Spring 2023
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NGT Magazine



Norfolk Gardens Trust

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Cover: Cyril Flower, 1st Lord Battersea by Frederick Sandys 1872 See page 6.
Back Cover: Booton Hall. See events page 38 Photo by Jenny Dyer-

Report from the Chair - Spring 2023

When you read this report you will, I hope, be enjoying the spring bulbs in your garden, either those which are long established or those which you planted last autumn. Without wishing to advertise any particular supplier I obtain my bulbs from Bloms of Melchbourne in Bedfordshire. Whilst perhaps more expensive than some suppliers they supply a most attractive range of bulbs. As their name implies the original founder of Bloms was Dutch. They have, however, been established in this country for very many years and have been awarded nearly 70 gold medals at Chelsea

We will shortly be publishing, for the first time, a legacy leaflet in the hope that a few of you may consider benefitting the Norfolk Gardens Trust in your wills. Some years ago Mr and Mrs Tate included a bequest to the Trust in their wills. A significant portion of this has been invested and the income used to sponsor UEA students and provide grants to schools and community groups to advance their knowledge and awareness of the precious garden spaces around them. Do get in touch with me if you would like to discuss a possible bequest to the Trust. I promise not to subject you to any pressure.

In this Magazine you will find a photograph of those members of the Committee who attended a routine meeting of the Committee in January. Missing from the photograph were Sue Roe who is jointly responsible for editing this publication. Also missing were Roger Last, a former Chairman of the Trust and the owner of a marvellous garden at Corpusty, Lyn Burroughs our membership secretary, Tina Douglas who is responsible for our grants programme, and Nick Sandford.

You will also see Penny Coombes in the photo. Penny was attending our committee meeting as an observer. All being well Penny will be joining the committee as our new talks organiser. In due course, anyone who wishes can advise Penny of suggestions for our talks programme.

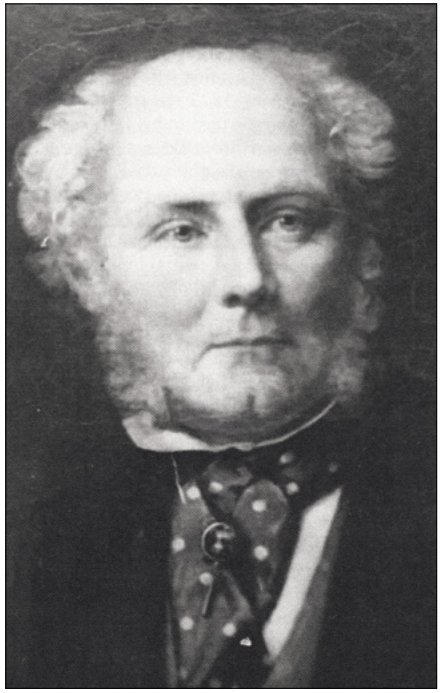
Matthew Martin



Mr Thomas's Garden Landscaping Work at Sandringham during the 1870s

by Jonathan Pointer, garden historian

In 1862, at the time of his twenty-first birthday and to provide her eldest son 'Bertie' (Albert Edward, 1841-1910) with a home and a project away from the distractions of London, the recently-widowed Queen Victoria carried through a plan previously agreed with her late husband. The c.8,000-acre shooting estate at Sandringham, north-west Norfolk, was bought for the substantial sum of £220,000 from the Hon. Charles Spencer Cowper (1816-79), a 'stepson' of Lord Palmerston. In March 1863 the Prince of Wales married Princes Alexandra of Denmark (1844-1925) and Sandringham House became their marital home.

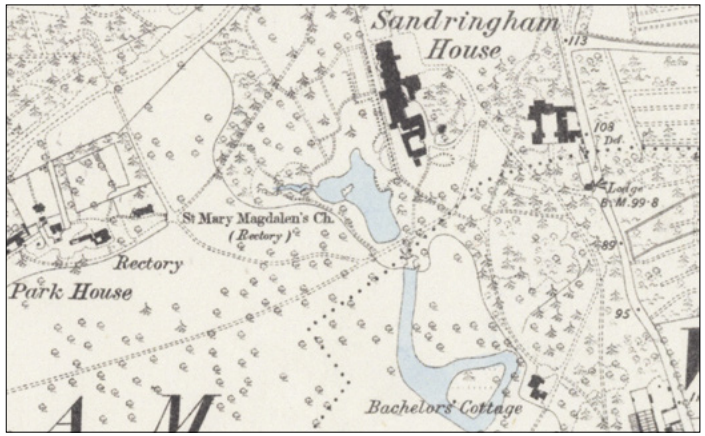


Portrait of William Brodrick Thomas (1811-98), probably c.mid-1860s. Source: East Sussex Record Office, Ref: AMS 6280/13

The subsequent few years made clear the inadequacies of the original house and highlighted the need for additional accommodation, not least for the Wales's rapidly expanding family. But in the late 1860s, alongside the house re-building programme, there also began a scheme of renovation in Sandringham's gardens and across the pleasure grounds. It was probably at the suggestion of Prince Edward's friend, Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild, that the then-fashionable garden designer William Brodrick Thomas (1811-98) of 52 Wimpole Street, London, was approached to direct this landscape garden development.

Thomas's personal involvement at Sandringham has usually been dated to the mid-1870s. However, it is possible that he might have been engaged some years earlier, during the time when Mr William Carmichael (c.1816-1904) was still employed as the Prince's head gardener (this being across the decade c.1864-1873). Some support is provided for this suggestion by a document held at the Royal Archives that records a payment to Thomas dated 12 August 1867 in connection with his having provided advice for drainage of water into a lake at Sandringham.

Garden History



Geographical arrangement of the extended Sandringham House and the two new lakes (detail) OS Map of Norfolk (6 inches to 1 mile), 1st edition published 1884



Original West Front of Sandringham House providing the backdrop to an (inaccurate!) artistic representation of the colourful new terrace garden subsequently laid during the 1870s F O Morris, 'A Series of Picturesque Views...' Vol. III (London: W Mackenzie, 1880

Sandringham's redeveloped main garden terrace lay on the west of the house, with the pleasure grounds (including two new lakes) principally to the south. Below the west front of the rebuilt mansion, which had been completed in autumn 1871, Thomas's garden plans (probably executed by Mr Carmichael and his staff) was comprised of three groupings of floral bedding. Nearest the house, two of these gardens contain small beds, edged with box, laid out on gravel. In each, bulbs and spring flowers were succeeded by displays of colourful summer flowering plants including mesembryanthemums, alternantheras and portulacas.

The third and largest garden was set on a flat turf base about two feet below the level of the broad west terrace walk, separated from the latter by a narrow grass slope and accessed by short flights of stone steps. This flower garden was comprised of shaped raised beds cut in the turf; to sustain winter interest each bed was edged with a different low-growing hardy evergreen (including common and variegated ivy, holly, heathers and cotoneaster), which 'hedge'

partly concealed a retaining earth ramp about 6-8 inches high. Within the decoratively-shaped beds were planted, in geometric patterns, a selection of mainly low-growing annuals and perennials including aubrietias, pansies, variegated arabis, ajugas and saxifrages, presenting a display of small colourful flowers upon a carpet of mixed green and variegated foliage. This garden was intended to be visible from inside the house, and additionally stocked so as to sustain an attractive display from November to February during the annual shooting season. However, as found with so many such schemes, over the years this decorative feature proved too labour-intensive to maintain. It was eventually ploughed up during World War II to make space for vegetable crops as part of the Dig For Victory campaign; subsequently (1947) it was grassed over and today remains as lawn.

It might be noted that Thomas's contribution to the gardens at Sandringham witnessed a shift in his landscaping principles away from a hitherto rather formal 'architectural' approach towards a more naturalistic styling. Thus, his new garden on the west lawn was not confined by balustraded or even low walls but gave way directly to open grassland scattered with trees.

