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Norfolk Gardens Trust

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Cover: Our designer Karen Roseberry's garden during 'lockdown' just before the explosion of self sown Lychnis coronaria took over.
Back Cover: Fiddian's Follies

Report from the Chair - Autumn 2020

Members will need no reminding what an extraordinary year this has been. The Committee and I are very conscious that lives have been lost and people have been hugely adversely affected. However, for those who enjoy gardening there has been much solace in attending to their gardens. As a consequence some gardens have never looked as fine as they are now.

One of the sadnesses is that the Norfolk Gardens Trust has had to cancel all its open gardens this summer. Apart from this being a disappointment to the members it has also resulted in garden owners sometimes putting in a huge amount of time and effort in ensuring that their gardens will be in a superb state for open day only to have them cancelled because of covid restrictions. To the owners of those gardens we offer our sincerest apologies. By great good fortune most of them have agreed to open their gardens in 2021 – social distancing permitting. So, at present, it looks as if 2021 may be a bumper year.

Unlike some charities our membership numbers have held up remarkably well. This summer we have not, of course, attended any fairs or other events where we have previously been able to recruit more members but I hope we can get onto the recruitment trail again next year. At present our finances remain strong, providing me with an opportunity to mention our legacy programme. I hope our supporters will remember us in their wills if they are able to do so. There may, of course, be inheritance tax advantages to them in so doing. Do make contact with me if you would like to discuss this.

Christmas is not too far off and one idea which may appeal to some of our members is to consider purchasing membership for family or friends as a gift. A gift voucher can be obtained from the Norfolk Gardens Trust from the Membership Secretary: Mrs R Lyn Burroughs, 14 Ash Grove, Norwich NR3 4BE. Email:- norfolkgtrust@gmail.com.

Finally, we are seeking to recruit a Treasurer as Peter Woodrow our stalwart Treasurer is retiring at the end of the year. There is a separate notice about this in this edition of the Magazine. I will be including a full thank you to Peter in the next edition of this Magazine. He will be hugely difficult to replace.

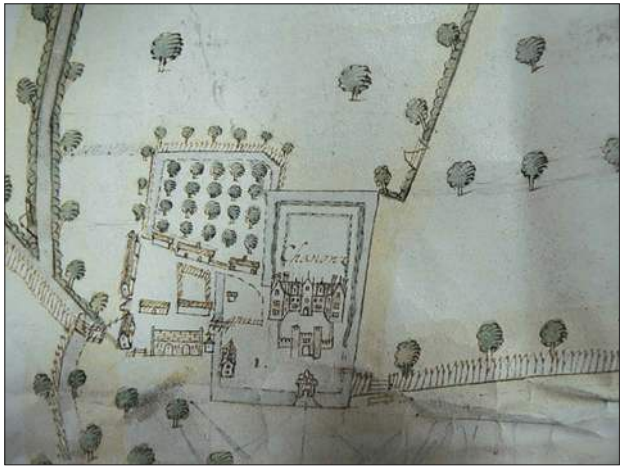
Matthew Martin



Fruit in Norfolk Gardens - Part I: Before c.1760

By Tom Williamson

East Anglia has a rich legacy of orchards and fruit-growing which is currently being investigated through a major project – 'Orchards East' – based at the University of East Anglia and funded by the Heritage Fund. In addition to their place in farm orchards and commercial enterprises, fruit trees played an important role in the gardens laid out around country houses, especially in the period before the middle of the eighteenth century, when these were 'formal' or geometric in layout and enclosed by high walls. Functional elements, such as farmyards, formed part of the grounds of most country houses and many garden features had both a practical and an ornamental role. Orchards fitted in well with this approach, combining production and aesthetics, and were proudly displayed. The orchard laid out beside Stiffkey Hall was 'pared' in 1570 to create paths of sifted gravel: William Lawson in 1618 emphasised that 'one principall end of orchards is recreation by walks'. Some large houses had more than one orchard, with cherries cultivated separately, for cherry trees tended to outgrow and over-shadow other fruit trees in mixed orchards. A map of Hethel Hall from 1756, for example, shows the 'Cherry Ground' lying within a courtyard adjacent to the hall. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries many important residences still stood within moats, and several early writers recommended that orchards should be similarly placed, an arrangement which 'will afford you fish, fence and moisture to your trees; and pleasure also'. Often the orchard shared the same island as the residence but sometimes an adjacent moat was constructed, as shown on a map of Channonz Hall, Tibenham, surveyed in 1640 (Figure 1). A lease for land in Shelfhanger, dated 1695, refers to the Cherryegrounde moate.



1. Channons Hall in Tibbenham, detail from a map of 1640. The hall stands within a moat; the orchard beside it is placed on a separate moated island.

As gardens became more sophisticated and

symmetrical in design through the later sixteenth and seventeenth century, under the influence of Renaissance ideas, orchards featured even more prominently in the landscapes laid out around mansions (Figure 2). But fruit trees were not confined to orchards. They were widely dispersed through the grounds, and can clearly be seen lining the walls of the ornamental gardens – trained as fans or espaliers – on contemporary illustrations (Figures 3 and 4). While these might include apples and pears, more numerous were stone fruit like peaches,



2. Somerleyton Hall in Suffolk. The great gardens, laid out at the start of the seventeenth century, as depicted on a map of 1652. The area of planting marked 'A', lying immediately below the great transverse terrace, is an orchard.



3. A painting of Aylsham Old Hall, c.1690; the walls of the gardens all have fruit trees trained against them. The area to the right is probably a 'wilderness', but it may have doubled as an orchard.

