2017, we suggested that serious consideration is given to restoring and managing Queen's Garden, as it is not only an important heritage asset but a public park for an increasing local population.

There are many special trees in **Museum Gardens**, York, including the True Service Tree which is the rarest native species in the country. So, in October we were very pleased that the Environment Agency, in discussion with others, had been able to redesign the embankment to protect it and other trees and secure their future, as part of the York Flood Alleviation Scheme. This had been very much a joint effort from the Museum Gardens' Head Gardener and trustees and the Environment Agency. Very refreshing to hear of such good joint working.

We are delighted that following a £1.4m grant from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, the Skell Valley Project with the National Trust is



Museum Gardens from across the River Ouse
(Photo credit: Chris Webb, 1 February 2021)

going ahead. This is great news for **Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal**. See p. 14.

West Yorkshire

Scholemoor Cemetery, Bradford, registered Grade II was designed by the Borough Surveyor, Charles Gott and opened in 1860. The cemetery also includes an early 20th century crematorium, this time designed by the Borough Architect, FEP Edwards. We have been consulted about alterations to the 1995 Prayer Shelter adjacent to the Muslim burial area but there were no details of the proposed landscaping such as railings, paving and planting which we think is important.

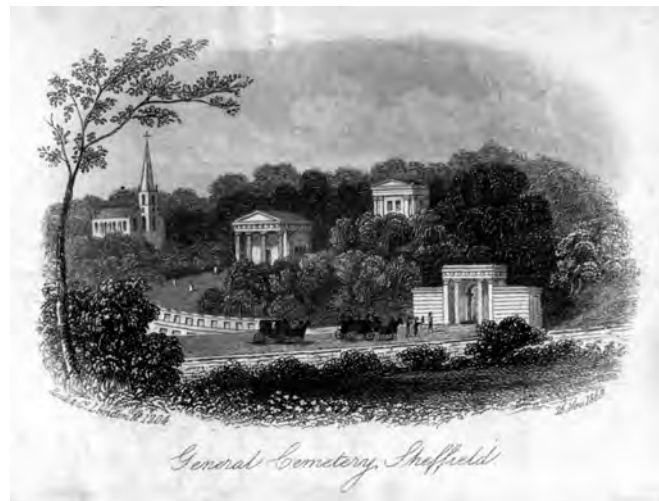
Another planning application from Bradford MDC was for a first and second floor rear extension to a property on the boundary of **Prince of Wales Park**, Bingley, (registered Grade II) that we considered was inappropriate and would harm the views and aesthetic aspects of this section of the Park. We have since heard that Bingley Town Council support our comments and recommend refusal. Prince of Wales Park was begun on the wedding day of the Prince of Wales, 10 March 1863, hence the name.



Prince of Wales Park, Bingley. The stone chair in the Northern Section of the Parkland. (Image: Anne Tupholme)

We have also had our first planning application for a solar park, fortunately at some distance from **Ledston Hall** where the park and garden is registered Grade II*, with the Hall listed Grade I. Some of you will remember a YGT visit some years ago to what is a fine example of an English Country House estate with a long history. The park has 17th century origins and the walled gardens and terraces are probably of a late 17th century date with the area now called The Grove originally designed by Charles Bridgeman for Lady Betty Hastings c.1731. This solar park covers an area of approx. 90ha of arable farmland that was once part of Kippax Park, and lies to the south west of Ledston Hall. Barnsdale Road which is located on a ridge running north-south separates the site of the proposed solar park from Ledston and could be a Roman route. The Hall and terrace are on high ground and there are views out over the landscape to the west and south-west so, although there is tree cover between the Hall, the road and the solar panel site, we suggested that any possible effect on the heritage assets from glint and glare is checked. There have been two planning applications for properties on Park Avenue, Roundhay, Leeds,

across the road from part of the southern boundary of **Roundhay Park**. For one property the application was for two and three storey extensions to an existing care home and the second, next door, subdivided into two plots for two dwellings included their demolition and the building of a new care home. We thought that both planning applications had overall been well considered, but we gave advice about existing trees, landscaping and car parking.



Sheffield General Cemetery;
engraving dated 26 November 1860.
(Image credit: www.picturesheffield.com.)



Ledston Hall; view of the south wing from the entrance gates. (Photo credit: Dick Knight.)



Ledston Hall; view south from the terrace. (Photo credit: Dick Knight.)

South Yorkshire

I am delighted to write that, although concerns remain regarding some of the RPGs where we have been consulted in the past year, recent consultations have been very encouraging. For **Sheffield General Cemetery** we have had variations to approved planning from 2018, for major conservation works at the cemetery to be funded by National Lottery Heritage Fund. The 2018 applications gave us several concerns so it is very pleasing to see the detailed understanding and revisions from the longest established landscape architecture practice in the country, Colvin and Moggridge. HE, GT and YGT strongly support the variations.

We have had three applications from Doncaster MBC, all of which we supported: for landscaping at the Old Brewhouse, **Cusworth Hall**; becoming the Brewhouse Tap.

At **Brodsworth Hall**, English Heritage have submitted applications for careful repair to the Target House and at the opposite end of this part of the gardens, also for the Eyecatcher. The Target House, listed Grade II as the 'Archery Pavilion, is a very attractive eyecatcher in a cottage ornée style and lies to the west of Brodsworth Hall (listed Grade I, built 1861-3), in part of the gardens known as The Grove. The long open space to the south of the Target House was used as an archery range during the 1870's and

1880's by the Thellusson family. It is thought that the building may have 18th century origins, perhaps connected with the now demolished Old Hall (demolished 1861). The Eyecatcher structure consists of an earth mound and limestone façade with sandstone copings. The façade has a blind doorway and windows. It was constructed in c.1866 of reclaimed masonry from the Old Hall. The structure was completely overgrown when works to restore the gardens started in the 1990s, and it was not discovered until 1994. Since then, the ivy has encroached upon the structure once again, and dislodged some of the coping stones.

Forestry Commission Felling Licences. The Forestry Commission has recently revised the consultation procedures so that they mirror the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). GT/YGT will be getting both Thinning and Clear Fell Licence applications for RPGs. Although we welcome the opportunity that this brings, it is an extra burden. Fortunately the recent two, Castle Howard and Scampston, were well-assessed and for very sustainable reasons, so allayed any fears. On the broader planning and conservation scenario I have taken part in planning webinars arranged by the GT, and Win, YGT Chair, Chris and I also took part in the HE Yorkshire Conservation Event remotely. As ever it was largely concerned with the built heritage but we did manage to get a word in for parks and gardens and also highlighted the YGT refugee visits.

We remain hopeful that we will eventually be able to have the **Edwardian Gardens Day at Lotherton Hall** working with Leeds CC officers. As you know this has been rescheduled for **Wednesday 7 July 2021**. However, we remain unsure as to how the practicalities of the day will work out with

social distancing inside Lotherton Hall and travel on that date. I am grateful that Malcolm Barnett, who has retired from other active roles in YGT, will continue to help with the event alongside Jane Furse and myself. Booked numbers are healthy for 7 July but more are welcome so please see the programme and booking form on p.10/11 and e-mail me if you are interested in attending. Whilst thinking about **Lotherton Hall** we have read about Leeds CC's precarious financial position and are very dismayed about the proposal to shut Lotherton Hall (the museum) on weekdays, leaving it open on just weekends and Leeds school holidays and reducing the staff; this will severely reduce Lotherton's ability to function as an art museum. According to [Visit Britain](#) Lotherton Hall was the second most visited paid attraction in 2018 in Yorkshire and the Humber. Only York Minster received more paying visits. In the same period no National Trust properties in the North of England received more visitors. This is a great accolade for the value of Lotherton Hall to so many families and others of all ages and I feel sure that the Gascoignes, who gave the estate to the people of Leeds in 1969, would be dismayed too.

As time progresses and the way that we live evolves, there will be much change ahead on the planning front. If you would like to help in whatever way that you feel able, then do get in touch with me. We have a very good and welcoming YGT team. As ever my thanks to them.

Val Hepworth
Trustee
Chairman Conservation and Planning

NT Rievaulx Terrace and Temples

YGT has more news about Rievaulx, which helps to confirm the (at the time of writing) unstated plan for permanent reductions in opening hours.

We have learned that there has been a significant number of redundancies in the Membership and Visitor Welcome team covering Rievaulx; the team's duties are shared with Nunnington Hall in the Rievaulx-Nunnington-Ormesby group of properties. The redundancies took effect at the end of staff contracts for the 2020 season. The number of staff who have been affected by these redundancies suggests that Rievaulx will not open on the same basis as hitherto (Monday-Sunday from mid-February to the beginning of November). It is *rumoured* that the plan for Rievaulx is indefinite closure, despite NT central receiving communications from members and

others making the case that Rievaulx should be reconsidered for opening in 2021.

There is some good news. While one gardener has accepted voluntary redundancy, the head gardener and assistant gardener responsible for Rievaulx and Nunnington have been kept on.

Most of this is significantly depressing, tending to confirm the dismal picture reported across the country, as described in Bendor Grosvenor's *Art History News* article from last August:

https://www.arthistorynews.com/articles/5685_Inside_the_National_Trusts_Beeching_Plan.

We can hope that the remaining gardeners' roles are secure following external pressure to retain expert roles.

YORKSHIRE GARDENS TRUST

Valuing Our Historic Garden Heritage: Lotherton Hall's Edwardian Gardens**Wednesday 7 July 2021****This is a Continuing Professional Development Event****9.30 am Coffee and Registration****10.00 am Welcome and Introduction***Adam Toole, Curator, Temple Newsam and Lotherton Hall, Leeds C.C.**Maria Akers, Senior Estates Manager, Temple Newsam and Lotherton Hall, Leeds C.C.***10.10 Lotherton: a Garden in Time:**

- **The Wider World Context of the late 19th century**
- **Leading Figures in Fashion in late 19th century Garden Design**

*Mette Eggen, Landscape Architect, Historic Research and author of 'The Edwardian Garden at Lotherton Hall'***10.25 Lotherton: a Garden in time: The Late 19th century and the Impact of the Discovery and Introduction of Hardy Plants from Asia on Gardens and Gardening***John Grimshaw, Director of the Yorkshire Arboretum***11.10 Break for Coffee/Tea****11.25 Lotherton Gardens and Parkland:****Creation and Layout 1898- 1949**

- **Frederick and Gwendolen Gascoigne at Lotherton**
- **Gwendolen - Unique Family Context + Influences;**

Garden designer and creator*Mette Eggen***12.10 Lotherton Gardens and Parkland:****A Unique Edwardian Garden- recent developments***Jane Furse, Landscape Architect, Historic Park and Garden Specialist***12.35 Questions****12.45 Lunch in the Stableyard Cafe****13.50 Challenges and Successes of historic garden restoration- an inspirational story***Chris Flynn, Head Gardener at Dyffryn, National Trust of Wales***14.30 Rebirth - the Economic case for Garden renovation and renewal***Chris Flynn***14.45 Questions****15.00 Guided Visit to Lotherton's Gardens and Parkland****16.30 Summing Up - Meet in the Stableyard Café courtyard for Afternoon tea and cake**

Gwendolen Gascoigne and granddaughter in the rose garden, Lotherton.
Photo credit: Lotherton Hall archive, Leeds City Council.

How to Book

Please complete the separate booking form and submit it ASAP to secure your booking.

Places are limited.

Yorkshire Gardens Trust—A Member of The Gardens Trust

Registered charity No.1060697

Company registration No.03256311

President: The Countess of Harewood



Lotherton

YORKSHIRE GARDENS TRUST

Valuing Our Historic Garden Heritage: Lotherton Hall's Edwardian Gardens

Wednesday 7 July 2021

BOOKING FORM

Cost: £40 per person

(see below for subsidised rates)

Some free places are available for garden/horticulture apprentices and students studying heritage horticulture. Please e-mail: conservation@yorkshiregardenstrust.org.uk with your details and proof of your apprenticeship/studentship to book a free place.

Speedy booking is advised.

For booking with payment by cheque: please complete this form and either email it to conservation@yorkshiregardenstrust.org.uk, then post a cheque made out to Yorkshire Gardens Trust to us, or post both elements to: YGT Conservation, 43 Richmond Road, Skeeby, Richmond DL10 5DX. Please write your full name and telephone number on the back of the cheque.

For booking with on-line payment by BACS, please complete the form below and e-mail it to conservation@yorkshiregardenstrust.org.uk then arrange a bank transfer of £40 to:

Yorkshire Gardens Trust

Account number: 25555237

Sort Code: 05-09-94

Reference: LHEG xxxxx (your surname)

Bookings will only be confirmed once payment has been received.

Your details: (name and occupation)

.....
.....

Tel. no

Address.....

.....

Post code**Email address**

This is a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) event.

Closing date for booking 31st May 2021

Bookings will only be confirmed once payment has been received.

In case of queries, tel 01748 822617

Yorkshire Gardens Trust

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Company registration No.03256311

President: The Countess of Harewood

Coping with a sudden flurry of consultations on changing the planning system

Introduction

You may have seen in the December e-Bulletin YGT's response to the government's *Planning for the Future* White Paper. Little did we realise then that, by the end of January 2021, three additional substantive planning consultations would have followed.

What is driving this? Our national planning system has grown incrementally over many years. There are undoubted pressures, including a rising population, more but smaller households and changing employment and work patterns. You may feel that development pressures on our towns, landscapes and greenbelt seem relentless and that many urban centres are in serious decline, this perhaps accentuated by the Covid-19 pandemic. You may also suppose that the increased popularity of parks and green spaces would drive some fundamental thinking about how we plan for their future.

A supposition underlying all the government proposals is that the slowness and complexity of the planning system itself is the major barrier to a key national objective of providing more housing and other new buildings which adhere to higher standards. There appears to be a different premise behind the very last consultation, which is that more radical reforms are needed to produce better and more beautiful buildings that people and communities want to live in. The general focus of government is on both streamlining the planning process itself and removing the need for some types of development to go through any planning process at all. An overarching intention is to encourage more 'good' development more quickly, particularly in urban areas and to allow more rapid change of use, with the express purpose of bringing underused buildings into residential use. Safeguards are suggested in certain geographical areas, e.g. national parks, or for some existing minimum standards.

For an organisation such as ours, some of the questions asked in the consultation documents can be challenging to address where we are specifically concerned at looking at possible adverse consequences on a designed landscape, park or garden, whether in town or countryside, as such areas were probably not in the minds of the authors of each consultation. YGT may wish to consider potential implications where buildings and locations in, or near, a registered landscape may already have a planning categorisation the

same as a city centre office, shop or empty space and might thus be treated in the same manner, should proposed changes be put into effect.