To the south the unstructured grassland sloped down to a large water feature covering about three acres also devised by Thomas. It must be remembered that the locality's name 'Sandringham' is a derivation of 'a dwelling in a sandy wet meadow', and indeed much of the ground around the house proved to be damp if not boggy. Thomas moved a small pond, originally a 'sink' for this wet land and sited unsatisfactorily close to the west of the house, further south and west and expanded it to make two lakes connected by a cascade. Under Thomas's direction, on the eastern shore of the Upper Lake (nearest the house), the specialist firm of James Pulham and Son of Broxbourne, Hertfordshire, installed decorative rocky 'outcrops'; squat blocks of the ginger-coloured local natural carrstone supported horizontal slabs of Pulhamite artificial stone. Massed shrubs were planted around much of the border



Partial view (northern half) showing the open aspect of Sandringham's West Terrace garden c.1920s *Credit: Country Life, 1980 (futurecontenthub.com)*

Garden History

of the Upper Lake. The Lower Lake, longer, curved and encircling an island, had a more open aspect, being bounded to the east by rolling lawns planted with trees and shrubs.



Old Sandringham House, with original 'sink' pond on soft ground below the West Front. J. Hort. NS Vol. 22 No. 564 p. 60 (18 Jan 1872)

A Thomas family anecdote recounts that at a point during Thomas's engagement at Sandringham the Prince of Wales was shocked by the size of an invoice that Thomas submitted, exclaiming: 'A gentleman not to be described as inexpensive'. However, Thomas survived this awkward moment, subsequently entering the Wales's social circle with invitations to become a weekend house guest of Royalty – which ironically included further visits to Sandringham.



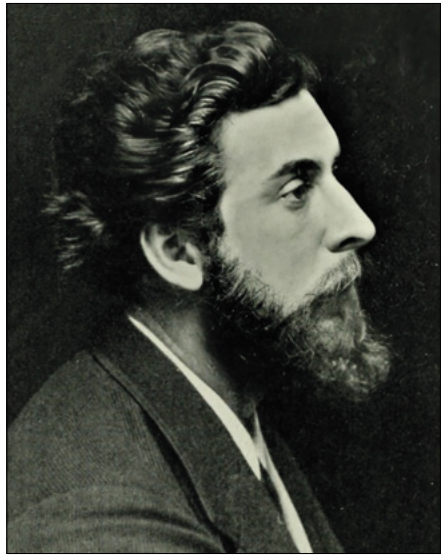
Sandringham Upper Lake, spring 2016, West Terrace lawn in background
Credit: iStock by Getty Images

Lord Battersea's Pleasaunce.

By Peter Jordaan, biographer and historian



Colour postcard.



Lord Battersea

A walk along the cliffs of the Norfolk coast at Overstrand eventually brings into sight a vast, rambling, red-brick plutocratic pile. Like Overstrand itself, it has the air of an elderly grandee down on their luck. A few careworn acres insulate it from the bungalows that have sprung up around it; however, a century ago the house sat in spectacular gardens stretching to sixty acres, with a gardener for every one of them.

This marine Xanadu had been the dream of Cyril Flower, 1st Lord Battersea. Married to Constance de Rothschild, he was a Liberal M.P. known as 'the most handsome man in Parliament'. Writing in 1940, his friend the novelist E.F. Benson recalled: 'Lord Battersea was of the type which Disraeli called 'the magnifico' and he had a genial, careless consciousness of his own splendours that seldom left him. No one in the least like him exists now.'

Garden History



The Cloisters

Cyril adored Italy, and had dreamt of a villa in Florence, and a palazzo in friendly Venice, where gondolieri were then magnets of desire. These fancies had been clipped by Constance but in 1888 she acquiesced to his hunger for a seaside pleasure dome, provided it was on more sober home turf.

The journalist and poet, Clement Scott, had popularised the stretch of Norfolk coast between Sheringham and Mundesley, which he dubbed 'Poppyland'. Chiming with the universal dream of a seaside idyll and the Victorian wildflower mania, it sparked a tourist boom, and not just of common folk. Overstrand, where Cyril found the cliff-top site to build his dream, would become known as 'The Village of Millionaires'.

With the help of Edwin Lutyens, two ugly semi-detached villas were absorbed into an ever-expanding mansion – a palatial jumble of some beautiful parts that, due to Cyril's meddling, never came together as a scenic whole. Lutyen's *coup de théâtre* was a spectacular twelve-bay cloister that stretched out parallel to the house.

Possibly close to Cyril's heart as he pursued this fantasy was a novel, *The New Republic* by William Mallock. A *succès-de-scandale*, it had featured a pagan voluptuary who lived in a villa overlooking the sea, where he sought 'retirement from the caresses of the selectest circles in London, in a yet selecter circle of his own.' Cyril would ensure The Pleasaunce was seductive; one guest writing: 'The house is warm



The Dovecote

& dark & scented, with low wide yielding sofas & jars full of rose leaves & spikenard [muskroot] & oriental curtains.' Gilded gondola lanterns, redolent of happy memories, added to the atmosphere.

The Pleasaunce may have been a compromised architectural vision but the full force of Cyril's passion would be unleashed on its landscape. It was an unforgiving environment in which to create any kind of garden but, fortunately, there was a model close to hand. On wind-swept dunes surrounding Cliff House at Cromer, a keen plantswoman, Katherine Lady Hoare, had embedded blast defences of sea buckthorn and wattle fencing, before going on to plant myrtle, arbutus, holly, cypress, and bougainvillea that sheltered her notable gardens.

With the advice of one of Lady Hoare's under-gardeners, and an army of his own, Cyril began his planning and planting, but would soon far outstrip anything botanical the district had ever seen. There were no elaborate hothouse ranges: Cyril laughingly told friends he was 'all for outside show'. As one account put it: 'Lord Battersea set himself to make the gardens as perfect as an ideal Italian garden ever was, and he succeeded beyond his dreams. Once within the garden gates, the visitor wonders whether he is in Greece or Rome; there are suggestions of both.'

Cyril's taste tended to be a grab-bag of plutocratic wants –The Pleasaunce's garden was never a unified vision. However, as an example of limitless wealth the end result was considered

Garden History



The Pergola

breathtaking – a succession of fantasy vistas so immaculately tended the effect was hallucinatory. In her novel *Ten Degrees Backward*, Ellen Thorneycroft Fowler, a friend of Constance, called it: 'the Garden of Dreams...more like a garden out of the Arabian Nights which had been called into being in one night by some beneficent Djin [spirit].' There was a sunken garden, 'paved with coral and amethyst, as only pink and purple flowers were allowed to grow within...a Japanese garden of streams and pagodas and strange bright flowers...an ideal fruit garden, where the pear-trees and the apple trees were woven into walls and architraves of green and gold.' There was also a summer house, a guest house, a loggia, a heather and conifer garden, a rosary, and 'a huge herbaceous border so glorious in its riot of colour that the dreamer's heart leaped up.'

Edwin Lutyens considered Cyril a thwarted charming boy, but it's unlikely he intuited his deeper motivation. Cyril's passion for a marine retreat set amidst a paradise garden wasn't simply due to his love of sea bathing, or even Mallock's novel. The vast walled estate and gardens, wrapped in the soothing background murmur of the sea and birdsong, and with its limitless clifftop sea view, provided the balm of an illusionary world away from the world and its judgements.

One guest who would have been sympathetic to Cyril's intentions was Alfred Parsons, whose signature appears in the Visitors Book in 1898. An artist who became a landscape gardener,



Gazebo built for Cyril's friend the poet Emily Lawless

Parsons was a confirmed bachelor who designed Princess Louise's garden at Rosneath: her wayward husband, the Duke of Argyll, was one of Cyril's closest friends.

Another visitor, Raymond Asquith, wrote that Cyril 'suffers terribly from his wife, who is full of philanthropy and temperance and all that sort of nonsense.' This entailed tolerating many of Constance's worthy, but heavy-going guests; Asquith noting: 'my host, hating them like death, but moving among them like a radiant god.' A feature of The Pleasaunce's gardens was a subterranean causeway: a rumour lingers in the Flower family that it provided Cyril with a means of making discreet visits to the cottages of his footmen, but it was likely even more useful for escaping Constance's more wearisome invitees.