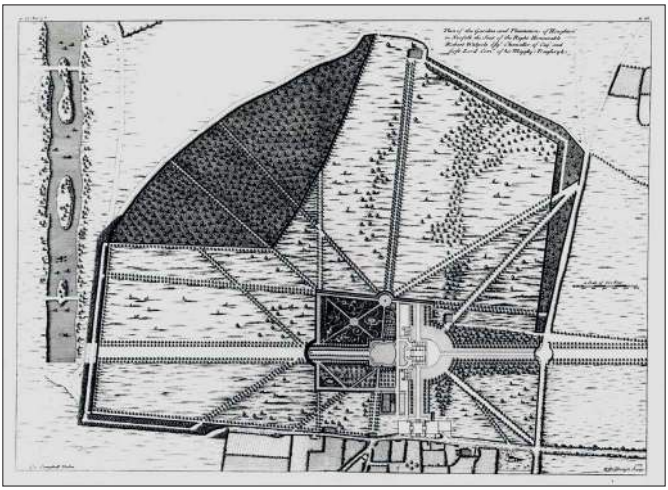


4. Ryston Hall in c.1680. Fruit trees can be seen growing against the walls of both the vegetable garden (right) and the ornamental gardens.

apricots and nectarines. These were high status items, cultivated by gentlemen rather than farmers, largely because they required walls for shelter and warmth, together with a considerable amount of management. Cherries and plums, generally coming into blossom earlier than apples and pears and thus more vulnerable to late frosts, were also often grown in the gardens. All were grafted on dwarfing or 'paradise' rootstocks. In contrast, apples and to an extent pears were more likely to be grown in orchards, as standard trees on vigorous rootstocks. Lists of fruit trees, like that from Honing in 1753, suggest that within the gardens peaches were roughly twice as numerous as nectarines and apricots, which were themselves present in roughly equal numbers, accompanied by variable numbers of cherry, plum and pear.

Although gardens remained formal and geometric in layout well into the eighteenth century, their style changed. In particular, from the late seventeenth century they became simpler but more extensive; walls became less prominent elements; and 'wildernesses' became more important features – that is, areas of ornamental woodland which were

dissected by gravel paths. These, too, might sometimes be planted with fruit trees – in some cases, indeed, the line between an orchard and a wilderness may have been a fine one. At Stow Bardolph in 1712 the wilderness 'quarters' were planted with '14 pears, 14 apples, 14 plums, 7 cherries all for standard trees'. At Houghton Hall the gardens laid out to the west of the house comprised a great lawn and tree-lined vista, flanked by extensive wildernesses. That to the south appears to have doubled as an orchard, and in part perhaps as a kitchen garden (Figure 5).



5. The grounds of Houghton Hall, as depicted in Colen Campbell's Vitruvius Britannicus of 1725. The vista to the west of the hall is framed by wildernesses, that to the south doubling as an orchard.

Landowners lavished large sums on acquiring their fruit trees, often sourcing them from prestigious London nurseries. Roger Pratt ordered trees for his new garden and orchard in the 1670s from John Alcocke of London and Leonard Gurles of Whitechapel. Many owners, like the Chambers family at Honing in 1754, bought from the famous Brompton Park nursery. They also planted a significant range of varieties, in part to ensure an extended period of supply but also, perhaps, as a display of affluence. Yet both these things were, to an extent, also true of lesser landowners. Mary Birkhead of Thwaite, for example, apparently the wife of a prosperous farmer, planted apple trees from the Brompton Park nursery in her daughter's orchard in the 1730s; this, and her own orchard, contained no less than fifty-two different varieties of apple and pear. Indeed, it is likely that – while not consciously managed for aesthetic effect – the orchards of yeomen farmers were certainly valued for their beauty. For all people in the early-modern world, orchards must have had an irresistible appeal, with their trees laden with fruit, their birdsong, and above all their displays of blossom in April and May, so welcome after the long winter. As William Lawson put it, 'whereas every other pleasure commonly fills some one of our senses, with delight; this makes all our senses swim in pleasure, and that with infinite variety, joined with no less commodity'.

Fiddian's Follies

By Roger Last

Dick Fiddian has been at Upwood Farm for forty years. After a tentative start, he increasingly turned his attention to gardening, but it is only in the last five years that he has become a builder of follies. The farmland is in other hands, and his hidden three-acre site at North Barningham boasts an unusual feature - a quarry. When sand and gravel extraction ceased, the small one-acre quarry became that most unenviable of things, a farm dump. This he had to clear before any gardening could begin. First an upper lawn was made on the same level as the house, with a ramp down into a lower section. Other ramps, paths and steps followed, linking the two sections together, and ornamental tree planting began. Soon plinths and urns and statues began to dress and personalize the space. But this did not seem individual enough; his thoughts turned to follies.

A definition of a folly is a structure which has no purpose. But a folly is usually decorative, and it can fascinate and entertain, therefore it is impossible to afford it complete negative status. Dick enjoyed the idea of building the frivolous. A folly gives a license for fantasy, a permit for quirkiness and even the outrageous. It also sanctions elements of amusement and fun. But there are some important provisos: their originator needs a good eye, must know how to blend and mix elements, insist on the highest level of construction, and know when to stop. Here all the boxes are ticked.



Section of the lower garden



Main Folly with tower above.

Entered through a curved arch set into a brick wall is the most extensive folly, itself set into a bank and secluded by trees. The chamber which awaits is elongated, paved, and with a plastered barrel roof. It is not necessary to know that this roof is made from a section of an old wartime oil tank, but that knowledge does testify to the ingenuity which has gone into the construction of everything. The result is totally convincing, as is the second chamber beyond, a double height cube, furnished and comfortable and five years old, but reeking of antiquity. The impression that there are more follies here than is the case, is strengthened by the fact that this folly has a viewing tower on its roof, to be discovered at a different level totally separated from the buildings entrance. The same is true of the second folly, the Rotunda. The access to its roof is via an elevated walkway. The Rotunda is wonderfully named as it isn't one. Externally there is no hint at all, but it is circular inside and does have a fine internal brick-domed roof. The building



Barrel vaulted entrance to the Folly.