Planning for the Future

The first document, the *Planning for the Future* White Paper, issued in August 2020 proposed a major change to the current planning system. The proposal that gained most national publicity was a revised centrally allocated allocation (later defined as 'a rogue algorithm') defining the number of new houses to be planned for in each local authority area. However, the intention was much more radical than this. All authorities would be mandated to speedily reallocate all land into one of three categories:

- Growth areas - suitable for substantial development
- Renewal areas - suitable for development
- Remaining areas to be protected

This last category was intended to equate largely to existing conservation areas, national parks or AONBs. The intention was that local 'design guides' would be produced to set specific local quality standards for developments. Thereafter individual applications would speed through, or bypass, subsequent local authority or public review. The Gardens Trust responded nationally to this consultation as did YGT, both organisations expressing numerous concerns.

Supporting Housing Delivery & Public Service Infrastructure

In December 2020 a second consultation *Supporting Housing Delivery & Public Service Infrastructure* proposed additional changes to planning legislation designed to accelerate housing construction, revitalise town centres, speed-up the delivery of public infrastructure, reduce delays caused by the planning process and improve the 'transparency' and "democracy" of the system. Economic recovery from Covid-19 is also mentioned. It proposed introducing a new usage class, 'commercial, business and service', within which most changes of use to residential would not need go through the planning system, even if they were located in a Conservation Area. It also proposed taking out of the planning system certain types and sizes of incremental development to hospitals, prisons and educational establishments. Again, there is little or no mention of potential impact on designed landscapes, parks and gardens. As with the previous consultation, there have been

responses at national level by the GT and at local level by YGT.

Right to Regenerate

In mid-January 2021 a third consultation *Right to Regenerate* was issued. This aims to encourage individuals and community bodies to force the sale of unused land held by councils or other public bodies unless the body has “clear plans for the land in the near future”. This is targeted at urban areas with derelict spaces, often owned by a public body, which may, or may not, have a real likelihood of bringing it into use. The intention is “for the public and local communities to redevelop and transform eyesores” but there appears to be no consideration of how an area around a parkland or a registered landscape might be affected. The issues for YGT may again arise from potential unintended consequences. It may be worthwhile remembering how much ‘unused’ land has come into the possession of councils.

For example, Wakefield Council owns not just the full area of the registered Thornes Park, which includes abandoned sports pitches and former school car parks, but also the whole of the Bretton Estate, areas of which are leased to Yorkshire Sculpture Park or to Rushbond, the latter being invited to develop Bretton Hall and to convert sites of former college buildings into an office park, all within the registered Bretton landscape.

National Model Design Code

On Saturday 30 January a fourth consultation entitled a *National Model Design Code* was issued, this meeting a commitment in the *Planning for the Future* White Paper to introduce design codes at both national and local level. At first glance this reads as coming from a different perspective, incorporating substantive “green” objectives and intentions to involve local people and organisations more in improving their localities. It specifically addresses issues raised in the government’s recent *Living with Beauty* report, the response to which was released on the same day. Some changes to the existing *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF) are proposed to help put these into effect.

The most recent consultation states that further substantial planning system proposals are still to come. There does not yet appear to be any indication of when the government may bring forward new planning legislation on any, or all, of the topics covered by these consultations.

The February YGT Conservation Meeting may well have these last two consultations on its agenda. It continues to be a busy time for YGT in terms of planning matters.

Geoff Hughes

Member of YGT’s

Planning and Conservation Committee

Further reading:

Planning for the Future White Paper:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/planning-for-the-future>

Supporting Housing Delivery & Public Service Infrastructure:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/supporting-housing-delivery-and-public-service-infrastructure/supporting-housing-delivery-and-public-service-infrastructure>

Right to Regenerate:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/right-to-regenerate-to-turn-derelict-buildings-into-homes-and-community-assets>

National Planning Policy Framework and National Model Design Code:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/national-planning-policy-framework-and-national-model-design-code-consultation-proposals>.

Living with Beauty report:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/living-with-beauty-report-of-the-building-better-building-beautiful-commission>

National Planning Policy Framework:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>

A new focus for Research and Recording in YGT

Research methods

Like much of life over the past year, the lockdown has largely curtailed the activities of the Research and Recording group with archives closed to visitors and sites inaccessible, but we have not been daunted and have found new ways of working. Some of the archives have been sending out documents. Others, such as Leeds University Special Collections, have been more enterprising using the new technology to hold 'virtual consultations' (see Figure 1) for up to an hour for free. The archivist shows you the documents and you decide whether you want a copy or not plus they video the session in case you miss something.

This enforced stay at home has also allowed many researchers to complete their reports with the archive material that they had already gathered. As we emerge into a post-Covid world, the R&R team has had a chance to look back and question how we have worked in the past. When the historic landscapes project was set up way back in 2012, we realised that to tackle all of Yorkshire in one go was too daunting. Instead, we adopted a cautious approach, starting with the East Riding and then the Selby District as pilot projects. While this worked well as a focus, it did constrain us, as we were limited to looking at sites just within those narrow geographical area. Since then

we have expanded to include the Hambleton and Doncaster districts and those sites in the North York Moors National Park, although the constraints mentioned above have become more apparent in the last year.

The R&R team has therefore decided to expand research to all parts of the historic county of Yorkshire. We will prioritise large and complex unregistered sites that are largely extant and have a reasonable existing archive. This is where we need your help. Perhaps you have looked at sites for a course or to help with a planning application. It does not matter that it was a long time ago.

What is important is the information you got from the archives. There is so much now online that any gaps can easily be filled in. You are welcome of course to write a report for us but alternatively, there are volunteers who I am sure would be happy to take your research and write the report.

Either way, please get in touch with me, Louise Wickham –

webmaster@yorkshiregardenstrust.org.uk or 01977 663471

Website redesign

The redesign of the website this year will allow us to create a much better resource on Yorkshire's historic parks and gardens, as currently the R&R reports are rather buried.

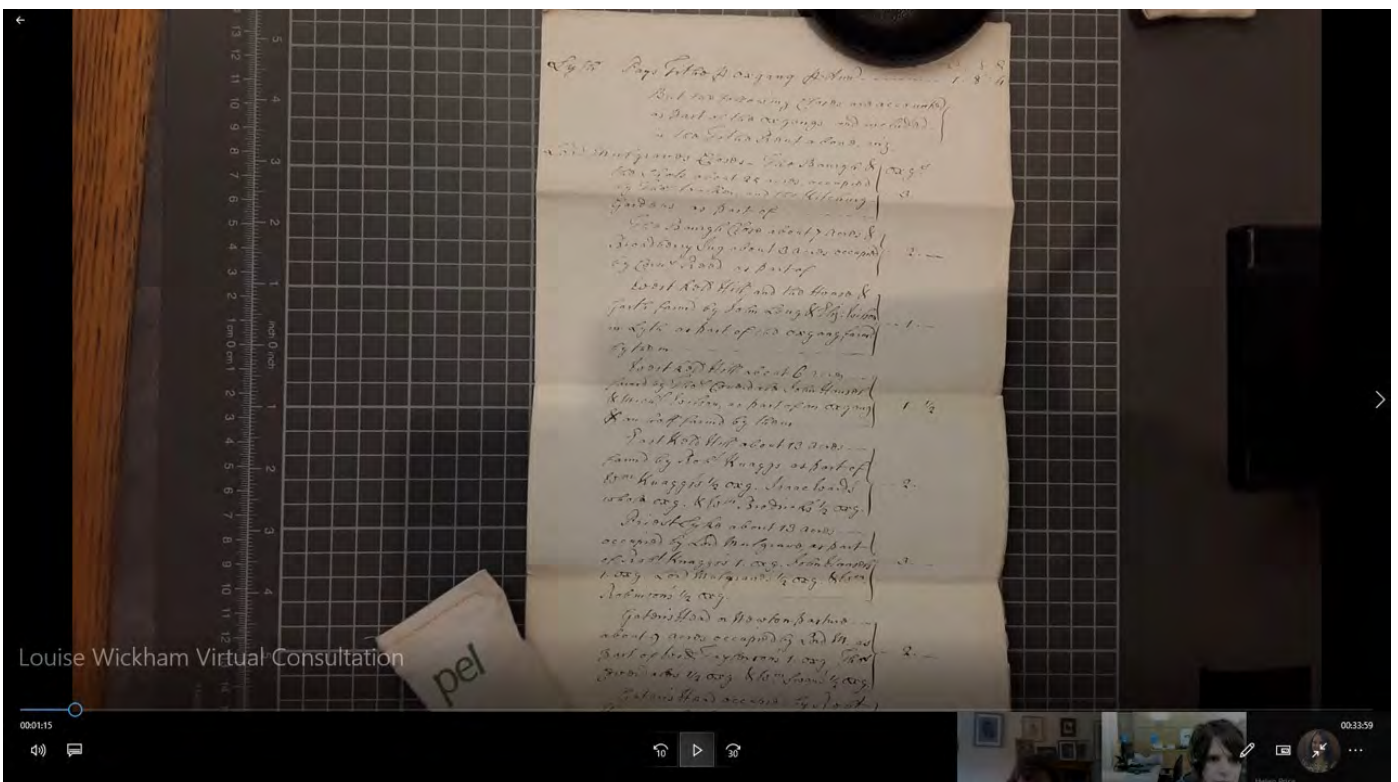


Figure 1: A virtual consultation



Figure 2: Archive documents

Our proposal long term is to have an inventory of the majority of the estimated c. 500 sites. To do this we will create a database that in turn will generate easily accessible webpages with the alternative to print off a pdf copy if required. We will start with the 50+ sites that we have already researched and then add the c.160 sites that are on the Historic England Register of parks and gardens. The hope is that the remaining sites may soon be added if all researchers across Yorkshire help us by going through their old files (Figure 2).

Research & Recording Team
Helen Caffrey, Mary Ratcliffe and
Louise Wickham

YGT Website Upgrade

Could your skills help YGT?

The YGT website is undergoing a timely redesign this year that will include additional content and better accessibility for users.

The current website uses Drupal 7 software with updates being done by myself for the Trust.

The new website will use the updated Drupal 9 software. If any member has experience of using Drupal or similar website software and is willing to learn to use it, please contact me.

Once the new website is operational, I would arrange for training and then allocate the area of the website the volunteer would be responsible for updating.

Thank you

Louise Wickham

YGT Web Manager

webmaster@yorkshiregardenstrust.org.uk

Backhouse Rock Garden Project 2020

Recording the former Backhouse Rock Garden at West Bank, York.

The Project

The purpose of the project, which was funded by the Yorkshire Gardens Trust, was to make a digital record of a recently made clay model of the celebrated Rock Garden at West Bank, Holgate, York and to use this together with a limited range of other sources, to begin the process of reconstructing the appearance of this lost garden. The project has established the layout of the Rock Garden, including the locations of its principal features and its 3-dimensional form. A foundation has now been established that would provide a good starting point for further work to reconstruct other aspects of the Rock Garden, such as the rock formations and the planting. This might perhaps involve a wider community of people in York and elsewhere.

The Rock Garden

The rock garden was created by James Backhouse II (1825-1890) over a period of at least 18 years beginning in about 1857. He was assisted by his father James Backhouse I (1794-1869). Both were distinguished botanists and owners of the well-known Backhouse nurseries at York. James II was also a gifted artist and an amateur geologist.

The nursery business was acquired by James Backhouse I and his brother Thomas (1792-1845) in 1815 and they took possession of it the following year. Their father came from a banking family in Darlington and it is likely that this was the source of the money for the purchase of the business from the Telford family. The nursery was already well-known and established and at that time it was located on Tanner Row within the City Walls of York. In the 1830s the nursery moved to a location on Fishergate on the other side of the city, just outside the Walls. A few years later, in 1853, the main nursery moved again, this time to Holgate which was then in the countryside on the western outskirts of York.

It was in Holgate that James II built a new house for himself at about the time of his marriage in 1855. The new house was called 'West Bank'. It and its gardens and grounds abutted and appear to have been continuous with the nurseries. It was James Backhouse III, the son of James II, who in 1910 sold West Bank to James Hamilton (later Sir James). Eleven years later, in 1921, James Hamilton and associates bought the nursery business from James Backhouse III. The Hamiltons remained in possession of the business

until it closed around 1954/5. Unfortunately, both the Rock Garden and its accompanying house, West Bank, were completely destroyed, sometime in the 1970s, it is thought.

The starting point for the project was a clay model of the Rock Garden that Peter Goodchild and Daphne Hamilton (1928-2019) the granddaughter of James Hamilton, had made. From having played on the Rock Garden as a young girl, Daphne had known it very well and even in her 80s had remarkably clear memories of it. Sometime before I got to know her, she had prepared and annotated a sketch plan of the Rock Garden. There was also a collection of photographs, several of which had been taken before 1910 when her grandfather bought West Bank. Although the sketch plan and the photos were very helpful, they did not convey a clear overall and 3-dimensional picture of the Rock Garden. To overcome this, and to capture Daphne's knowledge of the garden, she and I decided to make a clay model of it. It was my intention to use the clay model as a basis for making a digital one that could be manipulated to correct it and to which additional information could be added. I also had it in mind that it would be possible to make a new physical model from it for display purposes.

It was after Daphne's death in February 2019 and the transfer to the Borthwick Institute (University of York) of various documents and books relating to the Backhouse and Telford nurseries, that I followed up the idea of making a digital model and a digital reconstruction of the Rock Garden. This was done with the initial assistance of Gary Brannan of the Borthwick.

The project team consisted of myself, Alexis Pantos, and Roger Lambert. I provided the aims and the historical information; Alexis provided the technical skills for the digital modelling and mapping, and Roger provided the overall co-ordination of the project and the final report. It was decided at an early stage that because our best information came from Daphne Hamilton, we would aim to reconstruct the Rock Garden as she remembered it from around 1930 to 1945. It all worked very well and the results have joined YGT's other contributions to the collections at the Borthwick.

