Spring 2024
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NGT Magazine



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Report from the Chair Spring 2024

Spring has sprung and I hope your bulbs have performed well and produced the colours you expected.

At our Annual General Meeting planned for the 20th April 2024 I will be reporting three retirements: Roger Last, Keri Williams and Carol Keane.

It is difficult to exaggerate the beneficial impact that Roger has had on the wellbeing of the NGT. Over the years he has been Chair, Editor of the Journal (a predecessor of the Magazine) and Committee Member. But this understates his contribution to the Trust and to the wider community. In 2013 the NGT published Norfolk Gardens and Designed Landscapes, a celebration of Norfolk's particularly rich heritage of parks and gardens. It describes in detail more than three hundred of the most beautiful and significant gardens and designed landscapes in the county. Roger's role in its production involved detailed research, fieldwork and photography over many years. More recently he edited Enticing Paths for which he was awarded the accolade of Volunteer of the Year by the Gardens Trust in London.

The NGT is grateful to Keri Williams for his highly experienced and professional knowledge of Town and Country Planning legislation. This has allowed us to submit comments and occasional objections to planning applications affecting registered parks and gardens in the county, and sometimes those that are unregistered.

Carol Keane – who, with her husband, created a lovely garden and arboretum at their home in west Norfolk – has been responsible for managing our website and we thank her for making sure that it was always up-to-date.

In the autumn edition I also thanked our retiring Membership Secretary, Lyn Burroughs, and introduced her successor Louise Rice. This transition marks a number of changes in the way we hold members' records, taking advantage of systems available to entities that have an increasing size of membership. Indeed, the NGT is now the country's largest County Gardens Trust, all due to the efforts of our retiring officers and hard-working committee.

Matthew Martin



Cover: Little Plumstead Walled Garden. See page 6.
Back Cover: Horticultural Medals . See page 26

Brooke's Hidden Landscape

Marion Folkes, former member of NGT Research Group



Brooke Hall 1938 showing parkland with trees now gone.

Brooke Hall Park, once at the heart of a flourishing agricultural and sporting country estate, is little known even within the village. Half a mile east of Brooke Street, it still displays recognisable landscape features similar to those of Repton's designed parks.

In the early 1820s, the Lord of Brooke Manor, Seaman Holmes, commissioned the prestigious local architect, William Wilkins, to design an elegant new mansion house, replacing the old-fashioned Tudor Brooke Hall next to the church. This was situated within the village amongst its domestic farmyard, barns, hop yards, fish stews, dove house, rook wood and moat, all surrounded by walls and the gatehouse. In contrast, Sir Roger Kerrison, the wealthy banker, had built Brooke House south of the village on a grandiose scale and emparked land bordering the Holmes's manorial demesne. In response, Holmes selected an elevated site away from The Street to be transformed from agricultural demesne to elegant parkland. The existing house was demolished, its materials advertised for sale in 1830. The 1801 Brooke Enclosure Act had enabled the acquisition of extra land.

By 1827, the new house was under way and a small area of park (c. 400 acres) was being laid out, setting the south-facing house on a gentle eminence overlooking undulating countryside. Road orders closed footpaths crossing the site, affording greater privacy within the grounds. Although no documentary evidence exists, the landscape includes clear key features of designs by Repton (d. 1818) who had often worked with Wilkins. Brooke Park was possibly influenced by a pupil of Repton.

At the main entrance is an attractive Tudorbethan cottage ornée, and at the back drive a smaller, round, thatched lodge (in builders' design books, "The Hovel"). Iron railings protected the park boundaries along The Street. The curving drive across the park revealed the house front only at the last moment.

Peripheral planting of belts of semi-mature trees 'judiciously arranged' enhanced the southerly views and largely obscured Kerrison lands. Various semi-mature trees generously studded the park. In 1828 John Holmes had 'just



South Lodge, picturesque cottage ornée

returned from Scotland to learn Sir H Stewart's system of transplanting trees'. By 1841 Grigor's Eastern Arboretum observed, 'who would have believed it possible that such a great effect could have been created in so short a period?' 'A fine sheet of water (c. 1830) and beautiful pleasure grounds in a grandly timbered undulating park, island and rustic bridge in Repton vein, completed the picture; recorded in a watercolour (1860s) this shows a typically Repton scene – cattle grazing, terraces descending to the lake, and a distant Bergh Apton church tower as a higher focal point'.



Watercolour of Brooke Hall 1864 by Sir John Corbett (prob.) Credit: Ancient House Museum, Thetford

Discreetly distanced from the Hall, the demolition site became high-walled kitchen gardens, retaining the dovecote and reusing some of the Tudor bricks. They enclosed vegetable and flower beds, espalier fruit trees, glasshouses for exotic fruit and flowers, vine houses and a lily pond. Beneath lie the remains of the former manor garden. Decorative shrubs lined the walls along the drive.

The late 19th century Agricultural Depression and the 1908 death of John Holmes led to the sale of the estate in separate lots. The house and park were purchased by a series of owners who maintained them until the outbreak of WWII. By now the pleasure gardens featured a long central gravel walk, with four flights of steps down to the lakeside walk. A rose garden, fishponds, fountains, herbaceous borders, a nut walk, a shrubbery and a Dutch garden with log hut by the lake had been added, all affording delightful views. The extensive kitchen gardens were productive and in good order.

In 1938, Brooke Hall was on the point of sale again when the property was requisitioned by the War Office and occupied by the military, then POWs. A sentry box stood near the back lodge, huts and tents were placed in the park and the house and gardens neglected. Most of the land went under the plough and the owner abandoned the vandalised house. Photographs from 1948 show the Hall standing forlornly above a derelict garden of rough grass. Plans for conversion to a hospital fell through and by 1950 the



Postwar aerial photograph c1946: church, dovecote and derelict walled gardens



The dovecote, a survivor from the original Brooke Hall. Credit: Brooke Society Archive

house was demolished. Trees were sold as timber, and the kitchen gardens bulldozed, saving only the walls and, for the second time, the dovecote. The site became a housing development, its layout providing possible future access to the park. With no current public access, the park remains undisturbed. The house site is a self -seeded spinney above remains of cellars and a terrace.