In 1893, Cyril was offered the governorship of New South Wales, however he acceded to Constance's desire not to be parted from her mother. According to E.F. Benson: 'He was ambitious and it closed his career for him... giving his native magnificence nothing to exercise itself on, except palatial projections of himself.'

In 1902, Cyril was quietly arrested as the ringleader in a homosexual scandal. Two procurers were jailed, but unlike

Garden History



A modern view of The Pleasaunce

Oscar Wilde, in a remarkable case of 'class justice', he and other aristocrats involved were secretly granted immunity by the Government. By the time of his death from diabetes in 1907, the once prominent celebrity was an almost forgotten figure.

In his will, Cyril had stated with the greatest optimism it was his 'earnest wish and desire' that The Pleasaunce should be maintained as in his lifetime. It was not to be. Following Constance's death in 1931 the house became a Christian holiday home which it remains, while the majority of the estate was subdivided and built over. Only photographs, and paintings of the gardens by Beatrice Parsons, that were commissioned by the Batterseas, provide glimpses of the vanished fantasia. What remains is but the ghost of what was. Tout passe.



'Lutyens' steps

Peter's biography of Lord Battersea, 'A Secret Between Gentlemen', is available at Amazon. He continues to research this fascinating figure, and welcomes any new information from members, particularly from diaries or letters of the period. He can be reached at: contact@alchemiebooks.com

Ornamental Farm Buildings

by George Carter, garden historian and designer

The role of farm buildings as designed objects in gardens and landscapes has a long tradition; from the *bas courts* that formed part of the sequence of entrance courtyards of C16 and C17 houses and the flanking farm buildings, to C16 Palladian villas in the Veneto, they were designed to be part of a landscape ensemble.

In C18 Britain there are numerous examples of farm buildings dressed up as eye-catchers. Famously, William Kent gothicised a mill at Rousham to create a middle-ground object in the landscape beyond the River Cherwell and designed a two-sided gothic seat/cow shed in the late 1730s. The early *ferme ornée* at Woburn in Surrey, bought by Philip Southcote in 1735, had a Gothic Menagerie that housed fowl and was one of the many features that ornamented his 125 acre, largely farmed estate in Surrey. In *New Principles of Gardening* (1728), Batty Langley had already proposed that objects redolent of farming, such as haystacks, woodpiles, and small enclosures of corn should be placed in circular openings in formal bosquets.



Cottage at Rousham, gothicised as a mill by William Kent (1730s). ©Nat Chard.

In Norfolk there is a good selection of late C18/C19 farm buildings that are designed to be seen as part of the larger landscape. In *A General View of the Agriculture of the County of Norfolk* (1804), Nathaniel Kent noted that: 'In the species of building properly



The Great Barn, Holkham designed by Samuel Wyatt (c1790). Courtesy of Holkham Estate.



Dairy Farm at Gunton designed by Samuel Wyatt.
Courtesy of Evelyn Simak

appropriated to an agricultural report, greater exertions have, I believe, been made in Norfolk than in any other county of the Kingdom.' In particular, he describes The Great Barn at Holkham, designed by Samuel Wyatt (c. 1790s) that has four pedimented porches projecting on the E and W sides expressing the two threshing floors. Although it was, and is still, a functional barn it was built very much as a farming showpiece and was a destination in a tour of the estate. Kent also illustrates a gothic cottage built by Mr Robinson at Carbrook.

Humphry Repton had a rather negative view on the ornamental potential of farming and farm buildings: In *Theory and Practice* (1803) he wrote, 'The difficulty of uniting a park and a farm arises from this material circumstance, that the one is an object of beauty, the other of profit'. Repton did go on, however, to describe how farming in Hampshire and the neighbourhood of forests was made aesthetically more acceptable by having the various enclosures divided up by 'rows of copse wood and timber, from ten to twenty yards wide'. There are several designs by Repton and his son George for cattle and deer shelters in picturesque, rustic, barked wood, that would not disgrace park scenery; but, being of essence



Park Farm at Marham.

ephemeral, few survive. His view on the admission of arable land into parkland scenery changed later in his career – as at Sheringham.

In W S Gilpin's, *Practical Hints on Landscape Gardening* (1832) there is a slightly more relaxed view of the value of farm buildings in the designed landscape, and he writes that with smaller houses: 'the stable offices, and even farm buildings, if well grouped with trees, and not in the way of the view, may frequently be retained with perfect propriety in conjunction with a house of this character'.

Many of Norfolk's larger estates had Model Farms that were the principal, usually in-hand, farms. At Gunton Park, the East Park includes the early C19 Dairy Farm (listed grade II) and carpenter's yard designed by Samuel Wyatt. It forms one of a group of several buildings inside the park that form individual 'objects' in the scenery. This is particularly important in the East and South park largely designed by WS Gilpin, slightly later (c. 1835), when Gilpin both provided settings for existing buildings and incorporated new ones into the scenery. The park, and many of its buildings, has been beautifully restored from severe dereliction by Kit Martin and Ivor Braka over the past 40 years.



Model Farm complex at Holkham.

The Swaffham born architect W J Donthorn (1799-1859) – primarily known for his uncompromisingly plain astylar neo-classical houses, pared down gothic workhouses and mansions – also had a line in elegant farm buildings and pretty farmhouses. His best composition at Marham House is comprised of Park Farmhouse and Garden Cottage in a very attractive mixed gothic style; this is set within a group of austere classical farm buildings and garden walls all on the edge of the village of Marham and surrounded by attractive parkland.



Former engine house (1864), now an addition to the mid-C19 barns at Silverstone Farm.

The Model Farm complex, Holkham, is slightly later (1852-3) by G A Dean. The farm buildings arranged around two sides of a large courtyard open to the N side, and with the 1780s Samuel Wyatt house forming a third side – the latter originally an Inn. In matching Gault brick with limestone dressings and slate roofs the farm buildings are considerably more ornamented than the Wyatt house. Single storey ranges are flanked by two-storey corner pavilions. The central section in the West range is slightly advanced and pedimented. Large door openings with semi-circular arched heads now form an entrance to the courtyard. A central lantern with hipped lead roof is surmounted by an iron weather vane. From the outside the complex provides a substantial feature on the perimeter of the West Park.

And at my own house, the Engine House – designed to house a steam threshing machine and built by the Elmham Estate in 1864 – has become a cottage to terminate a vista in the garden).

Why were the pleasure gardens of Norwich so successful throughout the eighteenth century?

by Darcie Kerr, intern at Save Britain's Heritage



1741 Prospect of Norwich showing the design of Vauxhall pleasure garden. Norfolk Record Office C/WT/1/17/2

Pleasure gardens were first created in London as early as the 1660s and have been defined as the first public gardens allowing entry based on a ticketed fee rather than position or family name. However, it was not just London that could boast of popular pleasure gardens for during the eighteenth century other major provincial cities, such as Bath and Norwich, housed gardens that rivalled the capital's. Norwich hosted four major pleasure gardens between the period 1663 and 1849: the Wilderness, My Lord's Garden, Vauxhall and Ranelagh. These were formal public gardens that put on entertainments including music, fireworks and breakfasting. The design of a typical pleasure garden incorporated avenues, bowers, benches and large performance spaces providing shade and leisure as well as the opportunity for greater social mixing. One of the most significant reasons for their success and popularity within Norwich was the changing view of leisure and pleasure within an overtly visual age, something this article will explore.