Entrance bridge and top of the Rotunda

It is not just the follies which impress here, it is the complexity of the layout, which makes the garden seem much larger than it is. It boasts that essential element of good garden design, a sense of discovery. Discovery made possible by the extensive and knowledgeable planting which conceals, but still allows hints of, what is to come – including the county's prize echiums.

On the upper open lawn is a summer house and a retaining wall, dubbed the Crematorium Wall, as it has many decorative inserts let into it. Its main feature is a large ornamented buttress. Here, too, a viewing balcony looks down into the lower garden. On part of a steep bank there, water trickles down huge boulders of Carstone. The placement of heavy large elements round the garden comes as something of a puzzle. How could they have got there? But there is access for machinery and Dick, an agricultural contractor, is used to making the impossible happen. Last October disaster struck. Heavy rain, combined with unregulated pig farming in higher fields nearby, led to hitherto unprecedented quantities of water flooding into the former quarry area to a height of seven feet. The follies were filled with mud, and debris and furniture floated on the water. But all is restored now.

boasts brick and stone elements, a stone lintel from a church, Carstone sides, patterned tiles on the floor and a balustrade on the roof.

With luck, a third major folly will be added for 2021. The buildings are to Dick's designs, the result of much thought and deliberation, spurred on by the choice of architectural elements to hand. He is lucky in Sam Pointer to have found an excellent bricklayer and, as important, a man who likes to rise to a challenge and is not fazed by the wayward or unorthodox. Architectural fragments both large and small have come from auctions and a sharp eye over many years has seen potential objects of interest collected. eBay has proved a useful source too, especially for unusual bricks.

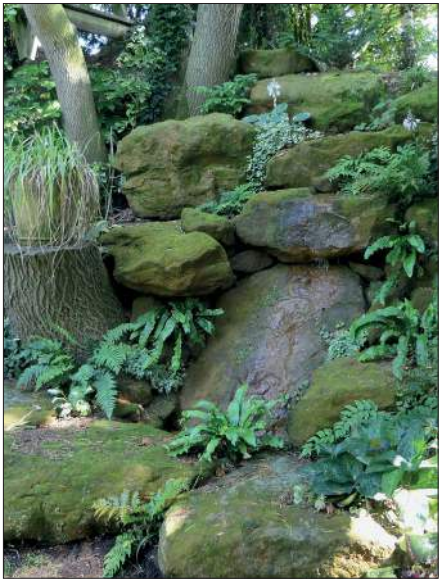


The Twisted Column



The Crematorium Wall

Beyond the main garden is a kitchen garden, and beyond that a 'cabin' set into the landscaped hill, a total hidden holiday let, and beyond that a high mound topped with a viewing platform and seat overlooking the well-wooded landscape. It would be possible to stroll through this garden in fifteen minutes. But that would be to miss the point. This garden has to slowly unwind and be allowed to take you on a passage of discovery; to celebrate the immense attention to detail which has gone into creating its every part. Upwood Farm presents what Norfolk does so well, unveiling the delightful and the unlikely where you would least expect to find it.



Carstone boulders and water trickle

A Norfolk Plantsman In South-West France

by Susan Brown

When Norfolk-born Cameron Field bought the cottage in 2005, the garden at Les Peyriéres in the Lot Departement was the classic 'blank canvas'. Apart from an enormous lime tree (trunk diameter 4.5 metres), three apple trees, a cherry tree, vines of seven types of dessert grape plus a fig and two umbrella plants, it was rough grass with a vast white stone drive way in the middle. The plot is 9 x 113 x 40 metres, bordered by vineyards and walnut groves. The cottage is situated about 1 km from the River Lot and enjoys alluvial soil with a neutral pH.



This wonderful garden has been designed entirely by Cameron Field and his artist husband Jean Luc Le Viste.The garden is located equidistant from the Atlantic and the Mediterranean at a height of 98 metres and enjoys short mild winters with no snow and few frosts of any type. Spring is usually wet and short; however, summers are long and hot, often with two or three heatwaves each year with temperatures reaching 40°C, resulting in violent electric storms. Les Peyriéres is able to make use of a system which draws water from the River Lot for a modest charge. But the autumn is cooler with some rain and is Cameron's favourite time of year.

The first task in establishing the garden was to put up secure chain-link fencing to keep dogs in and rabbits out – both a continuing challenge. Next, a hornbeam hedge of 520 plants went in. And a 22 metre L-shaped metal tunnel was commissioned for what is now a wonderful array of climbing roses.

Removal of the driveway followed. The white 'castine' (limestone) of which it was composed to some considerable depth was excavated by hand and the stone reused for the many pathways that now





lead you around the garden in such a way as to emphasise its different aspects. The large hole which was left was checked by laser beam to ensure that the liner was nowhere exposed to the fierce summer sun. It became a large pond and is one of the main features of the garden. It is15 metres long with width varying from 4 to 6 metres. Local stone was used to build walls and to rebuild the existing well in the local style.

The garden was planned to be harmonious with nature "starting on the bottom rung of insects" says Cameron. The only product used in the garden is bouillie bordelaise (Bordeaux mixture is still legal in France as a fungicide). No other pesticides or herbicides are used.

Planting

There are 50 different roses in the garden with the owners' favourite being 'Sombreuil', 'Wild Edric' and 'Chapeau de Napoléon'. In general, the roses are scented and repeat flowering.

On the north side of the cottage there is a wide range of hydrangeas and throughout the garden are magnificent cannas, 35 different ones in total. Several different varieties of cordon apples and pears mark the transition from the flower garden to the potager, which is used for growing vegetables, including heritage tomatoes and soft fruits. It is also home to a fine collection of sarracenias in



raised beds and irises, irises, irises: a particular passion of Cameron's, he grows germanica, louisiana, ensata, iberica and virginica.