Damaged garden urns and balustrades lie in fragments in the undergrowth while the original stone steps still lead down to the lake and pontoon. It is now a quiet fishing lake; snowdrops and bluebells carpet the woods. Wildlife flourishes.

Astley Paston Cooper, physician to George IV and Queen Victoria, grew up at the Old Hall. John Loynes, instigator of Broadland cruising, learned to sail on the lake while a footman to the Holmes's, and Edward Seago frequently painted in the park as a young man. It is likely that Old Hall Gardens conceals a manorial archaeological site.

Surprisingly, Brooke Park currently lies outside the Conservation Area. Pressure for development in South Norfolk renders it vulnerable to future building and it is within a farm currently up for sale. It would be disappointing if this 200 year old secret Norfolk landscape were not retained for the future.



The lake today. Credit: Sally Mott

Little Plumstead Walled Garden Project Part 2

Richard Hobbs Norfolk Plantsman involved with the development of the Walled Garden.



Before restoration

In Autumn 2019 I reported on plans to restore the Victorian walled garden and now it's finished. Once part of Little Plumstead Hall we were restoring the walled garden with funds from the developer building the estate next door. Much ivy was removed, buttresses added to reinforce weak parts, lost capping stones replaced and the missing parts rebuilt. Sadly a few months after the wall was finished a tree outside the garden blew down onto the wall and a large repair was required.

We got a 'Start Up' grant for the garden which was spent on hiring a small bulldozer, laying the paths and edging the beds. There were hundreds of young ash, birch and sycamore when we started but the bulldozer removed most of the trees and their roots and buried others. The paths were laid and the four main beds edged with Corten steel. Once these works were complete the volunteers could start turning it into a garden. We had, and still have, a dedicated team of volunteers who worked particularly hard during that first winter. Bramble roots go down a lot further than you might imagine and have a very strong will to live. It was the tree roots that caused us most problems. The ground elder and nettles seemed relatively straightforward in comparison. It was during this stage that I remembered Geoffrey Smith saying on Gardeners' Question Time that "Gardening is ten percent inspiration and ninety percent perspiration."

One of the first things we did was to wire the walls ready to plant fruit trees and the staff from Raveningham Hall gardens came to show us how to do it. We found lots of vine eyes in the garden and where possible these have been reused. The walls are riddled with small holes, some made by past vine eyes and others by masonry bees. About



The garden wall 2019

forty fruit trees were planted largely as cordons on the walls. Most of the apples are cultivars from Norfolk such as 'Horsford Prolific', 'Norfolk Honey Russet' and the most local of all 'Leeders Perfection', which was raised all of three miles away in Postwick.

The garden is divided into four blocks, which hopefully give a sense of symmetry, although the beds are all of different sizes. Two are referred to as "cutting beds" though they do contain other things as well such as seed-grown cardoons, globe artichokes and red-leaved castor oil plants. We were determined to fill the space as quickly as possible so these three were a great help. As well as German bearded irises we have rows of *Nerine bowdenii* and peonies that came as surplus from



May 2023



May 2023

the gardens and allotments of our volunteers. We grow old-fashioned cut flowers like pyrethrums and *Scabiosa caucasica* 'Clive Greaves'. Easy-to-grow annuals form a major part of the plantings in these beds including sweet peas, pot marigolds, sunflowers, clarkia, cornflowers and *Tagetes* 'Harlequin' and 'Dixter' – both of which are tall cultivars. Our aim is to provide as much colour as possible at all times of the year, using some old favourites and a few less usual things.

The third block is an orchard in a meadow, with snakeshead fritillaries, camassias and pheasant eye narcissus already established alongside meadow cranesbill, field scabious, goat's rue and salad burnet. We have a small patch of yellow rattle which will hopefully spread and reduce the vigour of the grass. This area will take time to develop but is already full of crickets and grasshoppers.

The fourth area is planted with shrubs and herbaceous plants, edged by the cottage garden favourites such as lamb's ears, a variety of pinks and lady's mantle. The shrubs include three interesting roses: *Rosa x odorata* 'Viridiflora', *Rosa* 'Complicata' and *Rosa spinosissima* 'William III' as well as *Hypericum* 'Albury Purple'– an upright shrubby St. John's Wort with fabulous foliage. A feature of this bed is *Ferula communis*, the giant fennel. The feathery foliage appears in November providing winter interest and in late spring the fun really starts when a nine foot spike of yellow umbelliferous flowers appear. By July it has died down to have a rest.

The family of the late Anne Borril kindly donated a large collection of snowdrops to the garden and visitors can now enjoy over one hundred different cultivars some of which are rare and unusual.

The original garden had glasshouses that were outside the present garden on land now owned by the school. A walled garden feels incomplete without glass so from day one we planned to build an appropriate greenhouse but we thought it might be many years before this dream was realised. However, we were able to start building a forty-eight foot Victorian-style greenhouse in May 2022. It is now an operational glasshouse and



The Café and Community Shop

is full to the brim. The only heating is provided by soil cables under one of the benches which means we can overwinter some less hardy plants and propagate sufficient material for the garden and sales.

All the work has been carried out by an enthusiastic group of about 25 volunteers. No attempt has been made to accurately recreate a Victorian walled garden, but we hope the garden fits in with its surroundings and retains the feel/atmosphere of a mid-nineteenth century working garden, whilst proving interest for visitors and food for pollinators throughout the year.