The eighteenth-century Enlightenment brought new ideas of pleasure, particularly the role that the senses played in heightening experiences, paving the way for the success of public venues like the pleasure gardens, which prioritised enjoyment through smell, sight, touch and taste. Changes in scientific and philosophical understanding increased people's desire to expand their sensory experiences, attempting to improve both education and mind. This change was noted by contemporaries John Locke and Kant who viewed the senses as the primary way for people to understand and obtain true knowledge – Kant placing a particular emphasis on sight being the principal route to enlightened thinking. Pleasure gardens became primary locations as

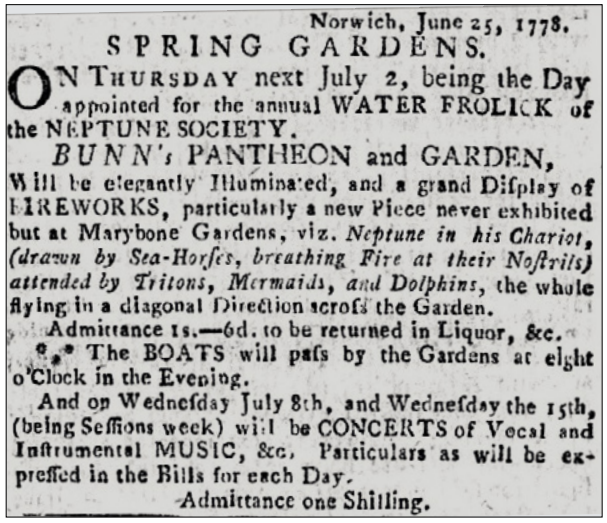


1830 map of Norwich showing the amphitheatre – the primary performance space at Ranelagh. NRO N/EN 20/185

multi-sensory venues combining music, art and food, making them stages of sensual pleasure in which people could improve their minds.

Events that took place within the gardens required the receptiveness of the audience's senses, demonstrating the immersive capability of landscape design and its ability to transport visitors away from the images, smells and noise of the city. By the use of mechanical device, pleasure gardens could enact scenes of fantasy and mysticism. An event at Vauxhall, for example, saw, 'Neptune in his Chariot, drawn by sea-horses breathing fire at their nostrils' as well as 'tritons, mermaids and dolphins' paraded on a boat which sailed past the gardens. At the Wilderness, Joseph Hammond displayed a piece called 'Theaseus and Hercules' Triumph', which saw the garden decorated with 'four pillars adorned with roses supporting an arch' and a 'pair of gates where Cerberus the three headed dog lies guarding them'. Ranelagh, in 1777, put on an impressive display of 'Hercules delivering Theseus out of the infernal regions', promising the 'greatest explosion that ever was exhibited'. The gardens, therefore, aimed to make visitors feel as if they had been transported to a new realm, utilising new advances in technology that allowed people to engage in overtly visual pleasures.

The very design of the gardens, with their long avenues of tall trees, allowed for mystery and intrigue while the displays of gods and fabulous creatures allowed social mixing, pushing the boundaries of roles and hierarchy in a setting that encouraged illusion. James Campbell's 1975 reconstruction of Norwich,



Norwich, June 25, 1778.

SPRING GARDENS.

ON THURSDAY next July 2, being the Day appointed for the annual WATER FROLICK of the NEPTUNE SOCIETY.

BUNN's PANTHEON and GARDEN,

Will be elegantly Illuminated, and a grand Diſplay of FIREWORKS, particularly a new Piece never exhibited but at Marybone Gardens, viz. *Neptune in his Chariot, (drawn by Sea-Horſes, breathing Fire at their Noſtrils) attended by Tritons, Mermaids, and Dolphins*, the whole flying in a diagonal Direction acroſs the Garden.

Admittance 1s.—6d. to be returned in Liquor, &c.

*** The BOATS will paſs by the Gardens at eight o'Clock in the Evening.

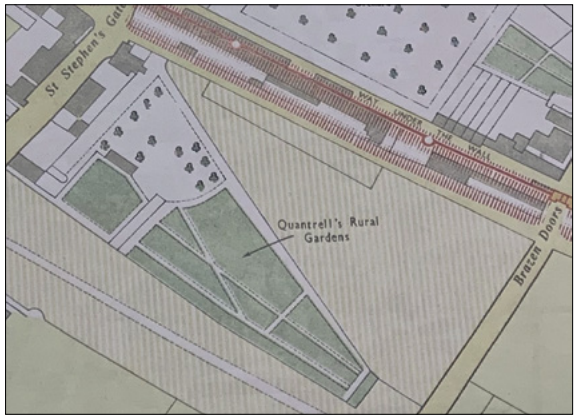
And on Wedneſday July 8th, and Wedneſday the 15th, (being Seſſions week) will be CONCERTS of Vocal and Inſtrumental MUSIC, &c. Particulars as will be expreſſed in the Bills for each Day.

Admittance one Shilling.

1778 newspaper advert for an event at Vauxhall. Courtesy of British Newspaper Archive

based on a map of 1789, highlights the dominance of these avenues in both Ranelagh and Vauxhall. The map depicts several interconnected avenues of differing widths within densely planted trees allowing for private interactions and encounters. The 1774 lease of Ranelagh Gardens further sheds light on the way these avenues were used to conjure excitement and escapism, listing features including 'alcoves, seats and benches' to encourage both contemplation and the subversion of social norms within more private areas. The combination of dramatic displays including mechanics and music aimed to blur the boundary between fantasy and reality, making the gardens attractive spaces to practice social emulation under the guise of enlightened thinking.

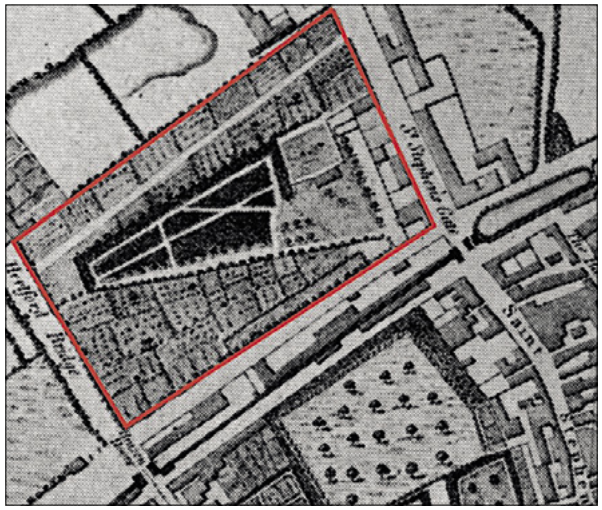
Further to this, pleasure gardens were intimately tied to the traditional image of the garden in which the sweet smells of fruits and flowers were able to heal the mind and create bodily fulfilment. As a result, cities saw an increase in flower planting and garden creation as the middle classes were encouraged to take walks in gardens that provided them with sweet, clean air. A poem by Sir Edmund Bacon encapsulates the sensory experience of Vauxhall detailing the 'lucid lamps that shine between/ the being boughs, all fresh and green' alongside the 'soft expiring notes/ as o'er the stream the musick floats.' Ranelagh also promoted itself as a space of sensory delight, boasting an impressive range of fruit trees and bushes, adding to the image of the garden being a place of escapism. The 1774 lease details 'eight hundred of the best sort of Dutch Corinth or Current Bushes' as well as peach, quince and plum trees.



James Campbell's 1975 reconstruction of Norwich in 1789, showing the avenues within Quantrell's Rural Gardens (Ranelagh). UEA ZZ 44



James Campbell's 1975 reconstruction of Norwich in 1789, showing the avenues within Bunn's Spring Gardens (Vauxhall). UEA ZZ 44



Hochstetter's 1789 map highlighting the number of shrubs, trees and flower beds within Ranelagh. Norfolk Heritage Centre.

Norwich was able to become a predominant leisure town with multiple thriving pleasure gardens rivalling that of the capital as it embodied what was popular within eighteenth-century enlightenment thinking. The gardens encapsulated the changing ideas of enjoyment and the increasing prominence placed on sensory exploration, as shown through the popularity of avenues, fruit trees and mechanics transporting visitors to foreign lands.

The NGT Committee



The NGT committee members at their meeting in January 2023.

Back row: Penny Coombes, Keri Williams. Hilary Talbot, Graham Innes. **Front row:** Karen Moore, Carol Keene, Sally Bate, Matthew Martin, Roger Lloyd, James Warren. Members not present: Lyn Burroughs, Tina Douglas, Roger Last, Sue Roe and Nick Sandford.