The layout and main features of the Rock Garden

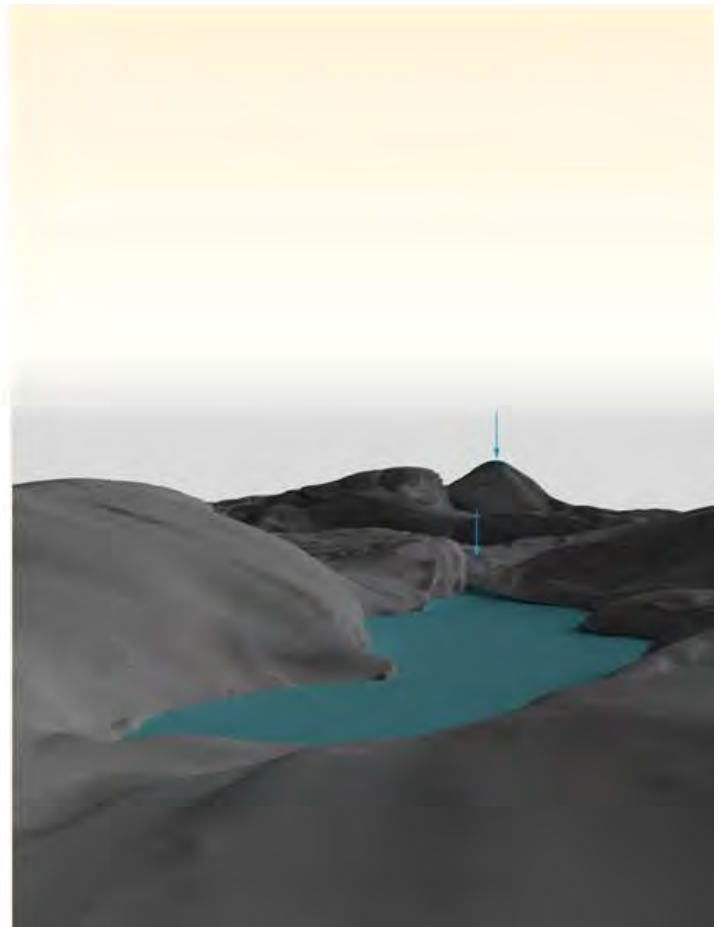
The house, West Bank, was located on the southern slope of the York Moraine, with the land falling gently away from it to the south. The Rock Garden was the principal feature of the garden; it was extensive and was likened by contemporaries to a small piece of mountain scenery.

The digital reconstruction allowed us to gain a much clearer, but not a complete, idea of the physical appearance of the Rock Garden as a three-dimensional creation. On the southern side of the house and visible from it, there was a long and deep artificial valley in the bottom of which was the Northern Lake. At the southern end of the Northern Lake, the water narrowed, passed through a gorge, and connected up with a second piece of water, the Central Pool, which was much the largest of three Southern Pools. At its southern end, the Central Pool was linked to two much smaller ones, one to its west (the Western Pool) and the other on its eastern side (the Eastern Pool). Like the Northern Lake, the Southern Pools were surrounded by high banks which in part were presumably built up with the spoil from

excavating the lake and pools. The highest point of the bank on the south side of the Southern Pools was known as The Crag which rose up on the south side of the Western Pool and was visible from the house when looking along the line of the Northern Lake; this is the view shown below. The various banks were adorned with natural-looking rocks and planted with alpinines.

From the reconstruction, the distance between the house and the southern end of the Rock Garden appears to have been in the order of 120 metres (about 400 feet). Again, from the reconstruction, the banks around the Northern Lake appear to have been in the order of 3 metres (10 feet) above the level of the water. Those around the Southern Pools, seem to have been from about 3 metres up to about 6.5 metres (about 21 feet) at the highest point (The Crag) above the water.

At present, it is not clear whether the Rock Garden was constructed in separate phases or was the result of a single continuous process that was implemented over a period with subsequent additions. One possibility is that the southern and the northern halves represent two different main phases.



Perhaps the most remarkable illustration in the report is Figure 19 (above) which shows the potential for developing a digital reconstruction of the Rock Garden. On the left is an archive photograph of the view from West Bank, the house, to The Crag. On the right is the equivalent view as seen on the digital model. In both cases, The Crag is identified by a blue arrow. The digital model shows the general nature of the underlying landform that was created when the Rock Garden was made. It does not at this stage in its development include rockwork or planting. To achieve this was beyond the scope of the project and would require further time and work to find out the extent to which it might be done.

The significance of the West Bank Rock Garden

Whether the making of the West Bank Rock Garden represents the start of the special line that the Backhouse nursery developed in the making of rock gardens and the cultivation of alpines, for which they gained a national and perhaps wider reputation, is also not clear at present, but it was certainly a major and very significant project.

One of the events in its history that is of special interest is the visit by William Robinson (1838-1935) in August 1863, some six or so years after construction began. Robinson was 25 at the time and was working for the Royal Botanical Society at its gardens in the Inner Circle, Regents Park. He was a skilled gardener, a keen botanist, a collector of British wild flowers, and by 1863 he was also the Foreman of the Society's Educational Department. This was before he took up his highly successful career as a horticultural journalist and writer of books about gardening. In this year, 1863, he was given a bursary by the Society that enabled him to visit various botanical collections including those in Hull, York, and Sheffield. At York he visited the gardens of the Yorkshire Philosophical Society in Museum Gardens after which he went to see the Backhouse nurseries and the Rock Garden at West Bank. The two latter both made a great impression on him. He also met James Backhouse II and struck up an acquaintance with him.

Following his visit, Robinson wrote an article about the Backhouse nurseries and the West Bank Rock Garden for *The Gardeners Chronicle*, a very prestigious weekly journal. The article was published in three parts on March 5, 19, and April 2 1864. At the nurseries he was delighted and very surprised by what he found. Not only was he most impressed by the contents of the glasshouses and by the collection of ferns, including a specially constructed subterranean house for filmy ferns, but he was wonderstruck by the Rock Garden and its alpine plants.

Of the Rock Garden, he wrote that "*the "rock-work" is best described as the facsimile of a very charming and well selected little bit of Wales or Cumberland, with cliffs and ravine, a little lake, rocky island, and gloomy gorge complete. It is utterly unlike and infinitely superior to any of the compositions known as "rock-work" that I have ever seen. Four hundred tons of "crag" rise up in the most varied and rugged forms of 20 or 25 feet in height, surrounding and hemming in a placid sheet of water, and presenting every sort of nook, aspect, fissure, soil, shade, or shelter, that one could wish for the numerous and in many ways not easily to be pleased gems that flourish on the*

rockwork, from the water-overhanging slab under which the Killarney Fern looks at home, to the exposed ledge where Alpine Forget-me-Not thrives as if on its native Ben Lawers."

The description continues and he concluded by saying "*So exquisitely natural looking and picturesque is the spot, that were it only clothed with the native plants of the neighbourhood a journey would be well repaid by seeing it. Indeed, pilgrimages after hardy plants are often made to natural and other scenes, not yielding one-tenth of its interest. And so, surprised and delighted to a degree previously unknown to me, I took leave of the York Nurseries, more than ever thinking with the author of "Guesses at Truth" that "Nature will never be bettered by any art, till that art becomes Nature"*".

One cannot help wondering whether the experience of the Rock Garden and his subsequent acquaintance with James Backhouse II were influential in the development of his thinking about gardening, for example in connection with his books *Alpine Flowers for English Gardens* and *The Wild Garden*, both first published in 1870. He had originally intended that *Alpine Flowers* would be his first book but events intervened. His famous magazine, *The Garden* was founded in 1871. Could the visit to the West Bank Rock Garden have ignited Robinson's special enthusiasm for alpines?

Robinson's subsequent acquaintance with James Backhouse II included accompanying him on a botanising visit to Cumberland in 1866 and also in him reprinting in *Alpine Flowers*, James II's directions about the construction of rock work. Of these Robinson said "*In dealing with the construction of the bolder masses of rock-work, we cannot have a better guide than Mr James Backhouse, to whom I am indebted for the following article, which first appeared in the 'Field'. If we merely want a certain surface of rock disposed in a picturesque way, such details as these may not be worthy of attention, but if we wish our rock gardens to be faithful miniatures of those wild ones which are admitted to be the most exquisite of nature's gardens, then they are of much importance."*

In the Introduction to *Alpine Flowers*, Robinson also wrote "*My heartiest thanks are due to Mr. James Backhouse, of York, for many pleasant days spent in his unrivalled collection, for the opportunity of taking sketches of various parts of his rock-garden, and for an excellent contribution on the formation of rockwork"*.

The results and output of the Project

The final report and other outputs of the project have been deposited in both printed and digital form with the Borthwick Institute, University of York and are available through the Institute.

Whilst not yet digitally available, the report can be accessed using the following citation: Backhouse Rock Garden digital files, Yorkshire Gardens Trust archive, Borthwick Institute for Archives, University of York.

Peter Goodchild

Vice President

A Glimpse of Gardens from the Past

Collecting old postcards of ornamental gardens, kitchen gardens and parks, relating to private country houses or public spaces, is a relatively inexpensive hobby and an endless source of fascinating information, invaluable to the garden history researcher. A collection may focus on particular themes or areas of interest. The “quirky and intriguing” group is always an entertaining starting point.

An unusual garden vista



This undated postcard shows a neat, formal and well-tended walled garden with the path leading to an inviting arched doorway. Closer inspection of what is beyond the doorway reveals the sail of a ship going by not something that many people would have as a feature at the bottom of their garden. The inscription on the back of the postcard reads “one view of the garden where I live. The canal runs along the bottom and that is a small ship that you can see by the sail”. It is signed “Mastion” or “Martion”. Identifying the possible location of the garden and who lived there, offers further research opportunities – any suggestions from YGT members would be most welcome.

A garden feature with an intriguing history

This image (above right) of a summerhouse perched on a precipitous mound amidst a formal parterre garden initially made it an ideal candidate for the quirky and intriguing group in the postcard collection, with the added interest of lady and a young boy.



However, Boscobel House and its summerhouse on a mound revealed a far more “monumental history” behind its historic garden. The 17th century house/hunting lodge and its Royal Oak Tree became famous as hiding places of King Charles II after his defeat at the Battle of Worcester in 1651. The account of Thomas Blount 1660 describes the King spending part of his brief visit “in a pretty Arbor in Boscobel garden, which grew upon a mount.” (Historic England Listing 1001115)

From 1812 onwards Boscobel was owned by a Derbyshire mill owner, Walter Evans of Darley, who embarked on the restoration of the house and garden to make them “what it was when Charles was there”, guided no doubt by the 17th century Hollar engraving from Thomas Blount’s account of the 1651 events (British Museum). In 1918 the estate was bought by the Earl of Bradford and therefore the people on the seat are likely to be members of either of these families. The House and Gardens are now in the care of English Heritage.

So much unexpected history from a postcard bought for its novelty value.

Chris Beevers

**Member of Events Team and
Research & Recording Committee**

Cornfield Flowers

Weasel's snout, mousetail, pheasant's eye, shepherd's needle and treacle mustard could woo you just because of their names but they are part of an intricate botanical tapestry woven into our farming heritage and they are in fast decline due excessive use of pesticides and chemicals.



Weasel's snout (*Misopates orontium*)

In 1969 the Agricultural Chemical Division of Geigy (U.K.) Limited, produced *The Geigy Weed Tables*. This was an in-depth scientific survey of all the main European weeds, some 300 species of which 160 are illustrated in full colour plates, the rest with drawings. Correct identification of seedling weeds was felt crucial to the success of the development and practical use of herbicides which was often difficult to achieve.

It is a masterly publication which I have found invaluable but of course it was written to promote the use of herbicides and this in turn would lead to an almost mass extinction of our beautiful annual cornfield flowers, a unique and rich part of our biodiversity and vital to the survival of our bird and insect population.

For many years, I had been finding uncommon plants in the borders of our arable fields, such as treacle mustard (*Erisimum cheiranthoides*), an endearing member of the wallflower family, field penny-cress (*Thlaspi arvense*) and the beautiful

large-flowered hemp-nettle (*Galeopsis speciosa*). They fascinated me and I loved their names. Particular favourites were the wild pansy (*Viola tricolor*) now on the critically endangered list, and the field pansy or heartsease (*Viola arvensis*). After harvest, I would walk the stubble fields left fallow until spring sowing, and was always amazed that so many species would continue to flower through winter months. It was here I discovered a fumitory species new to the area. Fumitory is the delight of the endangered Turtle Dove because its tiny seeds are suited to the bird's beak.

I had heard about the Cornfield Flowers Project, which was established in 1998 and had been set up through the support of committed individuals, and the North York National Park and the Ryedale Folk Museum, to redress the alarming disappearance of arable weeds in North-East Yorkshire which were passing unnoticed. Local farmers were invited to a talk which resulted in a number of us wanting to be involved in it.

I was particularly encouraged by Chris Wilson, Whitby farmer and lead botanist, who was creating an arable flower field at the Ryedale Folk Museum and propagating seedlings in nursery beds there.

This led me to take a swathe of land at the edge of a twenty-acre arable field bordering the North York Moors and try to turn it into a wild-flower paradise. An added bonus to the chosen site was an 18th century field house which we had had fully restored using traditional materials with help from Natural England. It was also a home to barn owls. We imagined balmy evenings when they, and their young, would quarter the herbage searching for field voles. Succeeding years have rewarded us with this magical sight.

In early spring, the field was ploughed, harrowed and rolled but when it came to sowing, the wildflower strip was kept clear ready for the young plants and annual seed I had collected the previous autumn, from plants naturally growing on the farm.

It was a very special day when Chris Wilson brought the first nursery seedlings to the field. We took great care in planting and watering them in but so often we would find them next day chewed off by rabbits. I began to think our project would never succeed but Chris, the eternal optimist, would always replace them. Protecting the most precious with rabbit wire, they began to establish themselves along with native seeds naturally present in the soil. From the very beginning, the

introduced corn marigold (*Crysanthemum segetum*) flourished. What joy, for it was the flower we most wanted to see grow in profusion. Never in our wildest dreams did we expect to see it take over the entire area, transforming it into a veritable Cloth of Gold.

Though not native to Britain, (hailing from Asia), the corn marigold has been around for a very long time as seed was recorded in Neolithic remains in Scotland. The Scots named it 'guil' or 'gool' (gold). Such was its profusion in arable crops that landowners and bailiffs held 'goul' courts each year to address the efficiency of their tenants' weed control. In 1795, it is recorded at the Cargill 'gool' riding, that tenants were fined a wedder (whether) sheep or its financial equivalent for every stem found on their land!

But for all those hell-bent on exterminating the corn marigold (it is now classified as vulnerable near threatened), others were dazzled by its beauty and religious significance, for marigolds are Mary's gold and thus they bring light into the world. They were favourites of Jane Austen and it is known they grew in her garden. She, like all ladies of her time, would gather God's natural wonders for posies or perhaps illustrate them in watercolour.

With each new introduction to our field site, there also came a wealth of botanical history. The story of the reintroduction of the corn buttercup or devil's claws, (*Ranunculus arvensis*) which was thought to be locally extinct, seemed like a fairy tale with a happy ending. It was classified as critically endangered and was consequently a UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP) Priority Species, we owe its survival to the late Nan Sykes, a much-loved botanist and author who discovered it after its apparent absence. In 1991, at the beginning of the Cornfield Flower Project, she came across a plant at Marton, near Malton. From this one plant, 32 precious seeds were taken and shared between volunteers. As more seeds became available, plants began to flourish on the different sites and in 2007, two thousand corn buttercup seeds were safely deposited with the Millennium Seed Bank at Wakehurst Place, thus safeguarding it from the threat of extinction.