Visit us:
The Walled Garden, Café and Community Shop, Old Hall Road, Little Plumstead, Norwich, Norfolk, NR13 5FA.
Open Mon to Sat 9am to 4pm and Sunday 10am to 4pm.
Admission free. Café, loos.



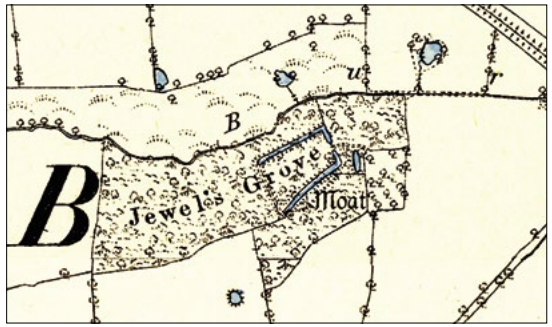
May 2023

A Wood Called Jewells

By the owners, Fran and Richard Harrold

In 2017, on the western edge of Briston, we discovered Jewells Grove and asked ourselves if we would find any gems. It extends to about 15 acres with a diverse selection of habitats: mature oaks; new planted areas; mixed undergrowth; a series of ponds and a babbling brook – the infant River Bure. It also contains a medieval moat with fishpond.

The wood was a wildlife haven when we found it, virtually untouched for 20 years. Now overgrown, with its paths blocked by fallen trees, we realised there was much to do. We wondered how to deal with an overgrown moat and how to formulate a woodland management plan.



1885 OS map. Courtesy of National Library of Scotland.

After meeting specialists – including the Forestry Commission, Norfolk Wildlife Trust, Historic Environment Service Norfolk, Norfolk Ponds Project and National Trust – we obtained a permit to fell an area of mature larch and thin an area planted in c1960.



The moat, northern limb looking west.



Forest of foxgloves

Wills held at the Norfolk Record Office yielded interesting discoveries about the name: George Jewell lived in Briston in 1574 and Edmund Jewell died in 1784 when the local newspaper reported, 'Died at Holt on 10th November in the 65th year of his age. Edmund Jewell Esq, one of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace, captain of an independent company, raised by himself during the late war, when his country was threatened with a foreign invasion. In him the public have lost an active, useful magistrate, and the poor a real friend.' Edmund was a wealthy man who owned houses and lands in Briston and it is quite likely that this prominent family gave their name to the wood.

We found it had been part of the greater Melton Constable Estate owned by the Astley family, entitled as Lord Hastings and traced back to the Norman Conquest via Sir Thomas de Astley. The background to this estate is described in the book 'Capability Brown in Norfolk' published by the NGT.

The lands remained in the family from ca1200 until 1948 when sold to the Duke of Westminster who then disposed of it piecemeal in the mid 1950s. We found a copy of the auction particulars of sale from 1957 detailing numerous farms, houses, cottages and parcels of land, including Jewell's Grove.

Our next challenge was to discover more about the moat, which is connected to the River Bure. It is quite large being 80 metres by 50m and 2-3m deep. Removal of the overgrowth of trees and brambles revealed an ancient but surprisingly well-defined earthwork. The island is ca 2/3 acre and the whole extends to ca 1.75 acres. With only

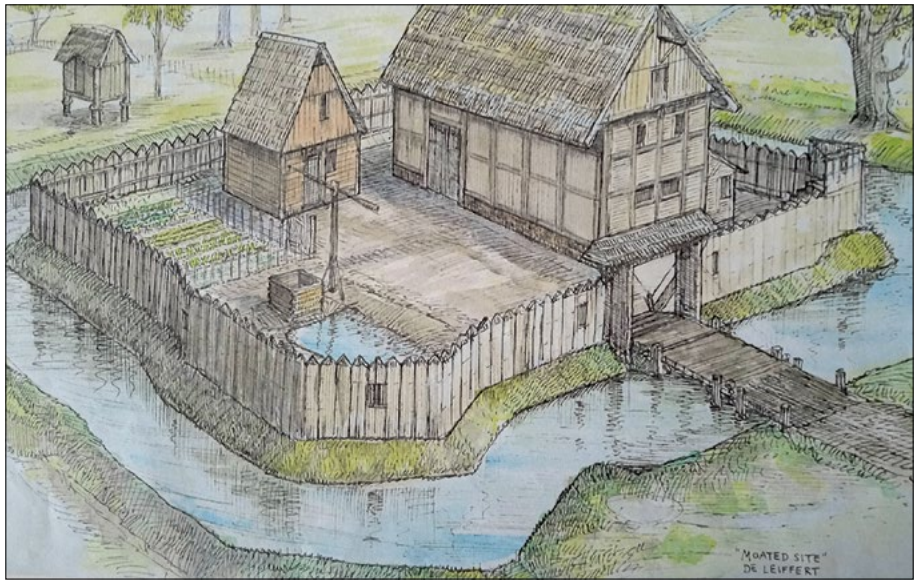
Mr. J. Mottram moved, Mr. E. Boardman seconded, and Mr. M. Knights supported a vote of thanks to the Mayor for presiding and to Dr. Jessopp for his address, the latter stating that there was in an out-of-the-way place at Briston called Jewell's Grove a large moated inclosure, connected with which were the legends of a building that was destroyed with parish records and the vanishing at night of a white lady, headless horses, and a black coach in the water of the moat.

Norfolk and Norwich Archaeological Soc Annual meeting. In, Norfolk News 25/4/1891.

manual labour it could have taken as long as 2 years to finish.

Given this effort and cost, the question is why? Our curiosity was satisfied when we discovered a D.Phil thesis entitled *'Moated Sites in Medieval England: A Reassessment'* by Natasha Coveney of the University of Leicester. This impressive document contained 63,000 words from which we extract two findings. One, moats were built from ca 1150 to ca 1500 with peak activity in the C13. Jewell's Grove moat is ca 700 years old. Two, there are about 300 moats in Norfolk. The main purposes were for: security; status; a platform for a dwelling; a garden with livestock and fishery. Most were thought to accommodate buildings but there are numerous examples of 'empty' moats.