The committee meets 6 times a year in either Bawburgh or Bawdeswell Village Hall and their roles are listed inside the back cover.

Photo: Stuart Beard

Circular Gardens: the Norwich roundabouts

by Lesley Kant Cunneen

Lesley is a keen gardener with a doctorate in landscape history



Sustainable planting scheme with hemerocallis, heuchera, kniphofia and ophiopogon backed by Vviburnum tinus and palm at Grapes Hill, July 2016

In 1971 Reginald Maudling the Home Secretary, announced a major reorganisation of local government. By 1974, Norwich's almost six-hundred-year reign as a county had ended and control of education, social services and highways had been ceded to the county of Norfolk. Councillor Walker, the long-serving chair of the Parks Committee, expressed particular concern at the loss of city's highways, fearing that the impressive programme of roadside planting would wither. Eventually an agreement was reached that allowed Norwich to continue oversight of its roads and the anticipated decline was averted. Over the following fifty years the city continued to manage not only its extensive tree programme but also its roundabouts..

Every quiz addict knows that Letchworth Garden City was the first place in the country to host a roundabout in 1909 but the concept was the brainchild of Ebenezer Howard, the nineteenth-century founder of the garden city movement. The term roundabout evolved later; in the beginning they were known as traffic islands, a refuge rather than a system to regulate traffic flow. Norwich was a comparatively late introducer of traffic islands but an early convert to roundabout gardening.



Phormiums provide a dynamic backcloth for agapanthus, begonia and Ophiopogon 'Nigra' edging at Barrack Street in September 2012

Garden History

In 1950 the Parks Committee mildly suggested to the Parks Superintendent, the formidable Captain Sandys-Winsch, that the city roundabouts might be laid out with flowers to celebrate the Festival of Britain – the post-war 'tonic for the nation.' The Captain responded with muted enthusiasm quoting lack of funds but the councillors prevailed and a year later funding for seven traffic islands on the major roads leading into Norwich had been approved. The pattern was established: the following year the new reign was welcomed with gardened roundabouts brimming with flowers and floral roundabouts became a significant feature of the city landscape for the following fifty years.

The Captain's successor, Mr. Anderson expanded the horticultural project as Norwich's road network burgeoned. By the late sixties, the Earlham Road roundabout had become a convenient pedestrian short-cut and the Parks Committee despaired. Anderson proposed the insertion of flower beds close to the boundary, astutely predicting that miscreants who thoughtlessly stomped over grass would think twice before trampling flowers. In the early seventies one of the city councillors was appalled to discover lavish use of hoses on the Newmarket Road roundabout, despite water restrictions recently imposed on the general public. His exasperation was such that he took direct action, stopping the gardeners in their tracks and making a formal complaint to the Chief Executive. No contrition was shown by the Parks Superintendent, who expostulated to the Parks Committee on the intervention. Apparently the roundabout had been recently planted and the



Lobelia, begonia and canna contrast with silver and grey foliage permanent planting at All Saints Green, August 2000



Subtle and sustainable planting of conifers and heathers at Martineau Lane, April 2005



Conifers punctuate the mature permanent planting at Newmarket Road. Exuberant flashes of colour are provided by red and yellow annuals.

water was essential for the survival of the plants. The councillor was reprimanded and the roundabout garden thrived.

On reorganisation the Parks Department was replaced by an Amenities and Leisure Department and Mr. Anderson, by now Director of Parks, retired along with many of the former Parks Committee. Under the new agreement the horticultural regime of gardening roundabouts continued apace, employing the traditional and lavish twice yearly bedding-out regime of annuals, including pelargoniums and begonias, grown in the extensive city greenhouses at Earlham Park. The floriferous bedding displays required many thousands of plants and although plant cultivation had been a long-standing tradition in local authorities it was eventually to prove too costly for straitened council budgets. Outsourcing of plant production – and later, grounds maintenance staff – was the result. As the twentieth century drew to a close George Ishmael, then landscape architect in the Planning Department, proposed two cost-saving initiatives. Roundabout sponsorship was introduced as a means of augmenting council coffers and the introduction of an ecologically sustainable planting policy was the second. Bespoke



Vibrant impatiens and cannas border palms, phormiums and artemesia at Grapes Hill July 2001.

combination of George's landscape designs and Terry Bane's horticultural oversight and sponsorship success, proved a serendipitous partnership. The exercise of driving around the Norwich ring roads became a gardener's delight, exorcising frustration at traffic delays by lifting the spirits and consolidating Norwich's reputation as a green and flourishing city.

landscapes for each roundabout were designed using permanent planting schemes, supplemented with edging plants, initially annuals, subsequently perennials and occasionally site-seeded annuals such as clarkia and nigella. This imaginative approach to roundabout planting resulted in stunning circular landscapes, many featuring the new-wave planting technique of symbiotic plant species. The first radical venture was at Ketts Hill, close by Mousehold Heath, where a drought-resistant scheme of grasses and heathers subtly echoed the nearby medieval landscape.

The result was breathtaking. Norwich roundabouts became an exercise in horticultural bravura: in the winter and spring the permanent evergreen shrubs were augmented by bulbs. In the summer and autumn the swathes of stipa and helictotrichon, phormiums, euphorbias, lavender and rue were supplemented by ever more inventive borders, providing splashes of bold colour. The

Two years ago Norfolk concluded the long-standing inter-authority agreement. Norwich's age of the roundabout thus echoed the reign of the late Queen. It is ironic that her successor, a man renowned for his gardening enthusiasm, should accede just as the Norwich roundabouts are destined to lose their horticultural flair and gardening expertise.

Many thanks to Terry Bane and George Ishmael for their invaluable assistance with this article.

All photographs courtesy of Terry Bane. More photos can be seen at www.norwichinbloom.co.uk

See also: (1) 'Norwich's Floral Roundabouts', George Ishmael and Ali Dore, NGT Journal 1998

(2) Norwich Record Office, NTC 28/2, Minutes of the Parks and Gardens Committee

A historic Old Catton garden, redesigned

By the owners Hugh & Jane Berridge.

The garden at 69 Spixworth Road, Old Catton NR6 7NQ is approximately one acre, part of a considerably larger garden that belonged to the house known as Catton Place or The Firs, built by Robert Rogers in 1758 when he became Norwich Mayor. The house and St Margaret's church with its 12th century round tower are the only buildings in Old Catton listed Grade II*. Its entry in Pevsner opens: 'A beautiful five-bay house of three storeys.' In 1937 two acres and the coach house to the south were sold off and the main house and garden divided into three properties, of which 69 is one.

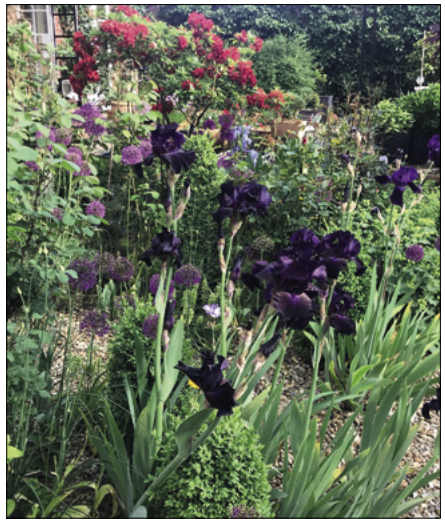
We started work on the garden in 2010 shortly after we moved in so the results of our labours and garden redesign are now becoming apparent. For the purposes of this article our garden can be divided into five areas.

Entrance to the property is via a courtyard adjacent to Spixworth Road. This has been planted with an emphasis on evergreens in order to create a sense of calm and formality: height is achieved by three fastigiate yew trees; spring colour by two large camellias; and summer interest by choisia, *Hydrangea paniculata* 'Limelight', clematis 'Sea Breeze' and 'Amber'. Winter jasmine and *Clematis cirrhosa* 'Jingle Bells' and 'Winter Beauty' provide some colour in the winter months with scent from *Sarcoccoca confusa* and winter honeysuckle.