You can imagine the thrill of seeing this bloom for the first time in our field; its yellow cups weaving upwards to the sunlight on long delicate stems. I especially enjoyed collecting its seed which I can only describe as mini-pan scrubbers, so designed with a rough surface covered in spiny achenes to attach itself to animals and humans, for seed dispersal. To see it in unbelievable abundance, Chris took us to a large field at Sylpho, near

Whitby, one of the main introduction sites he manages for the Cornfield Flowers Project. Here, amongst carpets of red poppies, its yellow flowers are a rare and beautiful sight to behold.

Though the corn marigold is the showy star in our field, she makes the perfect backcloth to the deep-blue flowers of the cornflower (*Centaurea cyanus*) - emblem of The Cornfield Flowers Project. Once known as bachelor's buttons, cornflowers were worn by young gentlemen to show they were single. They are native throughout Europe and in ancient times they made their way to Egypt, perhaps through the importation of grain, for when the archaeologist Howard Carter opened up the tomb of Tutankhamun, he found wreaths and garlands woven from cornflowers. Despite the passage of time, their colour had barely faded.

Other species which have naturalised abundantly through the absence of spraying, are the corn spurrey (*Spergula arvensis*); mayweed (*Matricaria*); field gromwell (*Lithospermum arvense*) now classed as endangered; Bugloss (*Anchusa arvensis*); night flowering catch-fly (*Silene noctiflora*); yellow-juiced poppy (*Papaver lecoqii*) - snap its stem in half and a deep yellow die will appear; the sun spurge (*Euphorbia helioscopia*); deliciously scented corn mint (*Mentha arvensis*) and weasel's snout (*Misopates orontium*) classified as vulnerable. Then there are the tinier flowers, like sparking jewels, which hug the soil surface and can pass unnoticed: scarlet pimpernel (*Anagallis arvensis*) with its stunning blue-flowered variety; the many speedwells (*Veronicas*); forget-me-nots (*Myosotis*) and the exotic, now endangered, pheasant-eye (*Adonis annua*), originally from the Mediterranean which naturalized in Britain before the Iron Age.



Pheasant-eye (*Adonis annua*)

Undoubtedly, the most threatened of all the species is Shepherd's Needle (*Scandian pecten-veneris*) now classified as critically endangered, another plant whose seed has been deposited in the Millennium Seedbank from locally sourced seed. These seeds are truly amazing as is its highly descriptive name.

Now names are a study unto themselves and the joy of poetry. There exists in the annals of botanical works and local records, thousands of colloquial descriptions handed down from generation to generation. One of my favourite works is *The English Names of our Common Wild Flowers* by Robert Fisher (1832) once a Canon of York. There surely cannot exist any other English wild-flower book which gives 150 names to the diminutive Herb Robert!



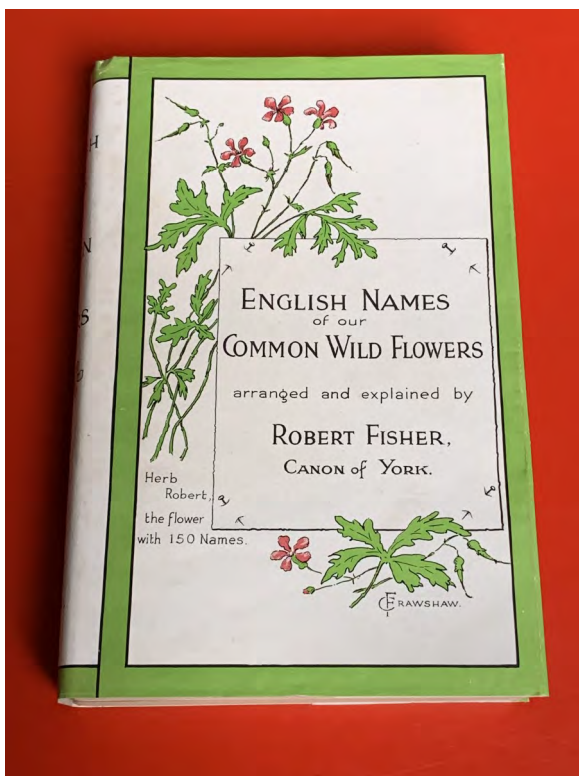
Thorn-apple or mad apple (*Datura stramonium*), wildflower area, let alone seal the fate of wandering livestock, I decided it must be exterminated. Chris came to the rescue. It was carefully disposed of but seed, which is uncommon, was dispatched to the Physic Garden, Abbey House YHA at Whitby – a place which Yorkshire Gardens Trust has visited in the past. Over the years, our arable flowers have continued to increase and flourish. Great effort is taken to remove wild oats and thistles in early spring and seed is harvested in autumn. Last year it was the best it has ever been but with lockdown few could visit to share its beauty. Our last survey, which was carried out by Chris Wilson, recorded over 50 species. All are vulnerable, and some critically endangered. They are food for a wealth of birds, butterflies and bees, as are the blossoms and berries of the native hedge we planted to border the field, which consists of a rich mixture of native, trees, shrubs and roses.

We shall always be grateful to those who have helped us over the years, especially Chris Wilson, ecologist Tom Normanton and Margaret Nieke from Natural England who, all those years ago, could see the importance of the field house within this timeless farming landscape which I am happy to say, is still home to our resident barn owls.

Penelope Dawson-Brown

YGT Trustee

Photo credits: Penelope Dawson-Brown



I cannot end this article without mentioning one of the strangest and rather unwelcome introductions to our field, the thorn-apple or mad apple (*Datura stramonium*), introduced during the 16th century. Grown from seed from a plant discovered on our farm, it is prone to lie dormant for years like its close relative the deadly henbane. Weird, toxic and highly poisonous, it bears attractive trumpet-shaped flowers as with other members of the *Datura* family. It appears in the Geigy Weed Tables and is also mentioned in early English herbals including John Gerard who recommends it for burns. However, during the time of witchcraft and wizard mania, it was prized for its hallucinogenic powers. In Cromwell's England, this weed may well have cost you your life had it been found growing in your garden. With all this in mind, and dreams that it might conquer my

Discovering North Yorkshire's Historic Gardens Through the Archives.

North Yorkshire County Record Office, Northallerton

Introduction

On Saturday 20 July 2019, the North Yorkshire County Record Office (NYCRO) in Northallerton, in conjunction with Yorkshire Gardens Trust (YGT), held a sell-out day of talks about North Yorkshire's Historic Gardens, with a particular focus on related archive material held within the NYCRO collections. Attended by an audience of 42, plus speakers, the day began with a welcome from Margaret Boustead, Head of Archives and Records Management at NYCRO.

An Overview of North Yorkshire's Garden Heritage

The first talk was a fantastic introduction by Marilyn Elm, who gave us *An Overview of North Yorkshire's Garden Heritage*. This took us from the medieval period up to the 20th century, looking at changes in style and design over the past 500 years. We heard about medieval, monastic herb gardens and a variety of knot garden designs. We were shown examples of the work of the 17th century French designer Andre le Notre at Vaux-le-Vicomte and Versailles and heard about the French influence on English Baroque gardens, such as the formal gardens of Hampton Court Palace. Other 17th century gardens were illustrated, including the topiary gardens at Levens Hall in Cumbria and the formal gardens of Newby Hall and Constable Burton in North Yorkshire. These gave way to early 18th century transitional gardens, such as the Yorkshire examples of Castle Howard, Bramham Park, Duncombe Park and Studley Royal, where water features, surprise views and Classical garden buildings were key elements of the landscape. Later in the 18th century, we were informed about the English Landscape Garden, Capability Brown, the Picturesque and Humphry Repton. Moving on to the 19th century and the Victorian period, we learnt about John Claudius Loudon, formal terraces and parterres and the North Yorkshire Spa gardens at Ripon and Harlow Carr. For the early 20th century, Marilyn described the work of Gertrude Jekyll and Arts and Crafts gardens, and we ended with a more recent image of Mount St John, near Felixkirk, designed in 2004 by Chelsea gold medallist Tom Stuart Smith.

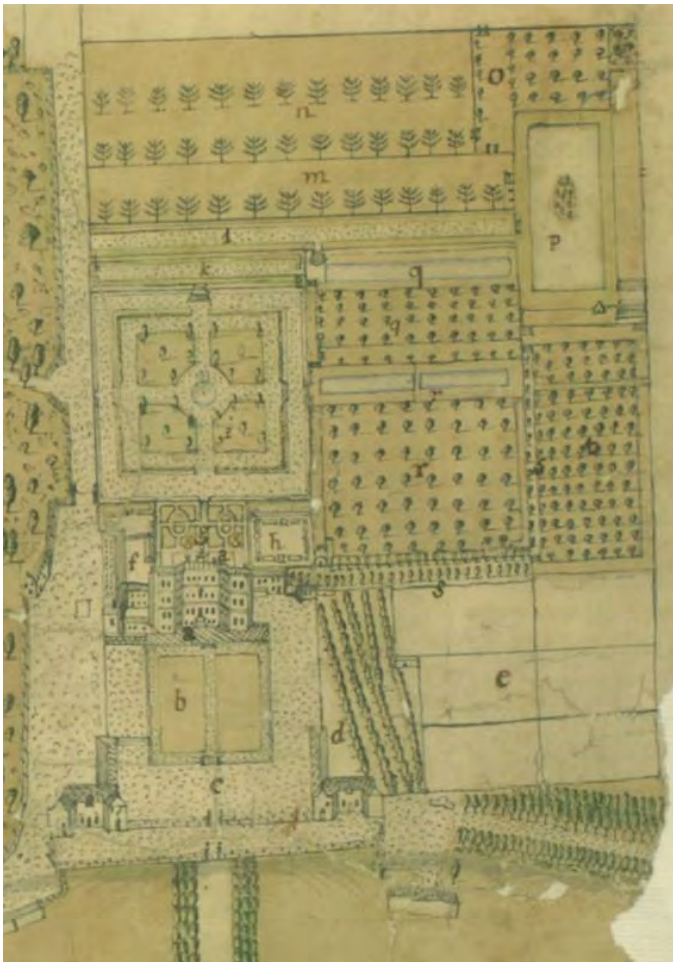
The Art of being a Landscape Detective

With Marilyn having set the scene for what was to follow, Louise Wickham, Chair of YGT's Research and Recording Group, talked to us about

the *Art of Being a Landscape Detective*. This introduced us to YGT's Historic Landscapes Project and the hundreds of historic designed landscapes within Yorkshire. With an estimated total of 475, most of these landscapes are unrecorded. YGT aims to research and record these designed landscapes and currently has several research projects ongoing in selected areas of North and South Yorkshire. Louise took us through her approach to recording a landscape and gave examples of the different types of sources which are available. She began by looking at historic maps and plans, including Ordnance Survey maps and estate plans. Other visual sources include paintings and drawings, old postcards and photographs, as well as more recent aerial photographs. Documentary sources were then explored, including a wealth of archive material including estate records, accounts, bills, surveys, letters, diaries and sale catalogues. More recent sources can include newspapers, books, wills, gardening magazines and travel journals.

The Gardens and Designed Landscape of Bolton Hall

We then heard from Val Hepworth, former Chair of YGT and Chair of YGT's Conservation Committee, about *The Gardens and Designed Landscape of Bolton Hall* in Wensleydale. This was the first of four case studies presenting the results of research into specific sites in North Yorkshire. NYCRO holds the Bolton Hall Archive within its collections (NYCRO Ref: ZBO), an extensive archive of family and estate papers, dating from 1205-1944, within which there is a good collection of estate maps and plans, the earliest of which dates to 1723. As Louise had told us earlier, a good sequence of maps can show us changes in the landscape over time, and Val took us on a journey through the development of the landscape from the 17th to the 19th centuries under the ownership of the Orde Powlett family and successive Dukes of Bolton. Notable features of the mid-18th century gardens are the long walk and the old bowling green (see 'l' and 'm' on the plan overleaf) and the formal courts and orchards to the south of the Hall. By the early 19th century it would appear that Thomas Orde Powlett (1787-1843), younger brother of William, the 2nd Baron Bolton was implementing changes to the designed landscape including to the woodland planting.



Mid-18th-century plan of the Bolton Hall landscape, with long walk (l) and the old bowling green (m) (NYCRO Ref: ZBO M 2/1)

Also stallion pens are introduced as horses were an important feature at the Hall. Val showed us a painting by John Frederick Herring of Jack Spigot (1818-1843) a Dark Bay racehorse in a paddock at Bolton Hall, who won the St Leger in 1821. This horse is said to be buried in Yew Tree Court at Bolton Hall.

The Gardens and Designed Landscape of Kirby Hall, Kirkby Fleetham

After the lunch break, I talked about the first of two sites I have been researching as part of the YGT Hambleton Historic Designed Landscapes Project, *The Gardens and Designed Landscape of Kirby Hall, Kirkby Fleetham*. This site, in private ownership, is the least well known of the landscapes designed by William Aislabie, son of John Aislabie, who developed the water gardens at Studley Royal. William was also responsible for Hackfall and Laver Banks. In the 1740's at Kirby Hall he used the natural topography of an elevated woodland terrace above a plateau adjacent to the River Swale upon which was sited the main Hall. Through this woodland, he created a mile-long approach from the village to the south east, through which a carriage drive took the visitor past three summer houses or temples, placed at viewpoints providing views through the trees to

the Hall, and out into the landscaped park beyond. To the west, a further two summer houses/temples were positioned in additional areas of raised woodland terrace which encircled the Hall. Sadly, there are no physical traces of these structures surviving and visual evidence is limited to a couple of paintings, which give us glimpses into how they might have looked. At least one appears to have been in the neo-Classical style, a small rotunda with circular domed roof. Archival evidence of this period is also limited to a few bills for work done in the surviving accounts within the Vyner papers held by the West Yorkshire Archive Service in Morley (Ref WYL 150). As part of the research, a 1782 Survey Book of William Lawrence of Kirby Hall came to light, which includes the earliest known plan of the estate; this has recently been deposited with NYCRO (Ref Z.1641).

The Gardens and Designed Landscape of Wood End, Thornton-le-Street

Margaret Mathews then gave us an overview of her research into *The Gardens and Designed Landscape of Wood End, Thornton le Street*. Although the Hall was demolished in the late 1920s after the estate was sold, much of the woodland and parkland survives, as well as the west gate and lodges. The original house of Wood End was built in the early 17th century, and was later known as Thornton Hall. No early plans survive, but Margaret showed us a 1727 Survey Book of Madam Talbot's estate, which is held by NYCRO. We also heard that 18th century sales' particulars and inventories mention the pleasure grounds, shrubberies, plantations, green- and hothouses, and tell us that fruit trees, vines and pineapples were grown. The property was owned in the 1790s by Samuel Crompton, a Derbyshire banker, who purchased additional land and extended the parkland.

Crompton also built the stables, which survive



Early 20th century photograph of Thornton Park Hall (aka Wood End) (NYCRO Ref: EE)

today and consulted the landscape designer Adam Mickle II, who probably carried out work at Wood End. In the 19th century, the estate passed to the Cathcart family and the gardens were redesigned as a series of four lawned terraces with flower beds. NYCRO holds a series of early 20th century photographs of the Hall and its interiors which show how it looked prior to demolition.