The only evidence for buildings on the site appears in a report in an 1891 report from the Norfolk Archeological Society that associated Jewell's Grove with a



A moated medieval farmhouse. Credit: De Leiffert



Bluebell Corner

legendary building, a white lady and a headless horse. It is probable that 'our' moat contained a modest house for a yeoman farmer; the soil is good and water plentiful, providing a good basis for a market garden. But a better case can be made for a fishery since the moat is connected to the River Bure by short 20-25m leats (man-made watercourses) that act as inlets and outlets at the north-west and north-east corners. The River Bure is a chalk stream rising about one mile to the west from the chalk aquifer, providing a reliable source of pristine water, perfect for freshwater fish. A fishpond is situated nearby at the eastern end, probably a breeding or stock pond. Fresh fish were a delicacy in medieval times, especially amongst the upper echelons of society. As part of the estate it could have fed Melton Hall. However, a nearby track is marked on the estate map of 1574 as the 'Walsingham to Norwich Road'. Might it also have delivered fresh fish to the wealthy merchants of Norwich and the hungry pilgrims in Walsingham?

We have focussed on the historical aspects, which are fascinating. However, the woodland is a natural gem, especially in the spring when the floor provides a stunning display of wild bluebells, flowering bird cherries and all shades of foxgloves. These were especially impressive in 2020 after clearing the zone of larch; what had appeared to have been a barren battleground erupted in the following season as a forest of foxgloves. This amazing capacity of nature to regenerate was also exemplified by the restoration of the ponds that resulted in a proliferation of aquatic, plant and insect life in and around them.

So in answer to our initial question, we found many gems.

(The wood has recently been adopted by the Norfolk Wildlife Trust as a County Wildlife Site. We are grateful to Mary Miller for historical research).

The NGT 2019 Tate Scholar: an update

Louise Crawley

Back in 2019, via a Tate Scholarship, the Norfolk Gardens Trust generously supported my research for my Masters in Landscape History at UEA. I told the story of the Norwich Nurserymen, who dominated Norfolk's horticultural trade between c.1750 and c.1860, and published an article about them in this magazine and in Garden History. Now in 2024, I'm in the final year of my PhD in eighteenth-century landscape history at UEA, all thanks to the initial generous sponsorship of the NGT that started me down this particular garden path.

Last year, I took a break from my PhD to work in a cover role as Landscape Advisor and Landscape Historian for English Heritage, in their Gardens and Landscape Team. This article gives an overview of my time there and some of the work that goes on behind the scenes to keep the historic gardens in their care going for years to come.

English Heritage sites often bring to mind ruined castles and prehistoric monuments. But English Heritage is also the guardian of 23 historic gardens, spread throughout the country. My role provided advice to the charity on the care of historic landscapes, allowing visitors to access and more fully engage with the sites whilst protecting them for the future. This involved site visits up and down the country, alongside the writing and updating of Conservation Management Plans, detailing the history, determining the significance of the site – particularly for their design and influence. These crucial documents identify potential risks to heritage and set out aspirations for research and work to be done, thus guiding their presentation and conservation for years to come.



Dan Pearson's replanting at Belsay. (All photos Louise Crawley).

We also advised on the Management and Maintenance Plans for sites, particularly where significant work



'Early C18' shrub planting around the Grotto at Marble Hill

was undertaken to restore or recreate parts of the historic landscapes. These documents set out the aims for each area of the historic landscape, giving practical advice on how to achieve the desired atmosphere, primarily through the planting. There have been a number of large projects in English Heritage's gardens, most recently at Belsay in Northumberland – where the landscape designer Dan Pearson created a scheme inspired by the extensive plant heritage of the site and at Marble Hill in Twickenham where an early eighteenth-century pleasure ground has been almost fully restored within its modern setting of a public park. New maintenance documents are required to help guide the formative years of the new plantings and provide advice on how they should be allowed to mature and shape the garden in the future.

This summer English Heritage ran a campaign called 'Make Sense of History'. We were able to show how it is possible, particularly in a garden, to travel through time with your senses: inhaling the scents of old flower varieties; tasting heritage fruits and vegetables; feeling the shade of historic buildings or trees; hearing birdsong (such as the canaries at Kenilworth Castle); or witnessing the spectacle of the dazzling bedding displays at Wrest Park. Visitors loved taking their time to enjoy the space and



Summer bedding in the Italian Garden, Wrest Park.



Stop and 'Make Sense of History' at Old Sarum

connect with gardens of the past while generating a renewed appreciation for the gardens of the present.

We also brought some more unusual garden history stories to life this year, such as the Stonehenge dahlia show, held for the first time since the 1840s. Local floristry groups reimagined the historic display of 'floral devices' (wire sculptures covered in flowers) and local growers held a dahlia show; the winner was the 'New' Hero of Stonehenge, after a prize-winning Victorian dahlia of that name. Visitors were encouraged to see the Stonehenge landscape in a new light and to consider how interactions with the stones have changed throughout their long history.



Inspired by Stonehenge, a floral device made of dahlias

In October 2023, the Gardens and Landscape team visited Holkham and Houghton in Norfolk, to see how two of the county's most significant – and now most popular – historic designed landscapes are cared for and accessed today. Visits such as these are important for the team to see how other organisations and charities encourage visitor access to historic designed landscapes, how the garden site teams operate and understand the similar challenges they face, as well as offering the opportunity to experience some fantastic locations.