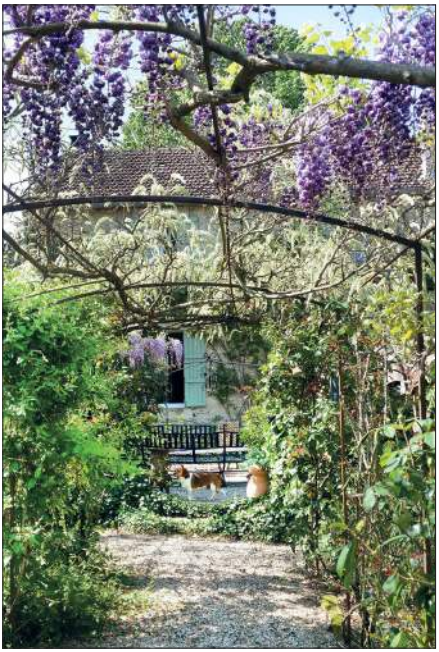


The pond contains a fine array of aquatic and marginal plants. To one side is a beautiful weeping willow and beneath it two Adirondack chairs – a wonderful hiding place from the heat of summer and the world in general. A climate such as this allows the cultivation of plants such as oleander, pomegranate and olive. These grow to an enormous size and the flowers glow with colour.



The garden planting is structured on three levels: level one has low flowering plants; level two has shrubs; and level three, trees. The pond at the centre provides for many aquatic insects, assorted frogs, midwife toads, plus ornamental fish which breed very readily. The pond also provides an ideal environment for the many birds that successfully produce fledglings each spring. In fact, parts of the garden become no-go areas because of the nests, which can be challenging, for not only does the pond quench the birds' thirst but on summer evenings they all line up to bathe so that people often have to decamp to another part of the garden.

Good mulching (home made) is very important for weed suppression, soil water-retention, protection against sun scorch, for providing a habitat for insects, feeding soil micro-organisms, and a source of nutrients. Cameron and Jean



Luc spend a lot of time and effort on this and are justly rewarded by a variety of birds; in fact, the cottage is at the centre of a territory of sparrows that nest under the Roman tiles. Because of the number of birds the owners have not had to treat box hedge and topiary for box tree moth as the caterpillars are quickly gobbled up. Other inhabitants include lizards, grass snakes, frogs, bats and red squirrels.

The future?

Cameron has plans to extend his range of irises and cannas of all types with the intention of propagating as many as possible, ideally becoming a registered plant nursery. He will continue to open the garden for charity and by appointment. For JeanLuc, the garden is a wonderful location for his art exhibitions.



Pests and disease among the spreading chestnut trees

by Allan Downie

Allan is an Emeritus Fellow at the John Innes Centre and an Honorary Professor at UEA with interests in tree diseases

Amid the news on the Covid-19 pandemic, it is easy to miss that 2020 is the *Year of Plant Health* (https://www.yearofplanthealth.co.uk/) and in keeping with this, I focus here on the health of the iconic horse chestnut. The Latin name, *Aesculus hippocastanum* is derived from *Aesculus*, the Roman name for an edible acorn, and *hippocastanum* for horse chestnut. The term 'Horse' may be because they are inferior to sweet chestnuts (as in horse radish) or may be derived from them being given to horses as food and medicine (the nuts contain aescin, a remedy for sprains and bruises). The 'Chestnut' term comes from the similarity of horse chestnut to sweet chestnuts, whose name is derived from "chesten nut". This comes from the old French 'chastain' based on the Latin Castanea, derived from the Ancient Greek word κάστανον (sweet **chestnut**). Despite their apparent similarities, horse and sweet chestnuts are genetically distinct and only distantly related.

In 1576 horse chestnuts were introduced to northern Europe from the Balkans by the botanist Carolus Clusius. By the early 1600s, John Tradescant had a tree growing in his South Lambeth garden and Capability Brown (1715-1783) used them widely. In 1699, Christopher Wren designed a mile-long avenue of chestnut



Horse chestnut flowering in early spring

revived on the Queen's jubilee in 1977. A more local, royal connection to horse chestnuts is the half-mile-long Coronation Avenue at Anglesey Abbey, planted to mark the coronation of George VI.

The potential threat to such sites is illustrated by the onset of bleeding canker disease, causing the felling (in 2009-2011) of 68 horse chestnut trees that made up Chestnut Avenue at the National Trust property at Barrington Court, Ilminster in Somerset.

Pests and diseases affecting horse chestnuts

The most common problem around our region is the leaf damage caused by



Coronation Avenue at Anglesey Abbey



Leaf damage caused by Cameraria ohridella. The adult is about 2mm long (Image: Patrick Clement, Creative Commons)

larvae of the horse chestnut leaf-miner insect *Cameraria ohridella*. Fig 3 about here The larvae form tunnels by eating the tissue between the epidermal layers of the leaves, causing a distinctive brown translucence. After about four weeks the larvae pupate inside the leaves; about two weeks later adult moths emerge and lay 20-40 eggs on leaves to repeat the cycle. These pests were first observed in Greece in the 1980s, appeared in London in 2002 and have now spread across most of England (they are relatively uncommon in Scotland). The damage has little effect on tree growth but reduces the numbers and size of chestnuts produced. The damage appears first on lower leaves, because the pupae overwinter in leaf litter, emerging as adults from April onwards, flying up to the nearest leaves. The miners cause less damage on the red flowering horse chestnut *(A. x carnea)*, red buckeye *(A. parvia)* and the Indian



Flowers of horse chestnut, A. x carnea and Indian horse chestnut

and Japanese horse chestnuts (*A. indica* and *A. turbinata*). The best control is to remove the leaves in autumn/winter and burn them, or compost them in sealed bags until at least July.