Early 20th century photograph of the conservatory at Thornton Park Hall, aka Wood End. (NYCRO Ref: EE).

The Gardens and Designed Landscape of Kiplin Hall

As the last of the four case studies I gave a presentation on *The Gardens and Designed Landscape of Kiplin Hall*, a site across the River Swale, just to the north of Kirby Hall. This is a well-known historic property, a Jacobean country house, owned and managed by the Kiplin Hall Trust; it is open to the public (see their website at: <https://kiplinhall.co.uk/>). Built from 1619 for George Calvert, founder of Maryland, USA, the house has passed through a number of owners, from the Calverts (Barons Baltimore), to the Crowes, to the Carpenters (Earl Tyrconnel), to the Talbots. The house and gardens have previously been researched in some detail (including by Val back in the mid-1990s), and there is a lovely garden museum housed in the gardeners' bothy off the walled garden. There has also been an HLF-funded archaeology project at the Hall,

Charting Chipeling, which investigated the sites of former garden buildings and structures. Despite the wealth of previous research, however, there is always something new to find. Searching through the archives at NYCRO, I found an undated, early 19th century survey book from the Bolton on Swale parish records recording Kiplin tenancies, which includes what appears to be the earliest plan of the gardens, with field names. A similar field book (without plans) is also to be found in the Kiplin Hall archive at NYCRO. This archive is extensive and was deposited by Bridget Talbot in 1951. It covers the period 1558-1930 and includes a wealth of correspondence, hall and garden accounts, vouchers, surveys and valuations, and sale particulars. The collection of over a thousand letters was transcribed by volunteers as part of the HLF project, and it includes William Eden Nesfield's tender of May 1879 for the laying out of the gardens for £423 (NYCRO ZBL IV 6/6). Whilst many of the garden areas we see today were laid out in the Victorian period, much of the landscape to the west of the Hall where there is now an extensive lake, has been altered by quarrying. To the east and north there is woodland and parkland, as well as formal and walled gardens which have been restored and brought back into production by the Trust and Head Gardener Chris Baker.

Capability Brown in North Yorkshire

After a break for tea, our final talk of the day was on *Capability Brown in North Yorkshire* by Karen Lynch who is an authority on the subject, having curated the 2016 exhibition *Noble Prospects: Capability Brown & the Yorkshire Landscape* at the Mercer Art Gallery, Harrogate, as part of celebrations of the tercentenary of Brown's birth. She wrote the accompanying book and also contributed to the 2016 volume of the *New Arcadian Journal Yorkshire Capabilities*. We heard about Brown's North Yorkshire commissions in the 1760s and 1770s, where he introduced a new, natural style, replacing earlier formality and straight lines with serpentine lakes and curving drives. New buildings were also constructed, such as farmhouses and temples to function as eye-catchers in the landscape. At Hornby Castle, for example, for the Earl of Holderness, Brown created a grass terrace around the castle which rolled down to a string of lakes which appeared as a river from the higher ground near the mansion, and were crossed by a rustic bridge, forming a scene with a gothic banqueting house. At Aske Hall, owned by Sir Lawrence Dundas, Brown visited in 1769/70 and his account book records a design for a bridge, although it is difficult to know exactly what works were



1818 painting of Howsham Hall and gardens by John Booth (NYCRO Ref: ZCG M 1/6)

executed. At Scampston Hall, in 1772/3, we are a little clearer about the works carried out for Sir William St Quintin, where Brown designed the Palladian bridge and also remodelled the house itself. At Howsham Hall near Malton, in the 1770s, little evidence survives for works undertaken, save for an entry in Brown's account book for a plan made for Nathaniel Cholmley. We heard from Karen that it is likely that Brown was responsible for the removal of the formal garden and its replacement by new lawns, plantations and gothic teahouse.

Conclusion

During the lunchbreak (and after the talks at the end of the day), there was opportunity to view a range of original archive material, which was on display in the search room. This included one of the mid-18th century plans of the Bolton Hall landscape referred to by Val (ZBO M 2/1), as well as a 1744 general plan of the Newburgh Priory house, gardens, woods and plantations (Ref: ZDV VI 7); the early 19th century survey book from the Bolton on Swale parish records showing the plan of the Kiplin Hall gardens, with field names (NYCRO Ref: PR/BOL 4/2); a beautiful, 19th century coloured plan for a flower garden at Aldby Park (ZDA (DAR) M.13), the first edition 6" Ordnance Survey map of 1856, showing Wood End and Thornton le Street; the recently deposited 1782 Survey Book of William Lawrence of Kirby Hall (Z.1641) mentioned above, as well as the 1818 painting of Howsham Hall and gardens by

John Booth (ZCG M 1/6) shown in Karen's presentation, as well as designs for the gardens at Ingleborough House, Clapham for JA Farrer by Thomas Mawson, 1910 (ZTW).

Feedback from the event was extremely positive, demonstrating evidence of a great interest in garden history. Hopefully, some of those who attended will be inspired to carry out their own research using the NYCRO archives. Thank you to Margaret Boustead and the staff at NYCRO for hosting and organising the event and for making so much original material available for viewing on the day. A huge thank you especially to all the speakers for their contributions and excellent presentations, which made the day the success it was.

Further information about the YGT Research and Recording Projects can be found on the Research webpage at: <https://www.yorkshiregardenstrust.org.uk/research>, where pdf copies of completed research reports on specific designed landscapes can be downloaded.

Gail Falkingham

Trustee

All photo credits: NYCRO

[Editor's Note: We apologise to Gail for the late publication of this report. This was due to a lack of space in the two previous Newsletters – Spring 2020 and Autumn 2020].



On This Day



Researching such resources as the British Newspaper Archive and the *Gardeners Chronicle* for garden history purposes is a double-edged sword. On the plus side, it is guaranteed to deliver some information on virtually any of the selected historic gardens the Research and Recording Group are interested in. On the other hand, it plays into the Achilles heel of any researcher, the ability to be distracted by anything of interest, whether related to the topic in hand or not.

However, so many of these distractions are noteworthy in terms of their garden and horticultural interest that it would be a pity to let them slip by, unnoticed.

Since many of these are quite fleeting references, they are ideally suited to be gathered together in a manageable collection for future reference in garden research projects by YGT members.

Here are a few examples to start the ball rolling...

Sheffield Independent, Saturday 1 December 1832

“The gardener of Charles Winn Esq. of Nostell Priory, near Pontefract, has succeeded in removing to a considerable distance a large ornamental tree (the Tilia Europea) which measures 40 feet 3 inches at the base, and the circumference at the extremities of the branches being 108 feet.



Undertaking such a herculean task is difficult to imagine in terms of logistics and effort, with limited mechanised assistance.

This report features in many newspaper editions across the country, in recognition of the magnitude of the event.

Following the horticultural theme at Nostell Priory:



Yorkshire Gazette, 14 August 1830

A report of the August meeting of the Yorkshire Horticultural Society recorded : “A new variety of Melon, raised from seed obtained in Persia, was exhibited by the gardener of C. Winn Esq. Of Nostel Priory. It is called the Keising Melon and was much admired “

In 1839, the Keising melon is described by John Duncan in his treatise on growing melons as:

“A beautiful egg-shaped fruit about 8 inches long by 5 inches wide in the middle; colour pale yellow, beautifully netted all over; flesh nearly white; high flavoured, and resembling in texture a well-ripened Beurre pear. It derives its name from the village of Keising, near Isaphan. “

Duncan, J. *A Practical Treatise on the Culture of the Melon* (1839). London, Hamilton, Adams & Co [Melon netting is the waxy, raised crisscross, net-like protecting structure found on the rind of some Cantaloupe types.]

Two very different aspects of 19th century gardening at one of Yorkshire’s most significant estates at Nostell Priory.

Chris Beevers

Member of Research & Recording Committee and Events Team

[Editor’s Note: If any YGT members were able to add to this feature so that we could continue to run it, we would be very pleased to hear from you. Please send any contributions to the Editor at the email address on p. 2.]

Genius of the Place:

John Aislabie's personal style at Studley Royal

A Lecture by Mark Newman to commemorate John Aislabie's 350th Birthday
on 4 December 2020

Introduction

Yorkshire, Yorkshire Gardens Trust and of course the National Trust are all very fortunate to have had Mark Newman for over 30 years as the NT's Archaeologist for Yorkshire and the North East. On a personal level, living at Hackfall Farm abutting Hackfall (Grade 1 HP&G) for over 30 years, working with Hackfall, Woodland and Landmark Trusts, I have often had the pleasure of being involved with our speaker Mark Newman on William Aislabie's masterpiece. Mark's particular devotion to the archaeology of historic parks and gardens has been a bonus to YGT for over 20 years. For Mark, having a World Heritage site and Grade 1 Historic Park and Garden, in his patch has always been an intoxicating absorbing issue, culminating in 2015 with the publication of his riveting book *The Wonder of the North - Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal*.

On Friday 4th December 2020 Mark once again delighted over 200 members of the Gardens Trust and YGT with the 350th Birthday Anniversary lecture on John Aislabie aptly entitled *Genius of the Place: John Aislabie's personal style at Studley Royal*. It was Mark's first attempt at a solo lecture delivered via Zoom, but what a triumph and we all look forward to many more, in particular on Aislabie's son William.

Madalyn Hughes welcomed us and thanked our friends at The Gardens Trust for helping with the technical aspects and working in partnership with YGT. She mentioned in this introduction that we would have been on site at Studley, was it not for Coronavirus limitations, but as a marvellous alternative Mark delighted us all by having a backdrop image of the 1931 photo of John Aislabie's sitting room at the sadly long demolished Studley Hall.

John Aislabie's early life and political career

John was a man of many parts: lawyer, businessman, politician, father, son, landowner, civic leader holding great offices of state and a landscaper of genius. It was a treat to hear Mark expose the Aislabie family history and the dramas which led to Studley Royal, the family home of his Mother Mary Mallorie, and then to hear of John's future rise to prominence as a Member of Parliament and Chancellor of the Exchequer. Starting with his birth in 1670 at Treasurer's



John Aislabie, portrait at Ripon Town Hall

House, close to York Minster, he was in the less auspicious position of being the third son. Much of his early life seems to have been spent at Studley Royal, leading to his intimate knowledge of the estate; his parents must have had plans for the property, because they built the Studley Great Gate and planned the formal main avenue and set out the basic form of the park boundary.

John had a lonely childhood as his father was killed in a duel whilst still young and his mother died at the early age of 42, leaving him an orphan at the age of 13. It would appear that he was largely self-taught, but he graduated in law from St John's College, Cambridge in 1692 and the story would probably have been completely different had not both his two elder brothers had the misfortune to die, thus allowing John to take the reins at the age of 23 and become the Master of Studley.

He married well in 1694 to Anne Rawlinson, niece to the Archbishop of York, who was the influence for John becoming the Member of Parliament for Ripon in 1695. Unfortunately, in 1700 Anne died in a fire at their London home, but the baby William was fortuitously saved.

Whilst Aislabie's political career was progressing he made a second marriage in 1713 to Judith Vernon, who brought with her the estate of Hall Barn near Beaconsfield, and here John became involved with the fashionable art of landscape design. We saw a plan of Hall Barn which showed some definite parallels with the gardens Aislabie would create at Studley Royal.

Becoming an MP launched John's political career and running parallel with his business career he became Mayor and patron of the City of Ripon partly by buying up burgage plots in Ripon. He became the Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1718. He was an adept lawyer and financier but, as Chancellor, his involvement in the South Sea Company led to notoriety and the role of national villain in 1720. This has followed him ever since, unjustly eclipsing his genius and indirectly his masterpiece of Studley Royal.



How Hill Tower (Photo credit: Alison Brayshaw)

Other early building works were the Banqueting House and Rotunda with the main features being the walks and their relation to formal and informal water and walks along the valley edge but at this stage they were inward looking. John was engaging with new ideas of landscape design, new tastes and concepts but always valuing the natural topography.



Right Hon. John Aislabie Chancellor of the Exchequer, by Sir Godfrey Kneller 1720 from *Portraits of Yorkshire Worthies*.



The Rotunda (Photo credit: Gail Falkingham)

Developing the Park at Studley Royal

A significant year in the story was 1716, when John's attention was refocused on Studley. He was able to purchase some land at How Hill with a fantastic prospect over the surrounding landscape. Celebrating his new role in high office he started work on the lake and the meandering River Skell was canalised, forming a long vista from the park to the new Tower on How Hill, which was his first major architectural project for the estate.

John's time in public office created the opportunity to promote his own financial interests and, although he was fined and his assets frozen while he was in the Tower of London for his part in the South Sea Bubble, he now had substantial wealth. Propriety meant that he had to pause work on the estate until his fines were paid off, though he probably spent the time formulating plans. Mark emphasised that John was truly an extraordinarily creative landscape designer, grasping the genius of the place, taking inspiration in looking forward to everything new in landscape design, whilst still preserving what was already there, a man of true vision. Valuing the natural topography was at the centre of how he saw landscape and what he created at Studley in his own personal style.



Main Canal Water Gardens (Photo credit: Gail Falkingham)

Later Stages of Development

From 1723 until his death in June 1742, John created the formal vignettes and there were key achievements along the way. However, in 1725 the early garden works were badly affected when the new cascade and balustrade were damaged in a flood, but ironically this led to an improvement, with an enlarged lake and the carriage drive moved to make a more subtle arced approach modifying the natural topography. Lidar imaging has revealed these details, the aerial recording of the landscape at high resolution helping to show the texture of the landscape. John was directing our experience, playing games with our senses, obscuring the views, and then revealing something different from the expectations of formal garden design tradition.

During this time John and Judith continued to live in the old Hall at Studley, investing money in some upgrading with fireplaces and other craftsmanship which could easily be relocated if a new dwelling was built, with more expenditure in 1724 on the chapel to the Hall. He invested in the marvellous stable block in 1728, which today dominates the landscape above the site of Hall. The obvious intention was to build a new Hall elsewhere on the estate, but this was left for the



Formal View from the location of the Studley Stone. (Photo credit: Alison Brayshaw)

future and has never materialised. The ‘Studley Stone’ above the Lake bears testament to the location and vision for the new Hall with engaging radical views. The contrast of the formal view ahead across the lake, canals, and gardens and up towards How Hill, and to the right the rolling parkland now obscured by the Beech Avenue, and to the left the raw jagged glacial Serpent Valley of Mackershaw with dramatic rock exposures. This was to be such an important key in drawing the elements of the landscape together.

Mark explained a great deal about John’s personal style and creativity, his plans, his vistas, sight lines, water features, unexpected buildings, view stoppers, plantations, statues, surrounding estate landscape and importantly his relationship with the natural topography.