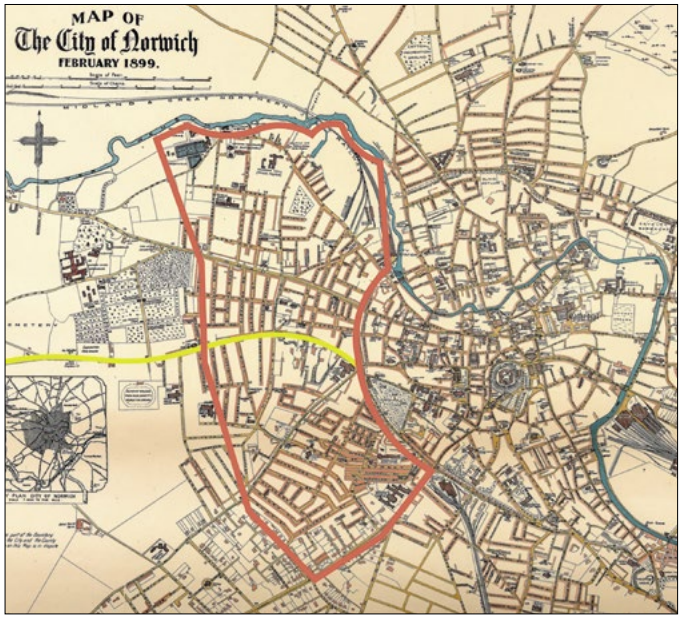
Behind the scenes on the terraces at Holkham Hall.

English Heritage also supports the future of historic gardens more widely across the UK. The Historic and Botanic Gardens Training Programme (HGBTP) is managed by English Heritage and currently supported by the National Gardens Scheme (NGS). The programme trains individuals with horticultural skills and experience to access a career in historic or botanical gardens. The scheme offers full-time paid roles as trainees in gardens across the British Isles, not just within English Heritage. Knowing there's a new generation of trained individuals to care for them helps secure the future for historic gardens and landscapes.

My time with English Heritage has demonstrated to me more than ever the importance of garden history and the practical use of research. I have had a year of fantastic experiences, from live television to advising and assisting in the long-term care of some of the country's most significant gardens and landscapes. As I work my way through the final months of my PhD, my thanks again to the Norfolk Gardens Trust for helping me take the first step into the wonderful world of garden history.

The Heigham Horticultural Society

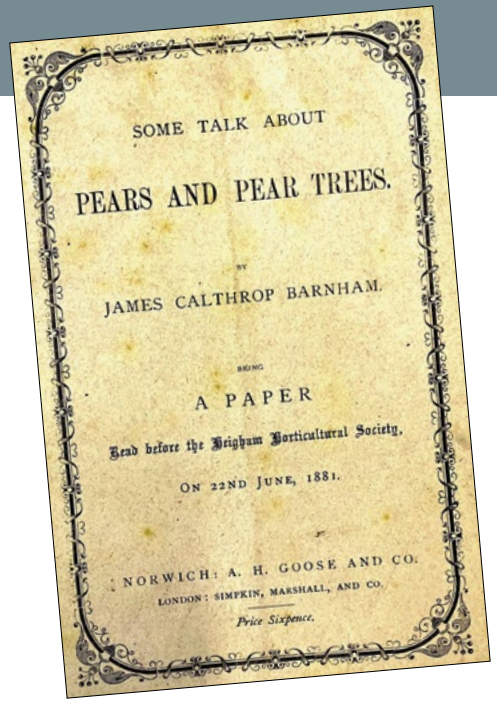
Marilyn Taylor. Member of the NGT Research Group



Heigham parish (red) divided north and south by Heigham Road (yellow).
Credit: Norfolk County Council.

In 1877, four working-class men and their wives opened their adjoining gardens in Albert Street, North Heigham, Norwich, and invited the neighbourhood to come and see the results of their gardening expertise. Little could they have imagined that their labours would result in a thriving gardening society that would hold its summer shows in most of the large private grounds in Heigham, and that keenly contested garden competitions would be held throughout the summer for the next sixteen years. What follows is a snapshot of that time.

David Walker, a wool-sorter and one of those four men, is credited with starting the Heigham Cottagers Society. He lived in a new terraced house in the rapidly expanding suburb of Heigham and had a long back garden of 150 feet. Here he had beds of foliage plants, a homemade greenhouse where grapes flourished, a rose arch, a fountain with water lilies and rare yucca plants. All maintained without mains water supply. “The whole such as to make the visitor think he is looking at the garden of one who has great wealth at his disposal”, noted a reporter at the time.


SOME TALK ABOUT

PEARS AND PEAR TREES.

BY

JAMES CALTHROP BARNHAM.

BEING

A PAPER

Read before the Brigham Horticultural Society,

ON 22ND JUNE, 1881.

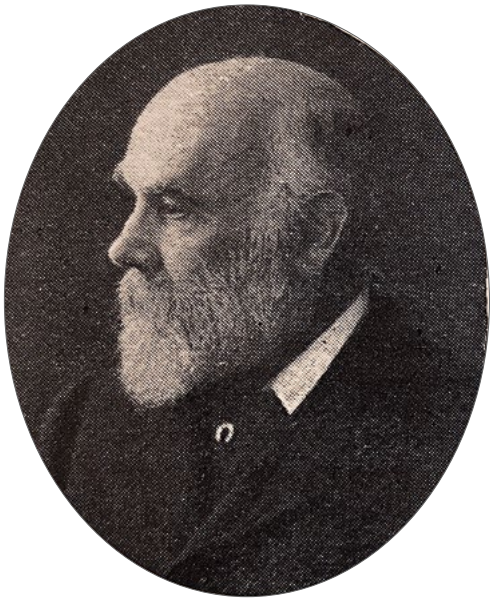
NORWICH: A. H. GOOSE AND CO.
LONDON: SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, AND CO.
Price Sixpence.