To the rear there is a west-facing garden



Pond planting, June.



Gravel planting in spring.

Garden History



Garden layout in Winter.

with an oval pond and greenhouse. The emphasis here is on structural shrubs, yew and roses. The general layout of this garden, the white garden beyond and the area of meadow leading to the woodland is illustrated above. An under-planting of statuesque bronze green phormium 'Maori Queen', *Cornus sibirica* and pittosporum 'Tom Thumb' below a carefully pruned 'Autumnalis' cherry tree provide vibrant colour in the low winter sun.

We keep hens and rapidly learned that they are both untidy and destructive so it was necessary to divide the rear walled garden; this has been done by means of a curved double yew hedge which encloses the hens in the white garden with its round lawn. Trial and error was the only way to build up a selection of hen-proof white plants and shrubs. Fortunately, established roses seem to be immune so there is a selection of 'Desdemona', 'Claire Austin' and several white climbers on the walls to the south and west. To provide structural height, Italian cypress trees were planted at the end of the walled garden.

Beyond the end wall lies the fourth part of the garden – an area of meadow grass dominated by a large copper beech tree. This site was cleared of invasive plants, such as rosebay willow herb, and a number of tree stumps. Before sowing

grass we hand mattocked the whole area and were pleasantly surprised one spring by a large sheet of glowing purple crocuses, unplanted by us. Daffodils follow the crocuses then a profusion of bluebells beneath the copper beech.



Meadow in spring.

We cut the meadow once a year in the autumn and have found that it is beneficial to the daffodil bulbs not to remove the cut grass.

The final section is woodland that extends to the boundary with Catton Park. We have been continually developing this by means of a series of 'projects'. One of the first was to clear an area of dense brambles and plant it with winter-flowering scented plants – winter honeysuckle, winter sweet, *Sarcoccoca confusa*, Bodnant viburnum, mahonia and witch hazel 'Jelena'. This planting is flanked by various white-flowering camellias and is under-planted with snowdrops and hellebores.

Other woodland plantings are of rhododendron, azalea, magnolia, acers to provide autumn colour, and silver birch. Under-planting includes pulmonaria, hellebore, snowdrop and, in particularly shady parts, ferns.

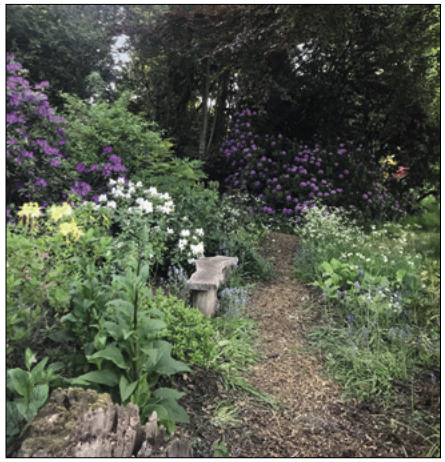
In the woodland area we have dug two wildlife ponds and increased the number of paths throughout, partly in homage to an old undated plan that showed the whole wood dissected by a pattern of paths. Our paths have been aimed to reveal certain plantings rather than an attempt to re-establish what appears to have been a geometric layout. Some thought has been given to what surface to adopt. Our choice of woodchip gives a natural look and acts as a weed suppressant.

Garden History



Winter colour.

Failures - we certainly have had some, but as with the fly-fisher whose sport palls if a fish is caught with every cast, so the gardener must endure a fair share of failures in order to cherish any success. Our attempts to establish a small orchard within a woodland clearing began with a selection of trees that would neither establish nor bear fruit. In a second attempt, mature-enough trees bore fruit but the only beneficiary has been the large population of grey squirrels who ruthlessly strip the fruit just before it ripens. Also, had we foreseen increasing summer drought we would not have attempted to create a rhododendron walk along the edge of the meadow area to the woodland. We would also have resisted the sweet-box colours in the Millais catalogue and contented ourselves with more robust varieties such as 'Cunningham's White', 'Mrs T.H. Lowinsky' and 'Flore-pleno'.



Woodchip path in spring.

The Berridges' garden, together with others in Old Catton, is open in aid of Catton Park (next Open Day is Sunday 14th May 2023).

Do you need help in the garden?

The WRAGS trainee scheme matches trainee gardeners, keen to learn practical horticultural skills, with suitable garden owners or head gardeners.

Time spent at home and in the garden during lockdown led to an uplift in interest in horticulture; the WRAGs scheme (Work and Retrain as a Gardener) offers aspiring gardeners a step towards making that their career. Trainees work for 12-14 hours a week for a year under the instruction of the garden owner or head gardener. On confirmation of appointment applicants pay an administration fee and receive the National Living Wage from the owner. Graduates of the scheme have gone on to run their own garden business, work in plant nurseries and become head gardeners.

The scheme is administered by the Working for Gardeners Association (WFGA), a charity formed in 1899. Alongside the WRAGs training scheme, it offers workshops, skill days and garden visits. Its network of Regional Managers monitor trainees and use their local knowledge to source new gardens. Currently, the number of potential trainees outstrips available gardens so the WFGA is seeking owners who have established a garden of which they are proud and can pass on their know-how to a new generation. Training is built around the charity's curriculum, and Regional Managers are on hand to advise. If you think that you can give a trainee a year's part-time paid experience, get in touch. You could be the catalyst that propels a life-changer into a rewarding new career.

Contact: Email admin@wfga.org.uk.
Website: wfga.org.uk. Instagram: @wfga_org



Josie Zhou at Murray Edwards College

My year as a trainee gardener at Houghton Hall

By Lisa Whaley

The Professional Gardeners' Guild traineeship provides three years of training – each year at a different garden – and I was delighted to learn that my first year as a trainee gardener would be spent in the walled gardens at the stunning Houghton Hall, the residence of Lord and Lady Cholmondeley. With its range of different garden rooms, a spectacular double-sided herbaceous border and impressive glasshouses, I knew there would be a lot to learn and a lot to enjoy.

My year at Houghton started at the end of August 2021; I joined a team of six gardeners led by Head Gardener Richard Ernst and Assistant Head Gardener Rosie Ernst. Even though the garden closed to the public a few weeks after I started there was plenty of work to do. September and October involved deadheading the 'Iceberg' roses and the range of dahlias, with 'Wine Eyed Jill' and 'Cafe au Lait' becoming fast favourites. This was followed by planting hundreds of spring-flowering bulbs such as camassia in the Italian Garden and a mix of tulips throughout the hot and cold Long Border.

Out of the public gaze it was a good opportunity for some of the less glamorous jobs, particularly cleaning



the glasshouses with hosepipes and brushes to flush out any pests like greenfly, whitefly and red spider mite that had become too comfortable over the summer. As winter loomed, the dahlias were cut down and topped with straw before being snugly pinned down by hessian. Tender plants such as *Lobelia tupa* were dug up and overwintered in the glasshouse, tender pots were moved into the Polytunnel and olive trees were protected with fleece. In December, rose pruning and training was a priority, followed in the New Year by pruning wisteria 'Walkway' and preparing the ground with high nutrient compost for the sweet peas. January and February was consumed with apple tree pruning and raspberry training. And from the end of February through March seed sowing became the order of the day – a job I thoroughly enjoyed as it holds so much promise for the year to come. As the coldest of the weather moved behind us in April, plants and statues were uncovered, and pricking out and potting-on took place on a grand scale.

With the ground starting to warm up, we started to directly sow matthiola and phlox in the Outer Rose Garden and amaranthus 'Green Thumb', *Gilia tricolour*, and bupleurum in the cut flower beds. All the 680 sweet peas that we had grown and hardened off in cold frames were planted out along a stretch of carefully placed canes. In May it was rewarding to see plants we had cared for in the Propagation House planted out as plugs and, before we knew it, it was time again to open the garden for which





the Garden Room was adorned with lots of pots of beautiful tender fuchsias, pelargoniums and clivia.