Brown patches on horse chestnut leaves can also be caused by the leaf-blotch fungus *Phyllosticta paviae* (also called *Guingardia aesculin*); unlike leaf miner damage, the blotches are not translucent, are more reddish brown and have a distinctive yellow border. Other leaf browning was caused early this year by hot dry winds which induced typical symptoms of leaf scorch. Another fungal disease on horse chestnuts is caused by the bracket fungus known as Dryad's Saddle *Cerioporus (Polyporus) squamosus*,



Leaf blotch (image courtesy of Joan Webber, Forest Research), leaf scorch (centre) and Dryad's Saddle

which forms large fruiting bodies, and can weaken the heartwood of the tree. The greatest current threat to horse chestnuts is caused by bleeding canker disease, in which cankers (bark infections), form on the trunk and/or branches and ooze a dark fluid. The endemic filamentous oomycetes *Phytophthora cactorum* and *P. plurivora* were previously known to cause bleeding cankers. However, since 2000 a dramatic increase in bleeding cankers was caused by *Pseudomonas syringae* pathovar aesculin, an introduced bacterial pathogen that probably jumped host from the Indian horse chestnut, a native of north-west Himalaya. It was this pathogen that caused the loss of the avenue of horse chestnuts at Barrington Court. It is estimated that about half of the horse chestnuts in the UK show some degree of symptoms.

The dark liquid around infection sites is a defence response and dries to form a rusty brown or black deposit. Below the infected outer bark, the inner bark is brown or purple instead of the normal white or pinkish colour. Spreading infections have a diffuse border between the healthy and infected inner bark, whereas a defined border suggests the infection has stabilised. If the infection girdles a branch or trunk, that part of the tree can die. Genetically-determined susceptibility ranges from total resistance to severe infections. A major threat is cross contamination; sawdust and unsterilised tools can spread the disease. Infected material should be burned rather than chipped or composted.



Bleeding canker induced by P. syringae pathovar aesculin

Fortunately, a significant proportion of horse chestnuts and related *Aesculus* species show significant resistance to bleeding canker disease. So despite this and the other pests and diseases, the long-term future of horse chestnuts in the UK seems sound, although, over time it looks likely that we will lose some of these stately trees from our avenues, parks and gardens.

Master Composters in Norfolk

by Sarah Scott

One positive outcome from the Spring Covid-19 lockdown was the upsurge in the nation's enthusiasm for gardening. Sowing seeds and tending plants was something everyone could do, whether on a window sill, in a back garden or even 'guerrilla' gardening in some under-used community space. Watching seeds germinate and grow was the perfect antidote to the sense of isolation and anxiety that people were experiencing.

In a short space of time, however, gardening materials became scarce: seeds, plants, containers and compost were all in short supply and, by early May, the papers were heralding a 'National shortage of Compost'. The increased demand during lockdown, combined with supply chain problems and difficulties caused by the winter flooding, meant that compost was scarce. There was a brisk trade in small, over-priced bags of the stuff on eBay, and gro-bags were like gold dust. 'Unable to buy compost? Now is the time to start making your own' advised one newspaper, failing to point out that the process might take 12-18 months.

I would like to think that here, in Norfolk, fewer people were caught out by the compost shortage because they were already making their own. If that was the case, it would be largely due to Norfolk Council's support of the Master Composter scheme. Working in cooperation with Garden Organic and WRAP (Waste Resources and Action Programme), the Council has trained and supported 308 Master Composters since 2006, when they first adopted the scheme.





Master Composting started in North America to encourage the sharing of composting expertise in local communities – truly a grass roots movement. Norfolk was one of the earliest UK counties to adopt the Master Composter scheme, which is coordinated locally by a Garden Organic employee at County Hall. Interested individuals apply to join a two-day, Master Composter training programme, which is funded by the Council and delivered by Garden Organic. Once trained, volunteers offer their time and expertise to share the knowledge they have gained: by giving talks, setting up a stand at flower shows, or simply by chatting to neighbours. Last year, volunteers in Norfolk contributed over 1100 hours of their time, spoke to nearly 6000 people and attended 60 local events.



I completed my training – based at Gressenhall - during a snowy March weekend in 2019, and then volunteered at local shows and plant sales where I talked to people about composting and answered their queries. The training was inspiring. We covered everything from the biological processes of decomposition (the stages and organisms involved), best techniques to produce good quality compost, the benefits of composting both for ourselves (good for our gardens, good for keeping us fit, saves us money) and for our environment. The latter aspect was particularly thought-provoking as I realised I could reduce my carbon footprint by composting more effectively. Using kerbside waste disposal services dulls our sense of responsibility for the waste we create and, although we are all much more switched on to recycling now, there is still a huge carbon cost



in fleets of refuse lorries criss-crossing our county, especially if some of the collected materials could be used to make compost.

So what steps can we all take, as gardeners, to maximise our production of good quality compost and to minimise our creation of domestic waste? Here are some pointers:

First , we need to recognise the key role that compost plays in plant growth: it provides nutrients for plants; it improves soil structure (it makes heavy, clay soils lighter and helps light, sandy soils retain moisture; it helps soil biodiversity and it helps plants resist pests and diseases). Compost is always a better option than buying in man-made products in plastic bags.

Next, we need to follow some basic guidelines to create good quality compost. The key to successful compost is to have the right mix of components. We should aim for 50/50 'greens and browns': 'greens' being tender young materials such as grass clippings, kitchen waste and young weeds, and 'browns' being older, tougher plant material and cardboard. This mixture will need moisture (but not too much) and air. The composting process is affected by temperature, so it will be slower during the winter (or in the shade) and faster in the warmer, summer months.

Finally, we need to choose a composting system that suits our garden. A large garden may have space for a traditional system of bins (usually at least three bins each approximately 1m3) which can be rotated and turned regularly. Where space is limited, more innovative systems are good, like the plastic 'Dalek', or the Hot Bin, or Bokashi Bins, or wormeries*.