Credit: Norfolk and Norwich Millennium Library

William Manwaring, a silk crepe worker living in Devonshire Street, but originally from Lancashire, became the Honorary Secretary to the society. They soon gained the support of many local businessmen who became judges for both the gardens and the shows. In 1880 South Heigham was invited to join what became “The Heigham Horticultural Society”. Annual meetings were usually held in the Parochial Hall in Essex Street. After the business of the day in 1881 a presentation was given on ’The Care and Pruning of Pear Trees’ by James Calthrop Barnham.

Membership was restricted to those living in Heigham with a rental of under £10 per year, although this would later rise to £13. Cash prizes of up to a guinea were awarded for “Best back or front garden, kitchen garden, window box or plant grown on a window sill.”

In 1885, one garden in South Heigham came in for special praise: it belonged to Thomas Wells, a hatter, whose son Herbert Rumsay Wells would later gain fame for his ‘Doggie’ caps and flamboyant style. Thomas’ back garden in York Street was some 25 feet long and the judges noted that “every inch of the small space has been utilised and resulted in something unique. Decorative stone-work, a rustic summerhouse, a miniature fountain, fernery and bedding plants make up a bijou Pleasure Garden.” He won over 50 prizes at the society’s



Thomas Wells, 1910

exhibitions. This was made all the more remarkable by the fact that it was decided in 1882 that the practical gardeners must not garden on the Sabbath.

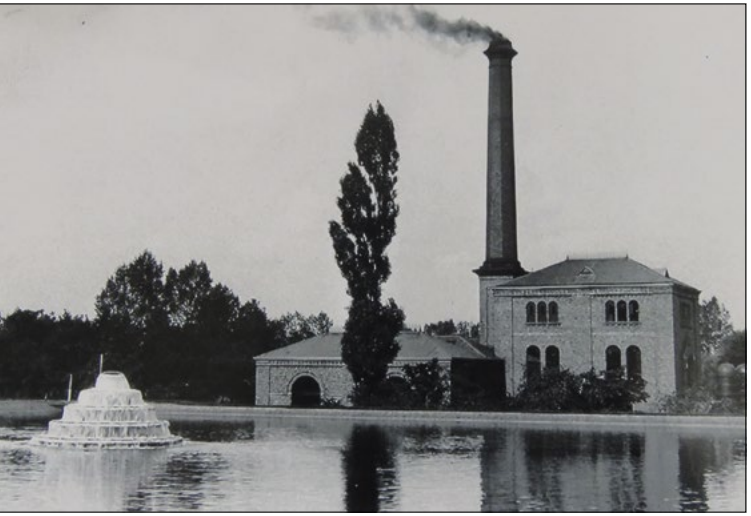


Hellesdon House, unknown. Courtesy of Roger Last

Offers of venues for summer shows – the highlight of the society's year – were soon forthcoming. James Winter, solicitor and president of the society held an early show in his ornate gardens on Heigham Road; the remains of a folly still stand inside the gate of the care home that now occupies the site.

Henry Trevor's Plantation Garden was the venue several times but he must have come in for considerable criticism because in an open letter to a local newspaper he stated "I have pleasure in announcing that between 7000 and 8000 entered the gardens. I am not aware of a flower or leaf being touched. Nor can I take exception (as far as I know) to any word or act."

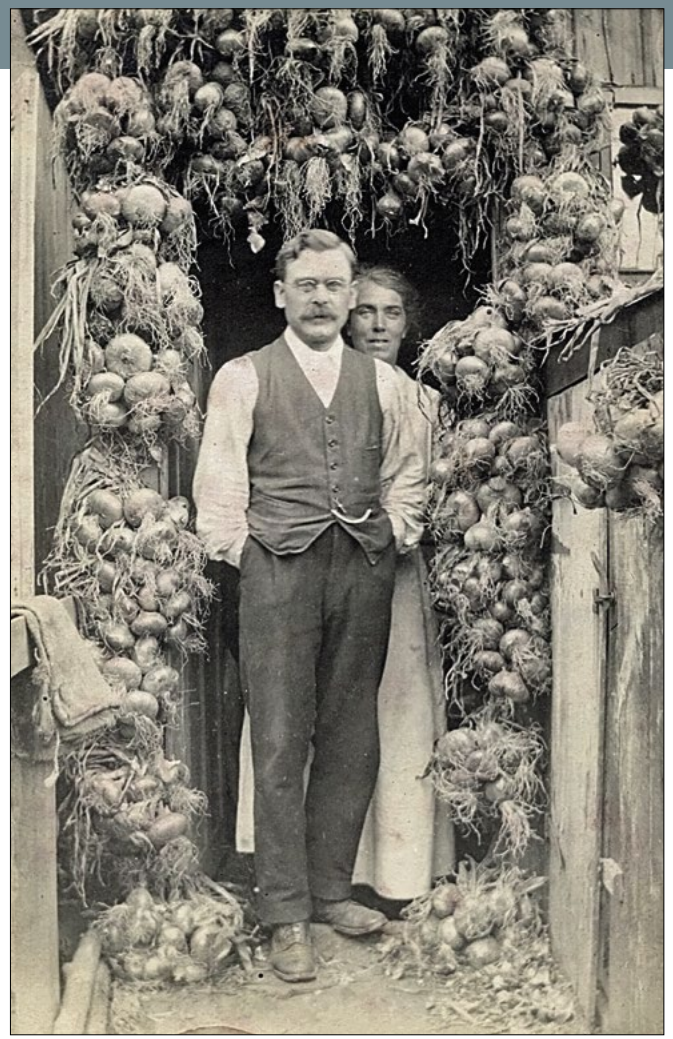
Some patrons hoped that gardening would keep men away from the public house. Although Harry Bullard the brewer supplied many of the pubs in Heigham he fully supported the society and, whenever asked, opened his garden at Hellesdon House for the society. Much loved by local people for his support during the floods of 1878, they thronged to his gardens on show days. Extra trains were laid on from Norwich to Hellesdon Station, a very welcome outing for those living in the inner city.