To explain all John achieved here would be very lengthy and not half as much fun as actually reading *The Wonder of the North*. This is a must for every YGTer’s coffee table and bookshelf; as well as being a good read, it is also a necessity for reference. Mark did of course give credit to many such as Vanbrugh, Burlington, Kent and others, contacts, friends and acquaintances, direct and indirect, who John visited and who visited Studley, and some of whom helpfully wrote of their visit.

Recent findings and Mackershaw

Mark discussed recent developing understanding of the site and the various exciting discoveries he has made since the publication of *The Wonder of the North* in 2015.

Another key turning point had been acquiring the previously rented property of Mackershaw from the Archbishop of York in 1730; here the garden spills out of the valley. It was also a time of building including the Temple of Piety, the Octagon Tower and also practical buildings such as kitchen buildings, the lovely boathouse by the side of the Lake and the Bathing House fed by cold water. Immersion in cold water was reputedly a cure for the deafness John suffered from. The Bathing House was demolished in 1850 and the remains became another victim of flood damage and repair. (New work to control flooding is due to go ahead as part of the Skell Valley Project - <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/skellvalleyproject>. See further on p. 34.)

Another theme was statuary which dances and changes places over the years with probably an allegory of progress, jokes and political gestures throughout the gardens, but by 1741 it was largely as we see it today.

Fountains Abbey was always beyond John’s borders, although views of the abbey were



Jeffery's 1771 map updated 1775 showing Studley and something of the network of routes and vistas.

obtained by his extension of the gardens in 1730. Mark showed recent Lidar work revealing a lost feature in Mackershaw Park, the largest found, which was a 370-metre long levelled terrace with ramps going off to the side, more of his signature tectonic earthworks. At the northern end was a reservoir to supply a switch on/switch off artificial waterfall.

At the head of the Mackershaw Valley John built the Gateway Lodges which have similarities to some drawings by William Kent, in classical form but built of rough stone; they would have been

viewed in the distance from the (proposed new) Hall. The walk along the valley, which today we call the Seven Bridges, was aptly named the Serpent Valley; these first works in John's time took an inspiration from Rome. We can see the remains of a small building which was based on the much larger Tomb of Horatii and Curiatii, with long gone sugar loaf pinnacles; it is on the sight line from the Octagon Tower in a clever trick of perspective across the Mackershaw Valley.

More Roman inspired architecture in the form of gate piers are half hidden in the undergrowth, the



The Roman Monument
(Photo credit: Karen Lynch)



The Octagon Tower 1734/35 introducing a neo gothic style
(Photo credit: Gail Falkingham)

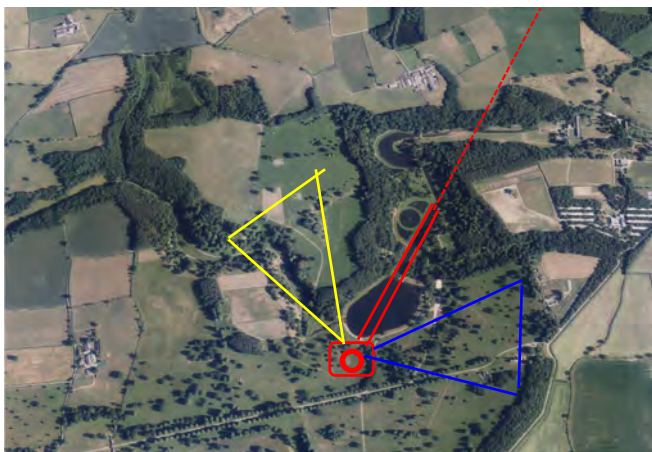
surviving remains of which are set at the head of the later Chinese Gardens. These were erected by John in his last summer and framed a view across the landscape to Mackershaw Lodges beyond. Mark showed a clever sculpted Lidar plan showing the views, the buildings and their relationships.

We still only have part of the story; the spreading out of the garden and park into the estate landscape around Studley has a value to the designed whole, and the fieldscape was part of John's vision.

Final Years

Mark concluded by looking again at the siting for a new Hall - to its location and relationship to the 1718 canal, the later enlargement of the lake and looking towards How Hill. The site has contrasting views away from the formality of the water and reflections. To the right are views of the rolling parkland which could be dressed with more formal garden ideas. To the left, the raw glacial outflow valley, landscape which cannot be dressed as a garden. This is landscape reaching towards everything the sublime and the picturesque are to be interested in, these are radical ideas he is engaging with.

The last phase of John's life saw the gardens progressing, but he left his last great gift of Studley to his son William to take the story to the next stage. John died at the age of 72 on 18 June 1742 and his memorial can be found in Ripon Cathedral. A man of True Vision.



Aerial view of possible position of the new Hall showing contrasting vistas . (Photo credit: Mark Newman)

Conclusion

Mark believes John was a truly extraordinary creative landscape designer. The key aspects of his personal style are difficult to gauge, but we need to look at the design and the archaeological traces; and respect his ability to look both forward and backwards. John was aware of new trends in landscape design, and yet still preserved what was already there. He understated the use of ornamentation, employing it sparingly at first but later to a greater degree, to catch the eye. He was fond of a big straight line. He amplified the

contrasts using formal pieces of work as grand formal events. These were interspersed with real landscape between, grasping the genius of the place, recognising and utilising nature; it was everything the 18th century was about.



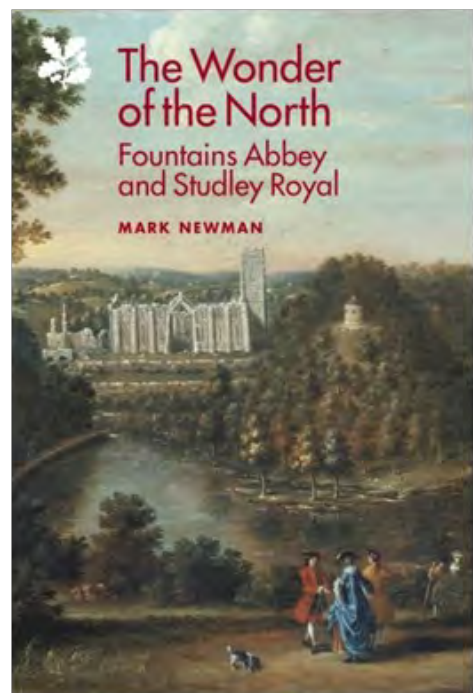
Mark toasting Mr Aislabie's 350th Anniversary Birthday

Mark thanked us for listening and for supporting the Gardens Trust, Yorkshire Gardens Trust and the National Trust in these difficult times. He most of all thanked Mr Aislabie for the creation of the gardens that we can continue to enjoy today and asked us to raise a glass to the spirit and memory of John Aislabie: "a 350th Happy Birthday toast".

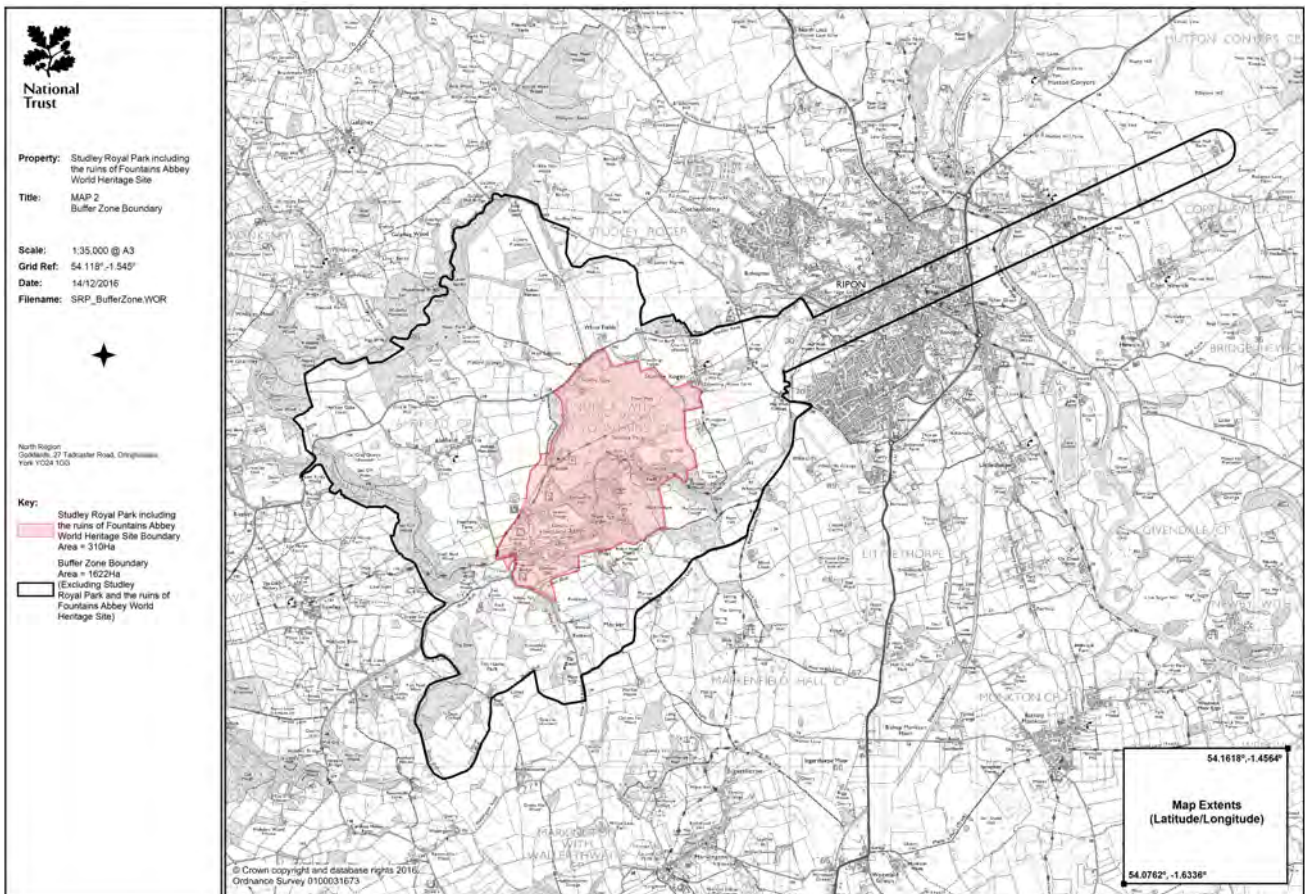
Footnote

There are many who long for Studley to have an appropriate interpretation centre on site, that enables visitors to truly appreciate the significance of this World Heritage Site and Grade 1 Historic Park & Garden, and the remarkable families portrayed by both the lecture and the National Trust publication *Wonder of the North*.

*Alison Brayshaw,
Hackfall Farm, Grewelthorpe*



The Wonder of the North: Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal by Mark Newman ISBN: 9781843838838; Boydell & Brewer £35.



The buffer zone protects the integrity of the wider historic estate. UNESCO pdf UK-372bis

The World Heritage Site

The present National Trust area is only a part of John's estate and his vision for the landscape went far beyond today's confine. It was William who was able to develop this vision. The breadth of the estate is better taken in by the map showing the extent of the buffer zone for the World Heritage Site, as above, or to be found at

<https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/372/> along with their words: "In the 18th century a designed landscape of exceptional beauty was created----- - one of the most magnificent Georgian water gardens ever created, make this a landscape of outstanding merit --- a true masterpiece of human creative genius."



Fountains Abbey in the distance today (Photo credit: Gail Falkingham)

The Skell Valley Project

The National Trust (NT) and Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) are the lead partners of sixteen organisations who have come together to deliver the Skell Valley Project which will create a sustainable future for the Skell Valley. Over the last five years, partners, farmers, landowners and communities living, working and visiting the valley have worked together to develop and shape the scheme.

Where is the Skell Valley?

The scheme covers all 12 miles of the River Skell, descending from the remote Dallowgill Moor to the Vale of York and the City of Ripon, while traversing at least six millennia of human history. Some of the most ancient human objects in this living landscape are the names of the rivers, the name Skell may have come with the Vikings and their word *skjallr*, meaning 'resounding' from its swift and noisy course.

The upper and middle stretches of the river lie wholly within Nidderdale AONB and include NT Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal, inscribed as a World Heritage Site in 1986 (see p. 28-33). The lower stretches flow through farmland and the open grasslands and wooded banks of Hell Wath before reaching Ripon.

The farmland involved covers c. 30ha spaced out across the 20km stretch of river in the valley and involves 14 farmers. NT is trialling how to work with farmers and pay for outcomes e.g the need to plant more trees; it wants to incentivise farmers to maintain them in the longer term as part of the new Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS).

Why is the scheme so important?

The Valley and its unique cultural and natural heritage are under threat from various forces including:

Climate change - This is causing extreme weather conditions and severe flooding events have caused irreparable damage to Fountains Abbey & Studley Royal. The river has been heavily engineered since the monastery was founded in 1132, and in 2007 the abbey was flooded to a depth of 2m; its foundations have been submerged three times in the last five years and it constantly needs repairing.

The high level of silt that is deposited in the river is threatening its ecology. Silt is also affecting the water features at Grantley Hall, Eavestone Lake and Ripon Canal.

Loss of heritage - Due to neglect there is a significant risk to heritage along the Skell

Valley. At Eavestone Lake maturing trees in the lake are encroaching on the designed landscape and obscuring views. Poor condition of built and landscape features in the Chinese Garden, at Aldfield Spa and the WW1 heritage in Ripon means we risk losing part of our heritage forever.

Decline in nature - Throughout the valley there is a decline in nature because of poor water quality due to the amount of sedimentation in the river which threatens wildlife, and there is an increase in invasive species such as Himalayan Balsam and Signal Crayfish.

In 2019 the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) gave NT Stage One funding to help develop a plan for the project. NT worked with farmers, landowners and communities living and working in the Skell Valley. Over 1000 people attended either an event, workshop or presentation about the project and offered their views. NT then submitted a Stage Two application to NLHF for a further grant of £1.4 million in Autumn 2020.

This bid was agreed in December 2020. The delivery of the projects will start from 2021 and run to 2024 and will cost approximately £2.5 million. The rest of the scheme will be funded by contributions from project partners and a fundraising appeal.

Goals of the Skell Valley Scheme

There are fifteen individual projects which combine to form a clear and ambitious vision for the river and landscape, with four key themes:

Landscape is resilient

Projects: Healthy Land Healthy River, Enterprising Landscape, Tourism Development in the Skell Valley

Nature thrives

Projects: Native & Ancient Woods of the Skell Valley, Hug an Ancient Tree, Hell Wath- Green gateway to the Skell Valley

People are empowered

Projects: Skell Valley Task Force, Digging Deep in the Archives, Volunteering City of Ripon, Nature on Your Doorstep, Watery Wildlife

Heritage is celebrated

Projects: Revealing the Serpent Valley & Chinese Garden, Sulphur, Springs and Spas, Exploring the Skell Valley, Enhancing Eavestone's Lakes.