Whatever system we use, there is a tremendous sense of satisfaction in generating rich, chocolatey, crumbly



plant food from waste materials, plus the knowledge that we are not dependent on commercial suppliers if shortages occur again. It's Win Win!

If you would like advice from your local Master Composter or would like somebody to speak to your group or attend your event, please email mastercomposters@norfolk.gov.uk or call Norfolk Master Composters on 0344 800 8020.

**Details of composting systems and their relative merits and costs can be found on the Garden Organic website (https://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/compost).* The website is also a good resource for checking if something can, or can't, be composted.

Do you own this?



Do you, recognize this picture? It is an oil by Robert Ladbrooke. It was painted around 1816 and is the earliest known image of any of the Norwich Pleasure Gardens. We want to include it in our next book 'Enticing Paths – A Treasury of Norfolk Gardens and Gardening'. It has only appeared in print once before in the black and white version above. We would dearly like to find the original so we could reproduce it in colour. If you own it, recognize it and know where it is, could you please contact me, Roger Last on rl19@btinternet.com or 01263 587 223. All I would need is access to take a photograph. We are fully aware of privacy and insurance considerations and no disclosure would be made of its location or owner in the book. The picture, I am afraid, could have left the county. We do hope not.We now expect publication to be in the autumn of 2021.

Sam Garland, Head Gardener to the Bishop of Norwich



Training and work experience

I grew up outdoors. When I wasn't off playing in the woodlands, fields and heaths of the Peak District I helped in my parents' and grandparents' gardens. There were many long summer days tending vegetables and weeding borders, exploring ancient decaying potting sheds with faded paintwork, and building walls from stone hewn from the ground. These days grounded me in horticulture and, like many gardeners, I spend a lot of time longing for and trying to recreate those sensory garden experiences.

After initially studying a BA and MA in Philosophy, I decided to pursue work in commercial horticulture. I undertook a PG Cert in International Horticulture at University College Writtle and found a job working as a pest monitor on fruit farms across East Anglia. It didn't take me long to realise that commercial crop production wasn't for me and I decided to move towards amenity horticulture.

I found a job as the gardener at Swannington Manor (Norfolk) and undertook the RHS Level 2 in Horticulture. I also took on one day a week of voluntary work experience at Felbrigg Hall. Felbrigg, and Swannington Manor, had strong influences on my gardening interests and style. In

particular, Debbie Palmer (the previous Head Gardener at Swannington Manor) encouraged me to always make time for the things in horticulture that I was really interested in, rather than getting bogged down (sometimes literally) in garden maintenance. At Felbrigg Hall, my eyes were opened to new plant families and ways of using plants that have really affected how I think about horticulture in the dry East of England.

Keen to develop my knowledge and experience, I moved south to tackle the RHS Wisley Diploma in Horticulture. I worked and studied at Wisley for two years and was given some extraordinary opportunities including spending two weeks studying drought-tolerant plants in Portugal, working at Chelsea Flower Show for a week and getting to work in all the different areas of RHS Garden Wisley.



After Wisley, I got the job of Head Gardener to the Bishop of Norwich, looking after the outstanding four-acre walled garden in the centre of the city.

Particular gardening interests, styles, plants, influences

One of my main passions is for growing fruit and veg. Producing 'edibles' is one of the trickiest areas of horticulture and requires buckets of knowledge, and



experience. I really enjoy the challenge of growing crops and learning the necessary skills. I've devoted one bed in the vegetable garden at the Bishop's House to trialing unusual and exotic vegetables, to demonstrate what can be grown in the UK. This year's successes have been watermelons, chickpeas, okra and agretti.

I'm really interested in Mediterranean and drought-tolerant flora and have a huge soft spot for sub-shrubs and all manner of spiky things. I'm also very keen on alpine flora but my recently planned visit to study alpine meadows in Georgia had to be postponed due to the Covid pandemic.

Plants aren't just what I do at work. At home, I'm obsessed with propagation and am experimenting with propagating interesting and unusual species of flowers, shrubs and trees, whilst being surrounded by a growing number





of houseplants. Propagation is another area of horticulture with an endless potential for gaining knowledge and new skills.

What things do you like best about The Bishop's Garden, what are the challenges?

The Bishop's House Garden is a very unusual horticultural gem. For such a small garden it has an excellent diversity in plants and planting styles, including a woodland walk, dry gravel beds, lush jungle-like foliage planting and wildflower meadows. In addition, the garden has an extraordinarily long and fascinating history, having been cultivated as a garden since at least the 12th century. It is this diversity that I like most about the garden. My predecessor Simon Gaches (now Head Gardener at Somerleyton Hall) collected many rare plants over his tenure and I plan to continue this.



Although the garden is always a fantastic place to work, like all jobs it is not without its challenges. Covid, box blight, pond pumps, strong winds and late frosts have all caused numerous issues over the last year. Possibly the largest long-term challenge in the garden is water. Using mains water with up to 1 bar of pressure means that only one hose and one sprinkler can be running at any one time, making watering very time-consuming during dry spells.

What are you planning for the future? Any changes?

Key missions for the future of the garden include enhancing its ecological credentials by increasing planting for wildlife, altering garden management techniques (including water use) and reducing chemical and plastics use. Shortly, we will also begin a survey of the garden ecology so that we can see whether the changes we are making to horticultural practices are having the desired effects.

What is your garden like at home?

My partner and I are lucky enough to share a piece of land with my parents on which we have just planted a small vineyard and established a reasonably sized vegetable plot. We hope to expand our vegetable and fruit growing to be as self-sufficient as possible over the coming years. We are also propagating plant material for a small arboretum.



NGT grants

by Tina Douglas

The Norfolk Gardens Trust is very interested in helping to develop projects in the community connected to gardening. This involves giving small starting grants to schools and community projects – the amount of money may not be huge but can make a real difference in getting projects off the ground.