Heigham Water pump house

The Heigham Water Works Company, now noted for having the remains of an important Industrial Garden, was the setting for the show in 1884. Fountains of reservoirs played and music was supplied by the band of the Queen's Own Hussars. Departing from the horticultural scope of the show, prizes were offered for the best-kept donkeys in the neighbourhood and a few very sleek and good looking 'Neddies' were offered for competition.

No mention of the society can be found after 1894, but in its heyday it was noted that "The society enjoyed extraordinary success because it originated with, and is supported by, the people."



Herbert Rider with wife Emily ca 1930. Courtesy Don Watson

However, floriculture in Heigham had not just been confined to the society's members. Many other gardens were bedecked with flowers and citizens were known to take a stroll out to the suburb and enjoy the 'New City of Gardens'.

The spirit of competition still lived on in the 1930s in Nelson Street. Herbert Rider, who worked as a shoe machinist, was well know in the area for his prize onions!

While the Albert Street area has subsequently been redeveloped, the majority of Victorian terraces remain in Heigham. They are as sought-after today as when they were first built to house the burgeoning population of Norwich.

The Parks and Green Spaces of Norwich: History, Decline and Revival

Paul Rabbitts, Parks and Open Spaces Manager, Norwich City Council



Ketts Heights

The 'fine city' of Norwich is endowed with many fine parks, from the ancient Chapelfield Gardens to the many parks introduced in the 1920s and early 1930s.

It is, however, the varied local geology and soils that have determined the character of the city's landscape. Rivers have ensured that the city is tightly defined: the Yare forms a physical barrier around the west, south and east of Norwich and the Wensum passes through the city centre. No other British city can claim to have a national park – the Broads – running right into its heart.

Norwich grew up where a large chalk ridge is cut by the river valleys of the Yare and Wensum. Consequently, the city contains several prominent ridge lines where the slopes are generally well wooded and link in places with areas of old woodland – parts of Lion Wood are believed to date back at least to the 12th century. The slopes of the 'Wooded Ridge' – several rural estates including woodland, heath and parkland now incorporated into the urban area – all contribute to the image of Norwich as a 'green' city.

The City Council has a long history of providing green spaces. The commitment of the corporation to meeting the needs of the citizens of Norwich by providing open space has been evident since at least 1665 when their right to walk over Chapelfields 'for their recreation' was secured'.

The city grew around the existing historic open spaces of Mousehold Heath and Earlham Park. In the 1920s and 1930s a huge programme of large-scale urban improvements swept away slums and gave Norwich a legacy of pioneering housing schemes (e.g. Mile Cross estate and gardens) and new parks, including Waterloo, Wensum, Heigham and Eaton, all designed by Captain Arnold Sandys-



Chapelfield Gardens

Winsch. These parks are now recognised by Historic England as of great historic value and are included on the list of Registered Parks and Gardens.

The concept of a riverside walk was also first proposed in the 1920s, the aim being to create a pedestrian walkway linking the city centre to surrounding countryside.

More recently the Bowthorpe development was designed to a master plan aimed at creating a place of character and identity and included the advance-planting of tree belts, a system of footpaths/cycle ways, and parks and play areas among mixed housing areas. Green corridors, nature reserves and urban woodlands all add to the green infrastructure of the city.

Today Norwich City Council manages a significant portfolio of parks and green spaces and provides a wide range of services. Those directly managed by the council's Parks and Open Spaces Service include 23 parks and gardens, including those historic parks so important to our



Earlham Dovecote

city fabric, as well as many protected and important sites for both biodiversity and geodiversity. The internationally designated part of the River Wensum Special Area of Conservation reaches into the northwest of the city. Five Sites of Special Scientific Interest can be found in the city, along with 8 Local Nature Reserves. The 30 County Wildlife



Eaton Park

Sites are protected under the National Planning Policy Framework and are important for a wide variety of species. There is one Roadside Nature Reserve. Geodiversity is also important in the city, as evidenced by 15 candidate County Geodiversity Sites. Two country parks are located just outside the city boundary. Habitats found within the city include woodland, heathland (at Mousehold), wet meadow and marshland and dry, wildflower-rich grassland. Many protected or priority species in the Biodiversity Action Plan occur within Norwich, including otters, water voles, peregrine falcons, bats and sandy stiltball mushrooms.



Heigham Park pergola



Waterloo Park

We also look after an extensive network of green corridors providing wildlife habitats and links and routes for people to walk or cycle away from motor traffic, 78 informal open spaces, 81 children's playgrounds, 62 teen facilities across 41 sites including multi-game areas, casual goals, aerial runways, trim trails, BMX and skateparks. The many areas for formal sports include football pitches, cricket wickets, bowling greens, pétanque, tennis courts, pitch and putt, and footgolf.

The result is a network of parks and open spaces, natural areas and green networks that provide for recreation, sports, events, and quiet reflection. All this despite the many challenges that reduced budgets pose for so many local authorities across the country.

In 1999-2000, the council was successful in obtaining considerable lottery funding to regenerate some of its most historic parks including Waterloo and Eaton Park, and both now fly the coveted Green Flag Award and are Green Heritage Award-winning sites.

Nearly 25 years later, the council is taking a more strategic approach to managing its network of green spaces, with a greater emphasis on green infrastructure, biodiversity, climate change and health and well-being. No longer is it a question of simply 'doing up a park', we must focus on outputs and outcomes; what impact and difference can we make by restoring and rejuvenating these parks and green spaces? Parks introduced in the 1920s remain important today but now we must be more inventive in securing the resources to ensure they can be enjoyed by generations to come.