In June the Diamond Beds took focus as they were planted with heliotrope, chocolate cosmos and pelargoniums that we had grown from cuttings the previous September, replacing wallflowers that

A Trainee Gardener



had been there since October. June was also the time to reap the benefits of the Fruit Garden, as we picked redcurrants, alpine strawberries, raspberries and cherries, that were all taken for use at the Hall. July then produced kilo upon kilo of gorgeous gooseberries. My time in the Walled Garden drew to a close at the end of August and I rounded off my year by taking cuttings for next year's bedding and pot plants – a task I joined in my first week at the garden. Such is the circular and rewarding nature of gardening.

It is safe to say that working at Houghton Hall Walled Garden has given me a further understanding and respect for the work of gardeners. I realise that the stunning blooms and tidy forms of roses, clematis and wisteria don't happen without a careful pruning hand, and the continued flowering of potted plants doesn't happen without diligent watering and feeding. I will never underestimate the continued weeding, lengths of manually cut edging and amount of leaf collecting involved in keeping a garden so beautiful and neat. My year has been packed full of learning new plant names, getting to grips with new tools and becoming very familiar with varying pests



and diseases and the biological control used to reduce them. I also feel I have had a good introduction to surviving the seasons, as this year brought a lot of challenging weather that other gardeners will have experienced.

I would like to end by expressing my thanks to Lord and Lady Cholmondeley for providing the opportunity for me to work at Houghton Hall, and to the Gardening Team for their support and guidance. I have really enjoyed learning from and getting to know my colleagues and the volunteers at the gardens, some of whom have become great friends. For my second year placement I have moved to Windsor Great Park, which will provide a new adventure; however, I look back to my time at Houghton with great fondness and will miss entering those wonderful walls every day.



For more information on Houghton Hall and its Walled Garden: www.houghtonhall.com

Follow the Walled Garden on Instagram: houghton_walled_garden

For more information on the Professional Gardeners' Guild: www.pgg.org.uk

Doreen Normandale: the life of a gardener

(As recalled to Chris Billing)



Doreen Normandale, née Crowther, was a Yorkshire woman who retired to Norfolk in 1979. She was the first from her all-girls school in Halifax to choose a career in horticulture after her headmistress arranged for her to spend a year as a part-time apprentice in the parks department. She went on to study horticulture at Reading University. Shamefully, the degree course was not open to women; instead she took a two-year diploma compressed into 18 months under war-time conditions.

Aged 19 she was the youngest person to work as a government advisor in East Sussex on the 'Dig for Victory' campaign in which citizens were urged to grow their own food. After the war, Doreen continued to advise growers on pest and disease control and gave talks on vegetable production to home-growers and gardening clubs. For this, she was taught to drive and provided with a 'ministry' car with precious petrol coupons; she had to become a good map reader as all signposts had been removed when the war began.

At this time Amateur Gardening Magazine featured question and answer pages under 'Doubts and Difficulties.' The editor lived near Crawley and heard Doreen giving a talk to his local Village Produce Association. He asked her to answer some of his reader's questions for two shillings each. Later, she was promoted to assistant editor, working in London.

During her time in East Sussex, when Doreen became very interested in growing fruit, the editor helped her to specialise and sent her to the fruit



Doreen's first garden in 2001

research stations. She wrote an Amateur Gardening handbook 'Currants and Gooseberries' and a small general book 'Fruit for Small Gardens'. These were well received but the fact that they were written by a woman was disguised under the authorship of 'D.S. Crowther.'



Doreen's garden. Credit, Annie Greene-Armytage

After the war Doreen married John Normandale who had completed his National Service in the Army. They still needed her income but in those days her youth and gender limited her chances of promotion so that when the editor retired she was pushed sideways to edit Collingridge gardening books – an unfulfilling office-based job. Fortunately, John heard that Plant Protection Limited were seeking someone to work with their photographer to make films for their representatives to show to groups of growers. These films would promote their products for controlling pests, diseases and weeds. This was a two-person film unit based in Haslemere, an easy train-ride from her London flat. Now she found specimens, sites, wrote scripts, commentaries and thoroughly enjoyed the job.

Moving from their London flat to their first home in Addington, near Croydon, made it more difficult for Doreen to be away from home where there was gardening and decorating work to do. So, when rationing ended in 1954 she gave up permanent work to become a freelance writer and to start a family. She wrote about fruit growing on which she answered queries for most of the gardening magazines. When the girls left home she retired to Norfolk and here she designed and worked in her own gardens at Thorpe End and, latterly, Wroxham. Even when she had to leave the work to a knowledgeable friend/gardener she was still able to pot-up surplus plants for friends and local charities.

Doreen died at Wroxham in July 2022, aged 96.

Planning: Heacham Park

Keri Williams, NGT Planning Adviser

A proposed replacement house at Heacham Park is one of the more interesting recent planning consultations we have received.

History

Heacham Park is in north-west Norfolk, on the fringe of Heacham village. It is a small Park of about 22 hectares, with an interesting and well-documented history. The Park was assembled in the 18th century by Edmund Rolfe, with later additions and alterations by successive owners. Building of Heacham Hall began in 1768. The Hall was on or close to the site of a former manor house, with stables, workshops and a walled garden to the rear. Among later changes to Heacham Park was the creation of a lake in the 1920s. Heacham Hall was requisitioned by the army and was accidentally burned down in 1941. In the 1980s a smaller house was built on the site of outbuildings. The kitchen garden walls remain, although there are now industrial buildings within them.

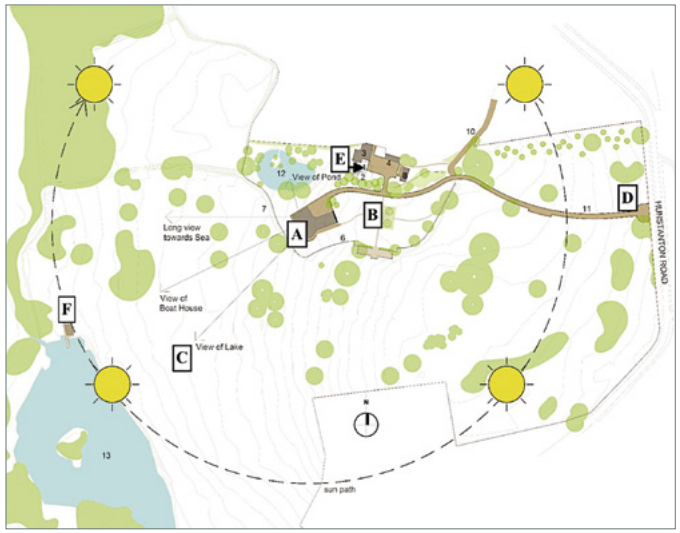
The Proposals

The 1980s house is poorly designed and sited. Only an annexe, workshop and garage building will be retained. The new house (label A overleaf) will provide a fresh focal point, being more centrally sited within the Park. It will not impinge on the site of the former Hall (B) but will be framed by some 19th century 'bottle-balustrade' garden walls. It will be close to an 18th century ha-ha, with principal



Heacham Hall pre-1921. ©A Buildings Fan

views towards the lake (C). A new access (D) will be created to the east, close to the line of an earlier one. A small, walled small kitchen garden is also proposed (E) and a new boathouse (F) will replace an inadequate lakeside building. There will also be a tree planting scheme for the Park. The contemporary design approach proposed is a valid one in this context, where nothing of the earlier Hall remains. The house is designed and sited for sustainability and energy efficiency.



Proposed scheme. Credit: online.west-norfolk.gov.uk



Proposed design

Conclusion

Heacham Park is a significant part of Norfolk's heritage of designed landscapes, albeit not formally registered by Historic England. This comprehensive approach to its planning is welcome and will not harm the Park's historic and landscape character. Our comments supporting the proposals were taken into account by Kings Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council. On 12 January 2023 the council approved the planning application subject to a range of conditions.