Three members of the committee meet and discuss the applications and this year I have taken over the grant application process (with valuable support and advice from Sue Roe).

Having been a Special Needs Coordinator in two schools for many years I am very aware of the benefits of gardening and being outside to all young people and adults in schools and community projects. Receiving a project grant adds purpose and can only help and support these ventures.



Fig 1. Long Stratton vegetable plot

We were interested in projects that involved children and adults working together and with their local communities. Many schools already have gardening activities and clubs and the injection of some money can really help them and add a new excitement to the project.



Fig 2. Long Stratton. Brightening up a wall

We asked for the



Fig 3. Taverham Junior School. Wild meadow in summer

applicants to do their homework and give an idea of what they wanted and how much it would cost. I have been amazed and heartened by the enthusiasm, ideas and dedication of the people who have applied for grants. The successful applicants have been delighted by their grants and as our decisions were made just before the Covid-19 lockdown this made for good news at a difficult time.

Applications came from schools, individuals, pre-schools and community hubs. The projects have been very varied but it is interesting that many of the proposals were for flower/sensory gardens and to grow vegetables. It has not been possible during lockdown for the gardens to be tended and photographed but having made new friends all over the county I look forward to visiting some of them before too long.

The Norwich Farm Share is a Community Supported Agriculture Cooperative. They are based at Whittlingham now and the project is being developed by growers and volunteers. They aim to share a green site with the community and pass on knowledge and skills to adults and children and to produce ecological food for the community. They will use their grant for fertilizer, seeds and plants.

Long Stratton High School wants to put in a bee-friendly garden and to make an allotment in the school, which would be maintained by the



Fig 4. Taverham's pond.

local community in the holidays. They provided a very detailed wish list including seeds, canes and plants.

St Clements Hill Primary Academy near Mousehold Heath is very keen to involve children in outdoor activities that are so beneficial for all children. They already have a mud kitchen in an outside area and now they want to start a garden with wild flowers and to make an allotment.

Taverham Junior School wants to create a wild flower area and plant fruit trees. This is going to be run by the very enthusiastic midday supervisors and involve children and adults in an ongoing exciting project.

Woodton Primary School, between Brooke and Bungay, is a very small school with around 50 pupils. They already run a gardening club and wanted to start a sensory garden in a disused, unloved courtyard to complement the allotment that is being developed in the school grounds.

North Lodge Pre-School in Cromer on the North Norfolk coast wants to put in raised beds and planters to make a garden in which the local community



Fig 5. The plan for Robert Kett Primary.

can become involved. The site has been cleared and they need tools, plants, a tree, and wood to make the raised beds.

One request came from a Special Needs Coordinator at Robert Kett Primary School in Wymondham to enhance the wellbeing of all children in the large primary school. She wants to develop the outdoor environment and to make a sensory garden to be used as a quiet, reflective place. The grant will help the school to buy seeds and wood to make raised beds. The intention is to make an allotment area to grow vegetables to be cooked and eaten in school.

Obviously all this excitement and planning had to be postponed due to the covid crisis but as soon as things are back to normal these projects should really take off.

Can you help?

VACANCY for the NGT TREASURER

Our present Treasurer, Peter Woodrow, is retiring at the end of this year and we are seeking a successor

No professional qualifications are required. A tidy mind is all that is needed ... and an interest in gardening.

Please contact the Chairman:
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The Old Coach House, 6 Fairfield Road
Norwich NR2 2NE
T: 01603 393244

Email: mtmartindairy@aol.com

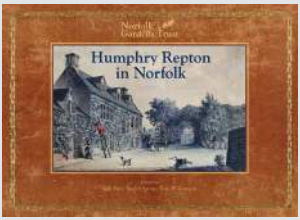
Can you proofread or know someone who can?

The Trust needs a proofreader for its next book.

It will not be ready until early 2021 but we need to set the wheels in motion.

Please contact:

Roger Last - rl19@btinternet.com



NGT Humphry Repton in Norfolk publication 2018

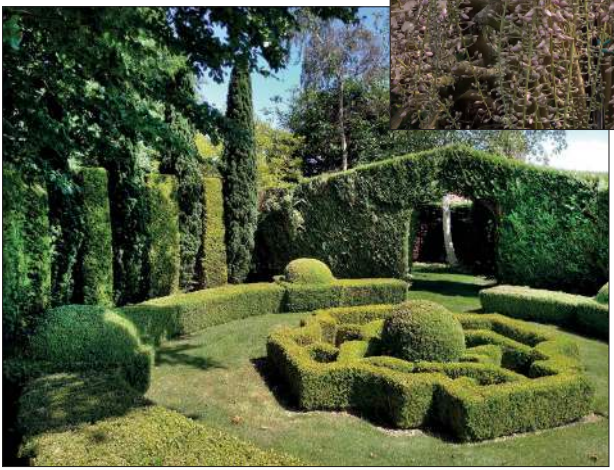
Lockdown gardening

The covid crisis has had its impact upon us all and gardeners to varying degrees. The greatest effect has been felt by those who normally open their gardens to the public, usually for charity. Each year, some gardens are open specially for NGT members who will know they have missed the chance to see some exceptional gardens. Because of the timing of the onset of the pandemic, owners were caught at the beginning of their annual preparation, not quite knowing whether their hard work would be appreciated.

At the opposite extreme, those of us with more humble gardens will probably have welcomed the extra time for new projects or simply relaxing without deadlines. We took a quick poll of some of the NGT committee members, asking them for a photograph and just a line or two.



Lyn Burroughs hadn't done anything very different or significant in the garden during lockdown. Just worked harder and enjoyed it more, especially peak wisteria.



The covid crisis had an unexpected bonus for Roger Lloyd in that he could relax; the lockdown meant he had lots of time to trim his box hedges and no excuse to skimp



Karen Moore found that time spent in the garden was the perfect stress reliever during lockdown.