Information taken from the National Trust website and the *RIBA Journal* January 2021.

Reginald Farrer: Man, Myth and Mountains

Introduction

In order to commemorate the centenary of the death of Reginald Farrer (1880 -1920), YGT had planned in 2020 to have a study day and lecture on this prolific author, botanist and plant collector. Like so much else, these events had to be cancelled but instead this year, four Zoom lectures on Farrer and alpine gardens were organised. Three were devoted to Farrer, of which two were given by Dr John Page entitled *The Power of*

Farrer and Farrer in The Alps and the Far East and the third by Michael Charlesworth, *Plants, Books and Journeys: the World of Reginald Farrer, "well known" Buddhist*. The fourth lecture, *The Rescue of an Edwardian Rock Garden*, focused on Aysgarth Rock Garden, and was given by Michael D Myers.

YGT members Moira Fulton, Patrick Eyres and Gillian Parker have kindly written up the lectures for us.

1. *The Power of Farrer* Dr John Page

This, the first lecture in the series, was given by Dr John Page, a key member of the Alpine Garden Society (AGS), the author of numerous articles on the growing of alpines and a frequent traveller to Alpine regions. Dr Page explained he had taken the title of his talk from Miles Hadfield's book *A History of British Gardening*, published in 1960. In this book, having acknowledged some of Farrer's failings as a travel writer, botanist and plant collector, Hadfield concluded that, apart from his encyclopaedic book *The English Rock Garden* 1919, Farrer's greatest legacy was the formation of the AGS. Although the Society was not founded until 1929, some nine years after Farrer's death, it was as a direct result of his influential writing on the cultivation of alpines.

By the time of his death Farrer had achieved almost celebrity status: his fame was based on his expertise in growing alpines; his expeditions in search of plants in Europe and the Far East; and his numerous and influential books on the successful cultivation of alpines. Farrer has been described as The Father of Rock Gardens and the Patron Saint of Alpine Gardening, as no one has done more to establish the correct principles in the creation of rock gardens and alpine cultivation.

Farrer, however, was not the first to promote rock gardens and alpines. In 1772 a rock garden was created in the Chelsea Physic Garden, using volcanic rocks brought back from Iceland by Joseph Banks, and some discarded stones from the Tower of London. As the first principles in growing alpines were not properly understood, the first rock gardens were aesthetic and horticultural failures, with colourful plants used as carpet bedding, grown on haphazardly arranged rocks. William Robinson (1838-1935) wrote critically about these methods in *The Wild Garden*, 1870.

He demonstrated that, with sufficient care, alpines collected in the wild, could be grown in rock gardens. In 1884 an enormous rock garden, entitled *The Nation's Rock Garden*, was created at Kew Gardens. Impressive remains of the stonework of this garden still survive. By the 1890s rock gardens had become very popular. The firm of Backhouse built many large and impressive rock gardens, such as the one in the Birmingham Botanic Gardens in 1894.

Reginald Farrer, born in 1880, was educated privately at the family home of Ingleborough Hall, Clapham. He was a precocious child with a very early interest in botany and plant growing. At the age of eight he was given the revised edition of Bentham's *British Flora*, published in 1887. Living near to the limestone hills of Ingleborough, Pen-y-ghent and Whernside, Farrer early became an observant and knowledgeable botanist. At the age of 14 he was the first to report the discovery of *arenaria norvegica, subsp. anglica* (Yorkshire sandwort), growing on the slopes of Ingleborough. In 1898 he enrolled at Balliol College, Oxford to read Greats. While at Oxford he assisted in the creation of the rock garden in the grounds¹ of St John's by its Bursar Rev Henry Jardine Bidder.

On graduation in 1902 Farrer travelled to Japan with a close friend, Aubrey Herbert. Farrer found the gardens of Japan of great interest and on his return in 1904 published his first travel book, *The Gardens of Asia*, about his tours in Japan and Korea. He then wrote his first horticultural book, *My Rock Garden*, published in 1907. This book, based on his own gardens in Clapham, went into eight editions and quickly established his reputation as a knowledgeable plantsman and botanist who could describe plants in an entertaining way. In 1908 he wrote *Alpine and Bog Plants* and in 1909, *My Yorkshire Garden*. Farrer did not admire the way the rock garden at the National Botanic Gardens at Glasnevin

¹When with GT members on a visit to St John's during the Conference in September 2019, I noticed that though there was a plaque to Bidder and his creation of the rock garden, the garden itself was sadly neglected.

PRESENT-DAY GARDENING



THE ALMOND-PUDDING SYSTEM
(The wrong arrangement of spikes)



A RIGHT PLACING OF SPIKES
(With evergreens)

In *My Rock Garden* Farrer described many of the errors commonly made in creating rock gardens, illustrating the mistakes in an amusing way.

(Dublin) had been constructed, but his greatest criticism was of Sir Frank Crisp's amazing rock garden at Friar Park, with its 30 foot high model of the Matterhorn and its tin chamois.²

Farrer's most impressive work, which is still consulted today, was his encyclopaedic 2-volume work *The English Rock Garden*, written in 1913 but not published till 1919. In these books he used his practical experience in gardening at Clapham and described his four gardens there:

1. The Craven Nursery³

Farrer had established this as a commercial venture in 1901 in the old kitchen garden of Ingleborough Estate. In part of it, which he called The New Garden, he created a very successful moraine garden which enable him to grow notoriously difficult plants such as *Eritrichium nanum*.

2. The Old Garden⁴

This had been created by Farrer at the age of 14 in the grounds of Ingleborough Hall in his father's existing alpine garden. Although Farrer had had problems with water in the garden, he was able to grow a wide range of plants in the rock garden he created there.

3. Cliff Garden

On a west facing limestone cliff, beside the lake which lies to the north of Ingleborough Hall, Farrer found an ideal spot for growing alpines. He had men on ladders scaling the steep side of the cliff to plant seeds. An apocryphal story relates that, from a boat on the lake, he also fired seeds from a shot gun into the cliff. Dr Page reported that, when he visited the site many years ago, though it was overgrown by trees, he was still able to identify some plants of non- native origin such as *Ramonda myconii* and *Clematis alpina*.⁵

4. The Craven Fault

Farrer identified that the soil in the fault on the west side of the lake was non- alkaline, which enabled him to plant acid loving plants such as bamboo, azalea and rhododendron.⁶

Dr Page concluded by stating that, although Farrer was not the founder of rock gardening, he played a very important role in the establishment of alpine gardening through his influential books, which laid down the principles of the successful growing of alpines and the creation of suitable habitats for them.

Moira Fulton

²See GT's weekly blog by David Marsh for an entertaining account of Frank Crisp's garden at Friar Park, 27/04/2019 & 4/05 2019

³The Craven Nursery closed in 1921 after Farrer's death. The site was sold and a bungalow built on it. Now no traces of Farrer's moraine planting survive.

⁴This part of the Ingleborough Hall gardens was sold in 1947 for building. Fortunately, the present owner of the property has carefully maintained both the garden and the memorial to Farrer erected after his death by his mother. YGT members were allowed to visit this garden as part of our study day at Clapham in August 2009. Historic England did a detailed survey of the garden in 2015.

⁵When the Cliff Garden was explored in 1942, N.G. Baguley reported finding a wide range of plants, such as saxifrage, daphne, primula and ramonda. *AGS Bulletin* vol 10, Dec 1942.

⁶By the 1970's these plants had been overwhelmed by undergrowth but it was cleared and replanted by Charles Graham in the 1980s. Some planting still survives.

Rhodo. aperatum, *Rhodo. basilicum*, *Rhodo. cerinum* and *Rhodo. facetum*. Farrer painted many attractive watercolours of the plants which he and Cox identified on this expedition.⁸ Cox returned to England at the end of the year⁹ but Farrer stayed on and in Spring 1920 travelled to

Nyitadi, an area of mainly granite rocks not very productive of garden-worthy plants. He explored this area with only native helpers until he became ill, possibly of diphtheria and died on 17 October 1920¹⁰.

Moira Fulton

⁸Many of these watercolours are now in the archives of the library of the RBG in Edinburgh, though there are some in the ownership of the Farrer family and other private collections.

⁹There were frequent disagreements between them and Cox in his diary is very critical of Farrer. Cox subsequently wrote three books about Farrer.

¹⁰After Farrer's death his coffin was carried towards Putnao but, as it was difficult to go further, Farrer was buried by his devoted sepoy Jange Bhadju near the village of Kawnglangphu, not far from Konglu (see map). Bhadju took the news to the local English Commissioner who wrote a full account of Farrer's death to his parents. There were no seeds from this expedition but Bhadju had preserved Farrer's paintings and notebooks which were returned to his parents. A brass memorial was erected on Farrer's grave with words chosen by his mother *He died for love and duty in search of rare plants*. The same words are on his memorial in the Old Garden at Clapham.

3. *Plants, Books and Journeys: the world of Reginald Farrer, well-known Buddhist* Professor Michael Charlesworth

This was the culminating lecture in the series on Reginald Farrer (1880-1920), so we were already well aware of Farrer's career and fame. He had dedicated himself to plant study and, through his collecting and prolific writing, he became renowned as 'the Patron Saint of Alpine Gardening'. Tragically, he died at the early age of forty during his expedition to Upper Burma.

In the garden at Ingleborough Hall, his mother Bessie created two memorials. On one she described her son as 'Author, Traveller, Botanist and Flower Painter'. On the other, she lamented that 'He died for love and duty in search of rare plants'. All of these attributes were emphasised by Professor Charlesworth. As an author, Farrer wrote successful novels, popular travelogues, wartime propaganda and authoritative horticultural works. As a traveller, he journeyed in Japan, Korea and Ceylon (Sri Lanka) between 1902 and 1908 and, later, between 1914 and 1920, he famously explored remote, mountainous areas of China, Tibet and Upper Burma, returning with many new species of rhododendrons, shrubs and alpiners. As a botanist, his approach was unique and innovative. As a flower painter, he was original and influential. It was love and duty that spurred him on; his love of life and of the diversity he discerned in the worlds of horticulture and humankind; his duty was to make his mark for himself and in the service of his country.

However, the particular focus of Professor Charlesworth's lecture was on the way that a profound attachment to Buddhism underpinned the qualities and achievements of Reginald Farrer. By the time he travelled to Sri Lanka in 1908, Farrer was already well known within Buddhist circles in England. On arrival, he committed

himself to Buddhism at a ceremony in Colombo. The way he wrote about his journeys within Sri Lanka gives the impression that he was on a pilgrimage, a sense heightened by his experience of the great Buddhist temple sites, such as Sigiriya, Polonnaruwa and Dambulla which had only recently been recovered from the jungle by British archaeologists and were being excavated.

By embracing Buddhism, Reginald Farrer became sensitive to so much else. Indeed, Professor Charlesworth was concerned to stress Farrer's humanity, which was so clearly apparent in his respect for others, for other cultures and for plants. Farrer's disability and upbringing had positioned him as an outsider. As a child, born with a hair lip and cleft palate, Farrer was disabled by a speech defect. Fortunately, he was spared the trauma of boarding at public school, instead being educated at Ingleborough Hall where he both learnt to speak fluently and embarked on his lifelong fascination with plants. As an adult, Farrer pursued his love of plants and, much to the chagrin of his father, he chose the adventurous life of a plant collector, rather than that of a solicitor in London.

As a member of plant collecting expeditions, Farrer did not conform to the stereotype of the strapping ex-public school imperial explorer. Even though he camouflaged his hair lip by growing a moustache, his small physique (he was 5'3" in height) and his persistent stomach problems positioned him as a man on the margins of imperial masculinity. Nevertheless, Farrer's disability infused him with a sensitivity to, and appreciation of, the non-hierarchical nature of Buddhism. This was exemplified by the way he wrote about the ethnic diversity of expedition employees, whom he acknowledged as individuals

rather than as imperial servants. He recorded his appreciation of the feisty and respected older woman, who looked after her peers, and noted his sadness at the departure of the cheery, helpful young guide.

Farrer was not a dilettante. He possessed the eye of a commercial horticulturalist and collected garden plants suited to the English climate. Nonetheless, it was emphasised that his view of nature was unusual for the time. The way he described plants in word and image was so unlike a contemporary botanist that it alerts us to his originality. He perceived flowers as having personalities and possessing human traits. By depicting them in their natural environment, he recorded their hardiness. This approach was clearly distinct from the conventional, analytical and habitat-free manner of the contemporary botanical illustrator. The example of his words and imagery subsequently altered the way that others described plants.

When Farrer returned to Britain in the midst of the First World War, he was keen to do his patriotic duty for King and Country. His stature prevented him from becoming an army officer. This was just as well because his Buddhist principles would have been severely tested on the Western Front. As it was, his task of reportage for John Buchan's Ministry of Propaganda was challenging enough. Farrer was to contribute to the ministry's propaganda offensive in the then neutral U.S.A. by writing about the European campaigns of the British, French and Italian armies. When in London, Farrer keenly scrutinised exhibitions by official war artists and developed an empathy with

the inhuman desolation of the Flanders' trenchscapes, as depicted by Paul Nash. The title of Farrer's book, *The Void of War*, was perhaps influenced by the titles given by Nash to the print, *Void of War*, and the painting, *Void*.

Professor Charlesworth's ability to draw the viewer into his theme made this a thoroughly engaging lecture, fascinating, insightful and mesmeric. Guided by Buddhism, Reginald Farrer was able to sustain his creativity despite marginal status, disability and deteriorating health. He was able to display adamant resolution and to persevere against adversity. Despite the frailties of his body, Farrer never flagged in his devotion to plants and plant collecting, as well as painting and writing about plants.

The lecture's emphasis on Reginald Farrer's empathetic nature can be followed up by reading Professor Charlesworth's remarkable book, *The Modern Culture of Reginald Farrer: Landscape, Literature and Buddhism* (Cambridge: Legenda, 2018). Additionally, we can stroll through Clapdale to appreciate a smidgen of Farrer's sensibility. We might even ponder how Buddhism informed his 'Chinese Garden'. Planted in the deep, rocky defile gouged out by the fast-flowing Clapham Beck, the 'Chinese Garden' is a tribute to Farrer's canny eye. Situated astride the Craven Fault, his bamboo and rhododendron plants still benefit from the acidic soil. Despite the persistence of overgrowth, we are still able to gaze into the gorge to spot his plantings.