Dates for your Diary

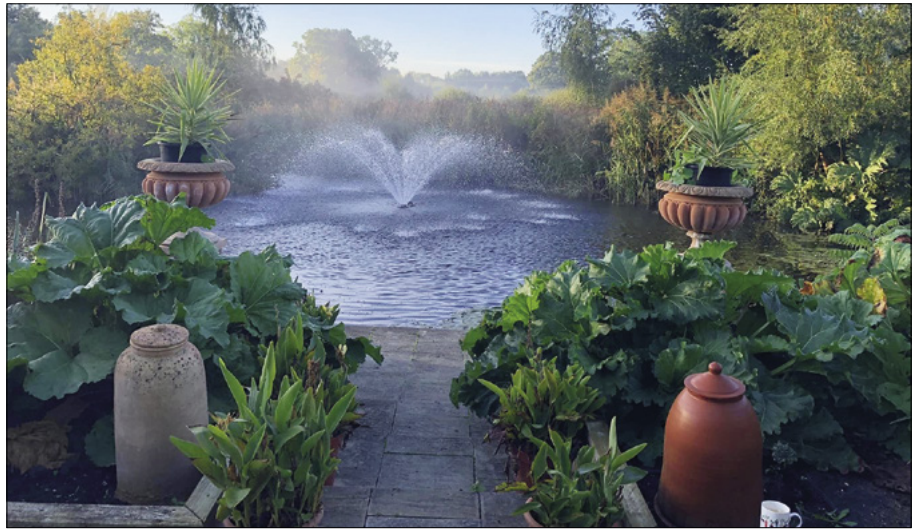
Saturday 20th May 2 - 5pm
Beck Hall, Billingford, Dereham NR20 4QZ

William De Beck founded a hospice for travellers to the shrine at Walsingham in 1224. In the reign of Richard II it became the site of the Manor House of the Curzons who were Lords of the Manor until 1606 when the house and surrounding land was sold to Sir Edward Cooke. The hospice was closed at the Dissolution and the Cookes built the present House on the site. Sir Henry Bedingfield (1st Bart.) resided here during the early years of Charles II before returning to Oxborough Hall. Sir Edward Cooke was a judge and the property later descended to The Earl of Leicester and the Holkham Estate. The house then became a farmhouse and remained in the ownership of the Holkham Estate until 1954 when it was bought by the Garrod family. In 2002 Sir William and Lady Goodenough started the 20-year restoration project of the house.

The moat, fed by underground springs, dates to 1410. In 2002 the garden was largely farmland with derelict outbuildings and the restoration project has only been in action for about 15 years. It contains a stream that runs into the Wensum, large ponds, many established trees and is surrounded by open arable farmland. This is still a work in progress with the aim of creating a low-maintenance garden but suitable for climate change, conservation projects, fruit and vegetable growing and some re-wilding.

Teas

Open by kind invitation of Lady Goodenough



Thursday 8th June 2 - 5pm
Booton Hall, Near Reepham, NR10 4NZ

The hall and old stables form one side of a one and a half-acre walled garden. This was re-designed in 2014 when Piers and Cecilia came to live in Norfolk and has a somewhat formal layout with lawns on different levels, peony and Annabelle hydrangea beds, rose arches and herbaceous borders. The hall dates from the late C17 when the original parterre and other landscaping appear to have been established on the south side. The small parkland meadows and grounds are blessed with a number of fine mature oaks, chestnuts and beeches. There are two large shrub beds under tall ashes and sycamore where the lawns dip down to the pond that was once the horse pond to the farm.



Teas

Open by kind invitation of Piers & Cecelia Willis

Wednesday 21st June
The Old Hall, Colton, Norwich NR9 5DB

The gardens of The Old hall will open for an early evening visit on the longest day of the year. (Pre-booking to include wine or a soft drink and nibbles)

The garden has been developed over the past 10 years to provide a relaxed setting for the listed hall set within an estate of 77 acres. The hall (not open) has parts dating back to the C13 and has been sympathetically restored with a new wing added.



The garden has been designed by the owners to incorporate a fine old wall and a few existing mature trees into a series of intimate areas providing interest throughout the year. Some of the areas are distinct whilst others flow and merge. The main points of interest are the White Garden, Sunken Garden, colour-themed Border, Potager, Tennis Court Garden, Orchard, Rose Garden, Secret Garden, Exotic Garden, two ponds and a Cherry Tree Avenue leading to a Pavilion. The planting interest in these different areas peaks at different times. The garden has an interesting selection of both modern and antique statues, together with a variety of garden structures.

Open by kind invitation of Andrew Scales and Christina Milchard

Wednesday 5th July
Walled Garden, Holkham, King's Lynn NR23 1AB

Guided tour, by the Head Gardener and his team, of the six acres of restored walled garden set in the Grade I listed park at Holkham Hall. (Pre-booking only)

Step through the ornate Venetian gates and discover a spectacular stand of Georgian and Victorian glasshouses and vineries, a formal ornamental garden, an established vineyard, a working kitchen garden that yields a plentiful crop (feeding both the Coke family at the Hall and visitors to The Victoria) an exotic garden, lawn and the cutting garden with its beautiful array of blooms.



For about 200 years the Walled Garden, originally laid out by Samuel Wyatt during the late 1700s, provided vegetables for the house and estate. The second half of the C20 saw a change as a nursery/plant centre but by the early 2000s the garden had fallen into a state of neglect. With grants from the Cultural Recovery Fund, Historic Houses Foundation and Historic England a vast amount of work has seen the six acres of garden divided into squares and slips, each with its own theme and associated planting plan. Further grants have enabled the restoration of the Thomas Messenger Glasshouse with its beaver-tailed glazing and distinctive bell-tower, the Samuel Wyatt Vinery (a Grade II listed Victorian glasshouse) and the sunken pit houses. Much has been accomplished although restoration continues.

Thursday 27th July
Hunstanton Hall, Park & Gardens, Old Hunstanton PE36 6JS
Guided tour of the parkland & gardens currently under restoration. (Pre-booking only)

The Hunstanton Hall Gardens are comprised of 15 acres of ground divided by banks, walls dating back to the early 1600s and extensive yew, beech and holly hedging. This is separated from the main 300 acre park and Hall by a haha and a small moat. The walled section of the gardens nearest the Hall was built in the early 1600s essentially as a kitchen garden. They were separated from the Hall by a narrow moat and accessed via a small bridge. In the mid 1800s they were substantially increased in size. The moat was widened and the spoil used to create the bank now above the moat. The ha-ha was also added, topped with woodland and hedging to enclose the garden. Henry Styleman le Strange is said to have created this to provide a sheltered garden for his children and grandchildren. Several greenhouses (including a heated pineapple house) provided the Hall with fresh vegetables and fruit. These were in a state of advanced decay by the late 70s.



In late 2019 Charles le Strange Meakin started a renovation armed with original plans, family diaries from the 1870s, a few Country Life pictures and his own memories from the 70s and early 80s. Substantial work remains but the ha-ha and the C17 walls have been repaired, conifers planted in the 80s removed, overgrown pathways reestablished, hedging retamed and a start made to excavate the larger greenhouses.

By kind invitation of Charles Le Strange Meakin

TALKS *(pre-booking only)*

Talks are held at Bawdeswell Village Hall, Reepham Road NR20 4RU

Saturday 14th October 2pm

'Constance Villiers Stuart : In Pursuit of Paradise'

An illustrated talk by Mary Ann Prior.

Saturday 18th November 2pm

'Sir William Hooker, protégé of Sir Joseph Banks and the first director of Kew Gardens'

An illustrated talk by Andrew Sankey.

Norfolk Gardens Trust

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

We are seeking a new membership secretary to succeed Lyn Burroughs who is retiring at the end of 2023.

Please contact the Chairman if you are interested in learning more.

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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The Marquess of Cholmondeley KCVO DL

Chair Matthew Martin
mtmartindairy@aol.com

Vice Chair Sally Bate
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Membership Secretary Lyn Burroughs
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