Sally Bate said: "Working at home during lock down gave us time to reinstate our vegetable garden for the first time in many years, build our new compost bins and watch slow worms mating!"





Matthew Martin, having just moved into a new house, found time to relax in a sheltered corner.

Because she wasn't opening her town garden this year, Sue Roe freed herself from the tyranny of frequent grass-cutting and edging.





Roger Last spent more time enjoying the bumper year for blossom.



Tina Douglas started a new water feature

And our designer, Karen Roseberry, found that she still had work so the garden got no extra time, but at least her partner, who was furloughed, got to finish their new temporary home...



Meetings of the Norfolk Gardens Trust committee have had to be held by Zoom.



From top left: Roger Lloyd, Sally Bate, Lynn Burroughs, Matthew Martin, Sue Roe, Nick Sandford, Caroline Keene, Peter Woodrow.

Carol and Ken Tunstall-Turner, Roughton Road, Cromer

How long have you had the garden?
We moved into our new home about eight years ago. Both bungalow and garden required extensive renovation.

What was it like?
The garden is about a third of an acre and split into three parts and then a large patio area. One part of the garden had a large hole where an above garden pool had been. Another part was completely covered in brambles. There was also a mini orchard of apple and pear trees. The garden had rhododendrons, magnolia, beech, cherry, fir and rowan as well as buddleia and wild honeysuckle. As the property had not been inhabited for some time the whole garden had become totally overgrown and we spent the next six years revealing what had once been a lovely garden.

How did you change it?
The original garden had obviously been lovely and well cared for by the first owners. We just took time to find what had originally been there. The apple and pear trees were cut and shaped as were the other bushes and trees. A new pond was put in and a new path laid. As we weeded we found plum slate in all the borders. We removed them, replaced the original ground cover that had rotted and put the slate back. We have also left parts wild, having discovered plenty of frogs and a couple of deer that had made it their home.

Were there any particular challenges?
Getting rid of the brambles was a major headache. We did not want to use chemicals so we cut back a large part and then covered for two years to prevent further growth and hopefully kill majority of it off. Although we had to live with an ugly eyesore for an extended length of time it did the job. When cutting back we found a large privet hedge at the back of the garden and a wooden door that led onto a quiet woodland path and bluebell wood leading into Cromer centre.
We also discovered broken stones from what had once been a rockery and I spent a number of months putting it





back together again. Out of the whole garden I have found the rockery became the most work and expense. I have now let forget-me-not and wild primroses invade and included daisies and lavender and quite like the affect. We sadly had to cut back a number of trees that had been planted together very near to the house that was completely blocking light out of one of the bedrooms and could become a threat to the foundations. We could not move them and so sadly had to cut them down.



Any future plans?
Mostly to just enjoy the garden. We are creating more wildlife habitat, adding more water resources and bird boxes, but as with any garden, you never really finish.

Autumn Talks

In light of the current situation and the potential for an autumn spike in Covid-19 as the weather turns colder, we have taken the difficult decision not to go ahead with a live audience for the last two talks of the year. The October talk will be rescheduled for 2021 and the November talk on Orchards of East Anglia will go ahead via Zoom.

Saturday 17th October 2020
"Norfolk Wild Flowers"



Our October talk "Norfolk Wild Flowers" by Simon Harrap from Natural Surroundings, Bayfield Estate will now take place in October 2021



Saturday 21st November 2020
"Orchards of East Anglia"
Funded by the Heritage Lottery and based in the School of History at the University of East Anglia, this three-year collaborative project, working with existing country orchard groups, other interested organisations and orchard owners, is devoted to discovering and understanding the past, present and future of orchards in Eastern England. Professor Tom Williamson from the University of East Anglia will broadcast this talk **via Zoom at 2pm.** Full details will be sent to members by email.



And looking ahead:

TATE TALK:
Saturday 6th March 2021
Venue: Bawdeswell Village Hall, Reepham Road, NR20 4RU

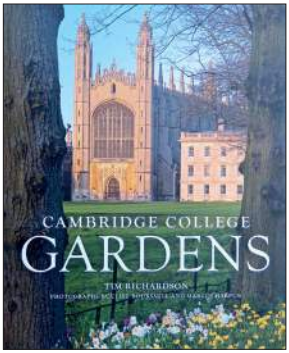
"Cambridge College Gardens"

An illustrated talk by Tim Richardson

Pre-booking only. Full information will be sent to members early in 2021.

This new book, on one of the world's finest collections of historic gardens, was reviewed in the spring 2020 edition of the NGT Magazine.

A day visit to Cambridge to see at first hand some of these special places will be planned for summer 2021.



Call For Articles

We welcome suggestions for articles to be included in future issues of the NGT Magazine. These could be pieces you are prepared to write or just thoughts about articles you would like to see in the magazine. We are interested in ideas about gardens in Norfolk (or further afield), historical research, gardening, plants, people in gardening etc. In the first instance send us an email at:
sueroe8@icloud.com

Clive Lloyd and Sue Roe, Editors



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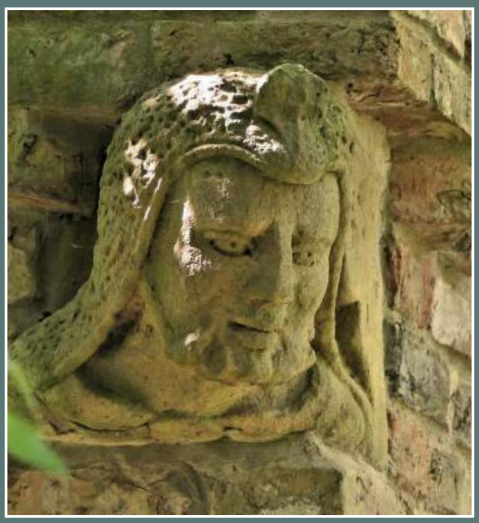
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Norfolk Gardens Trust

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