Dr Patrick Eyres

New Arcadian Press

4. *Rescue of an Edwardian Rock Garden*

Michael D Myers

Introduction

In 1906 or thereabouts, Frank Sayer Graham (1859-1946), a successful trader in game, commissioned the construction of a rock garden on a plot of land across the road from his home at Heather Cottage, Aysgarth. The garden was built by William Angus Clark (1858-1950) who until 1905 had been the alpine manager at the famous Backhouse's of York nursery. After Frank Sayer Graham's death the rock garden suffered from changes of ownership and periods of neglect. When Angela and Peter Jauneika bought the cottage in 1988, they were surprised to find that they had also bought an overgrown listed rock garden that had almost disappeared to development in the 1980s. Rosemary and Adrian Anderson took over the garden in 2012 and, in

her carefully researched book, *Aysgarth Edwardian Rock Garden*, Rosemary tells the story of its origins, the Jauneikas' fight to save, restore and open it to the public in 2003, and its current layout and some of its planting.¹ There is also a website about the garden and its history: <http://www.aysgarthrockgarden.co.uk/history.htm>

In the second of YGT's webinar series - 'Reginald Farrer: Man, Myth and Mountains' - Michael Myers described his input to the restoration of this early 20th century rock garden, also outlining the work done to stabilise the rockwork before he came on site in 2002 to redo the planting. First, however, he helped to put the Aysgarth rock garden and his work there into some historical and personal context.

Historical context

Michael suggested that the Aysgarth rock garden was part of the 19th century tradition of rock garden construction that allowed the owner to be, in some way, 'transported' to the Alps. However, there was only so much that could be achieved in a domestic garden, and even at 28 feet high the Aysgarth rock garden was only ever going to be a (very) miniature representation of the Alps. Michael also introduced us to the enthusiasm for alpine plants that characterised the late 19th and early 20th centuries, as plant hunters tracked down alpine plants, in Europe, the Americas and the Far East – a process that Reginald Farrer had contributed to. Michael's modern photographs of the Trenta Botanic Garden in Slovenia, of the Prague Alpine Show, that runs for two weeks, and of gardens in the Czech Republic showed that interest in and the skilled laying out of 'naturalistic' rock gardens is alive and well in Eastern Europe. It would be so interesting to know more about the history of rock gardens in this part of Europe and whether there is any continuity with the British history.

Touching on who else was having rock gardens built, Michael mentioned both Ellen Willmott's earlier garden at Warley Place, which was built by Backhouse's of York, and Frank Crisp's more-or-less contemporary 'Matterhorn' at Friar Park, Henley-on-Thames, to which both Pulham's of Broxbourne and Backhouse's contributed. He also reminded us that Backhouse's had lost out to Pulham's when Wisley commissioned a rock garden in 1911. Given the rebuilding of the Wisley rock garden that has been necessary over the years - Michael worked there in 1989 when there was an attempt to improve the growing conditions for alpinists - one cannot help wondering whether the ghosts of those who awarded the contract might have regrets!

Restoration project 2002

Photographs of the Aysgarth garden when restoration work started in 2002 highlighted the challenges that Michael faced. Trees had grown into the rockwork and many of the original planting pockets and crevices had eroded or completely disappeared. The rockwork had to be inspected before any planting could be attempted and, in places, was stabilised to ensure safety for future public access. However, given that the garden was over 100 years old by this stage, it was found to be 'in a remarkably stable condition, despite years of neglect'.² Michael explained how he went about removing unwanted vegetation and introducing new planting, a considerable task in a garden where crampons are needed to do the weeding.

Michael's interesting talk and the preceding one by John Page triggered two main reflections for me. The first was how rare it is to find anything new either in garden design or in what writers find to criticise about it. Michael referred to Farrer's highly influential *The English Rock Garden* (1919) where he criticised the use of artificial rocks, burrs and clinkers, and expressed disdain for certain types of rock layout. In the first talk of the YGT series John Page called Farrer the 'father of rock gardening', but neither Farrer's criticisms nor, indeed, his recommendations for the rock garden were very novel. Susan Schnare's work shows how alpine plant hunting in Britain, Ireland and on mainland Europe goes back to at least the mid-16th century, and that rockwork was being constructed at this early stage to give the plants brought back from the mountains the best chance of survival at home.³ The Civil War probably put a stop to rock gardening for a while but, nonetheless, 17th and 18th century specialists in Britain knew how to grow alpine and 'rock' plants out of doors and in suitable situations.⁴ At the beginning of the 19th century, McDonald's *Complete Dictionary* included sections on plants 'proper' or 'desirable' for growing on rock work, indicating continuing interest in and understanding of alpinists.⁵ At the same time, of course, rockwork had been used to create grottos and other architectural or decorative devices, while stone had been arranged in the landscape for picturesque effect, but not necessarily for growing any plants, never mind alpinists.⁶

Throughout the 19th century, the large commercial nurseries, Backhouse's being an important one, supported alpine plant hunters across the globe and created the rock gardens in which to grow the plants discovered for customers with the resources necessary for these, often gargantuan, undertakings. For example, in the early 19th century (probably starting around 1820 or so) Lady Broughton at Hoole House in Cheshire spent years constructing a replica of part of Mont Blanc in her garden. John Claudius Loudon was a fan and visited twice, the second time giving a detailed description of how 'rare and beautiful alpinists' were grown in the rocks, in soil suitable to their needs and with stone mulches that also served their particular requirements.⁷ By 1870, when William Robinson wrote the first edition of his *Alpine Flowers for English Gardens*, he was not bringing something new to the garden but building on a long tradition.⁸ He probably contributed to the popularisation of alpine plant growing, not least by advising that one could grow alpinists without any rocks at all, including in pots. Yet Loudon had suggested over forty years

previously in his *Encyclopaedia of Gardening*, that those with a specialist interest in alpinists and wanting to grow the choicest, rather than create a garden feature for artistic effect, would do best to grow them in pots in order to meet their specific needs.⁹

Robinson made no secret, either in *Alpine Flowers* or in editorials in his magazine, *The Garden*, of his disdain for rock gardens that made use of burrs and clinkers or of cement laid over brickwork, and for those where the rocks simply stuck out of the ground. Farrer's criticisms of similar lapses were thus not new, although his disdain for carpets of alpine plants was not shared by Robinson. As Michael mentioned, this disdain led to an outbreak of hostilities between Farrer/E. A. Bowles and Frank Crisp, that culminated in Crisp paying Ellen Willmott to hand out leaflets at the Chelsea Flower Show. Who knew that inanimate rocks could lead to such passion?

The second reflection prompted by Michael's talk was about the perverse fragility of a garden form that is so solid. The Hoole House rock garden is

long gone; the framework of the garden at Lamport has survived but its glories are past; the Backhouse rocks in the Warley Place ravine are still recognisable within the wildlife reserve that the site has become, but there are no horticultural reminders; Friar Park almost disappeared until rescued by George Harrison, although it is not open to the public; and there *may* be a tiny remnant of the rocks that made up Backhouse's internationally famous rock garden in West Bank Park, York. Other examples of lost rock gardens, which contemporary descriptions suggest were stunning, are legion. Tiny though it is, then, compared with its more famous cousins, the Aysgarth rock garden is very important, giving a real sense of what such 19th century gardens must have felt like in their prime and providing important information about the Backhouse style at its peak. All those involved in its rescue, restoration and ongoing care deserve great thanks from anyone interested in this fascinating type of historic garden.

Gillian Parker

Footnotes

- ¹Rosemary Anderson, *Aysgarth Edwardian Rock Garden. A Story of Creation and Re-Creation*. (York: Rosemary Anderson, 2014). Anderson, p. 66.
- ²Susan Elizabeth Schnare, *Sojourns in Nature: The Origin of the British Rock Garden* (unpublished D.Phil, University of York, 1994), chap. 1.
- ³Schnare, *Sojourns in Nature*, chap.2; Richard Gorer and John H Harvey, 'Early Rockeries and Alpine Plants', *Garden History*, 2 (1979), 69–81.
- ⁴Alexander McDonald, *A Complete Dictionary of Practical Gardening: Comprehending All the Modern Improvements in the Art*, 2 vols (London: George Kearsley, 1807), Arcrostichum (vol.1), Verbascum (vol.2), Biodiversity Heritage Library Biodiversity Heritage Library <<https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/bibliography/25138#/summary>> [accessed 5 September 2020].
- ⁵Brent Elliott, *Victorian Gardens* (London: Batsford, 1986), pp. 46–47.
- ⁶*The Gardener's Magazine*, vol. IV new series, (1838) pp.353-63.
- ⁷William Robinson, *Alpine Flowers for English Gardens*, 1st edn (London: John Murray, 1870), archive.org, <https://archive.org/details/alpineflowersfo00robigoog>.
- ⁸John Claudius Loudon, *An Encyclopedia of Gardening*, Fourth (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown and Green, 1826), p. 885, archive.org, <https://archive.org/details/encyclopediaofgar00loud/mode/2up>.

The Mount, or Polly Peachum's Tower

Bolton Hall, Wensleydale

Across the valley from Bolton Hall in Wensleydale stands a ruined tower. A recent planning application to restore it as a venue for shooting lunches prompted YGT to look again at its history.

Nineteenth century texts will tell the reader the romantic tale that the tower was built as a summerhouse for the 3rd Duke of Bolton's mistress, Lavinia Fenton. Fenton was an actress who was best known for playing the role of Polly Peachum in the first run of John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* in London in 1728. The Duke of Bolton is said to have seen her perform and fallen madly in love. Inconveniently, he was married, so Lavinia was established as his mistress (as was perfectly common amongst the upper classes at this time).

The reality is that the Duke spent little time in Yorkshire, being mainly at Hackwood, his seat near Basingstoke in Hampshire, or his London town house, or on the continent where a duke and his mistress did not need to be so discreet. The

Duke's wife died in 1751, and he was free to marry Lavinia, who became the new Duchess of Bolton.

Lavinia is said to have taken rides to the summerhouse, from where her singing could be heard across the valley. There are few records of the period, and the only evidence that she spent time in Yorkshire is from the journal of a visitor in 1792. John Byng was shown Bolton Hall by the Duke's aged retainer, who took pride to point out the bed where the demure 'Polly Peachum' always slept alone.

So perhaps 'Polly Peachum', aka Lavinia Fenton, aka the Duchess of Bolton, did sing in the tower. But it was not built for her pleasure, as it was in existence at least three decades earlier.

The first documentary evidence for the tower is on a 1723 map in the collection of the North Yorkshire County Record Office. The map shows an elevation of a tower with a cupola standing in a square enclosure in 'Mount Park'. A 1737 map at



1/1 Map of the manors of Wensley and Preston 1723'
(Photo credit: North Yorkshire County Record Office, ZBO (M))

Bolton Hall shows a similar view and is marked 'Lodg'. The tower was most probably a hunting stand, where those not participating could watch the chase, and refreshments could be served. An exact date for the construction of the hunting tower has not been found, but stylistically it would appear to be from the late 17th or early 18th century. It may be as early as the period of the 1st Duke (died 1699), who carried out works on the estate in 1686/7.

The dukedom expired in 1794 with the death of the 6th Duke and the estate passed to his niece Mary Powlett. She married Thomas Orde in 1788, and he was created Baron Bolton in 1797. By this date the tower had been neglected for some years, and in 1793 it was described as being in a 'dilapidated' condition, and there was a suggestion that the lead be stripped from the roof. Lord Bolton's advisor, John Anderson of nearby Swinithwaite, vetoed this idea, as the temple was 'an ornament to the Dale'. In 1798 the cupola collapsed in a gale and the architect John Foss suggested replacing it with 'four or more little turrets at the corners'. Foss and Anderson knew about ornamental towers and Foss designed the pretty belvedere on Anderson's Swinithwaite estate in 1792.

It seems unlikely that the building was renovated, and by the middle of the 19th century it was a ruin - albeit a romantic one, with the Polly Peachum story repeated in various histories of the dale from this period.



Polly Peacham's Tower geograph.org.uk 556398
(Photo credit: geograph.org.uk via creative Commons licensing)

The current owners of Bolton Hall, Lord Bolton and family, have applied for permission to reconstruct the tower, which is not listed, as a 'small entertaining space'. Ross Thain Architects of Stamford, Lincolnshire, have drawn up plans to rebuild the missing walls, add a flat lead roof behind the parapet, and insert a timber first floor. There will be basic kitchen and sanitary facilities, enabling the structure to be used for shooting lunches and occasional family events.

At the time of writing (January 2021) the application is being considered by Richmondshire District Council.



Penhill and Lavinia Fenton Tower .
(Photo credit: geograph.org.uk via creative Commons licensing.)

YGT Events Update

We have decided not to send out the YGT 2021 Events Programme and Booking Form until there is more certainty that events will take place. Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the first event which we had planned for 2021, a guided visit to Wentworth Woodhouse to see snowdrops, had to be cancelled, although we already have a new date for this visit, next year on **Thursday 10 February**. We have also decided to hold the YGT AGM as a virtual Zoom event this year, on **Saturday 27 March**, and information about this has already been sent to you. We hope the visit to Bramham Park will become a special event to include the talk by David Jacques and a tour of the landscape. Now that the Prime Minister has published his road map, we know that it will not be until 17 May at the earliest that a group of 30 people can meet outdoors, and 21 June when all limits could be lifted. We had hoped to start the Events Programme after Easter with the visit to Boynton on Saturday 17 April, followed a week later by the visit to Professor Alastair Fitter's garden in York. Both of these events plus all the events in May and June will now need to be re-scheduled for later in the year if possible. As soon as we have new agreed dates, the Events Programme will be sent out.

Unfortunately the visit to Hare Spring Cottage Nursery has been cancelled.

As some members are in credit as a result of booking events last year which were then postponed, Maddy has suggested that you might like to contact her if you need a reminder of the amount before sending in a booking form. Priority will be given to members who booked for an event last year if this event is re-booked. We will of course be in touch if we have to postpone more events.

Provisional YGT Events Programme 2021

Details will be sent later.

March

Saturday 27th: AGM on Zoom

Later Spring events, all TBA.

- * Boynton landscape visit
- * A visit to Professor Alastair Fitter's Garden, 533 Huntington Road, York.
- * Cusworth Park visit
- * Cantley Hall
- * Sion Hill Hall and Gardens for our Summer Evening Party

Later Summer Events

Hopefully the programme after 21 June should remain unchanged as listed below, although we may need to juggle events.

June

Wednesday 23rd: Durham Gardens

July

Friday 2nd: Valley Gardens, Harrogate

Thursday 15th:

Norton Conyers for the Summer Picnic

September

Friday 3rd – Sunday 5th: Gardens Trust AGM

Thursday 16th: A visit to celebrate Rowntree Park's centenary plus a walking tour of central York gardens.

Date TBA: Waterton Park

October

Saturday 9th:

YGT's 25th Anniversary Lunch at Rudding Park

Vicky Price for the YGT Events Team

Forthcoming YGT Publications

Publication	Copy deadline	Publication date
Summer e-Bulletin	1 July 2021	21 July 2021
Autumn Newsletter	22 August 2021	28 September 2021
Winter e-Bulletin	1 December 2021	21 December 2021

Please send items for inclusion to Christine Miskin: c.miskin@btinternet.com