All photos, Paul Rabbitts

Horticultural Medals

Bob Wilkinson, winner of two Grenfell medals at Chelsea

The award of prizes for excellence in horticulture goes back to the seventeenth century and the Florists' Societies – gardeners growing a specific range of flowers such as auriculas, carnations, laced pinks and tulips. This evolved into examining and judging each others' blooms and competitions with prizes which included copper kettles, silver spoons and ladles. Norwich was renowned for its Florists' Societies. Over time, competitions expanded to include all flowers, fruit and vegetables; prizes began to include medals and trophies. I have a small collection of these medals and here I describe five early examples that are not only beautifully designed and engraved but offer insight into aspects of horticultural history.

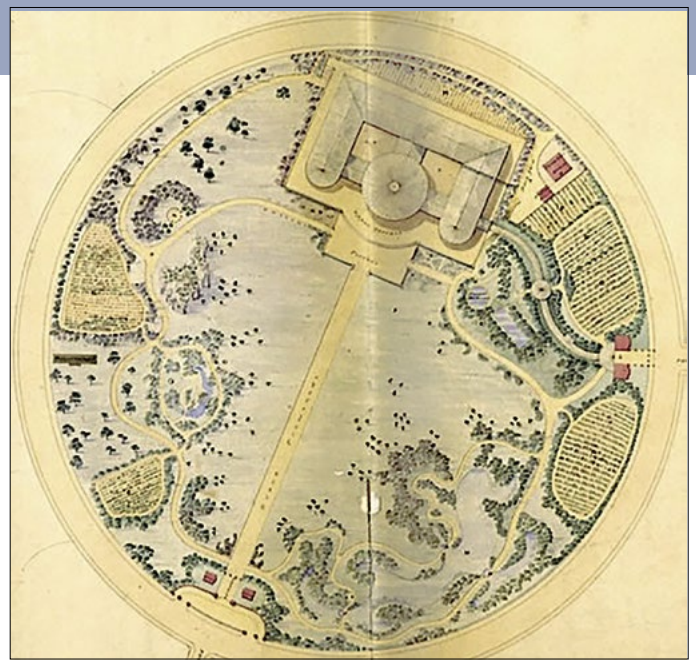
(1) 1834 The Metropolitan Society of Florists and Amateurs

This society was founded in 1832 and in June 1834 they held a show at the Windmill Inn, Slough and, as reported in the Florists' Register, *"there were many very beautiful specimens, and some good cut flowers . . . . . the hearts-ease were extremely beautiful. A delightful band of music attended in the garden, and continued playing all the afternoon."*

This particular medal was awarded to John Allnutt of Clapham for his exhibit of hearts-ease *(Viola tricolor)*. The obverse of the medal shows Queen Adelaide, the patron of the society, and was based on William Wyon's design for the coronation medal of King William IV and Queen Adelaide in 1830. After



Five medals from Bob's collection. 1-5 top left to bottom right



Decimus Burton's design (1840) for the Royal Botanical Society's gardens in the inner circle of Regent's Park, London.

the show, *"members and friends dined together at the inn where the host had provided amply for their enjoyment of the good things of life. The band played occasionally between toasts and nothing could exceed the hilarity which prevailed."*

(2) 1853 The Horticultural Society of London

This silver Banksian Medal was awarded to Mr. R. Dawson of Tottenham on 9th July 1853 by the Horticultural Society of London for his entry of six varieties of fuchsia. His gardener, Mr. Godfrey, did not have his name on the medal but received credit in the published proceedings of the society.

Sir Joseph Banks Bt (1734 to 1820) depicted on the medal was one of the seven men who met in Hatchard's bookshop in Piccadilly, London on 7 March 1804 to plan the creation of a society devoted to the improvement of horticulture. Originally called the Horticultural Society, the name was changed in 1809 to the Horticultural Society of London before receiving a Royal Charter in 1861 to become the Royal Horticultural Society.

(3) 1861 The Royal Botanic Society

The Royal Botanic Society was established in 1839/40 *"for the promotion of botany in all its branches and its application to medicine, arts and manufacturers, and also for the formation of botanical and ornamental gardens."* Within a year the Society had leased from Her Majesty's Commissioners for Woods and Forests, the whole of the Inner Circle of Regent's Park, a little over eighteen acres of land.

Here, in June 1861, the Society held an exhibition where the medal illustrated was awarded to F. Bennett, Esq. for a display of fuchsias. The Gardener's Chronicle and Agricultural Gazette described the event as *"in most respects a good exhibition. However there were weak points such as the azaleas and roses in pots which were, for the most part, past their best."*

(4) 1892 International Horticultural Exhibition

On Saturday, May 9th 1892 His Royal Highness, Prince Arthur Duke of Connaught and Strathearn, opened the International Horticultural Exhibition at Earl's Court. After this ceremony a muslin screen was drawn aside revealing *"a picture of rare loveliness – a sort of fairyland – an English landscape garden under cover with grass plots, raised flower beds and gravel walks."* The many flowers that decorated the halls came from growers and seed merchants and were intended *"to encourage horticulture all over the world."*



The International Horticultural Exhibition 1892



Buffalo Bill and Sitting Bull at the exhibition.

One of these growers was H. Cannell & Sons of Swanley in Kent who received this medal for their display of dahlias. Later, the arena was occupied by Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show with his troop of Indians and Cowboys; Colonel W. F. Cody (Buffalo Bill) received a magnificent reception and Miss Annie Oakley performed feats with rifle and pistol. The Deadwood Stage was then captured by the Indians before being rescued by the Cowboys.

(5) 1893 The Gardener's Magazine

This silver medal was awarded by the Gardener's Magazine to George Middleton in 1893 for "Excellence in Horticulture". On the obverse it shows Flora, the Roman Goddess of Flowers.

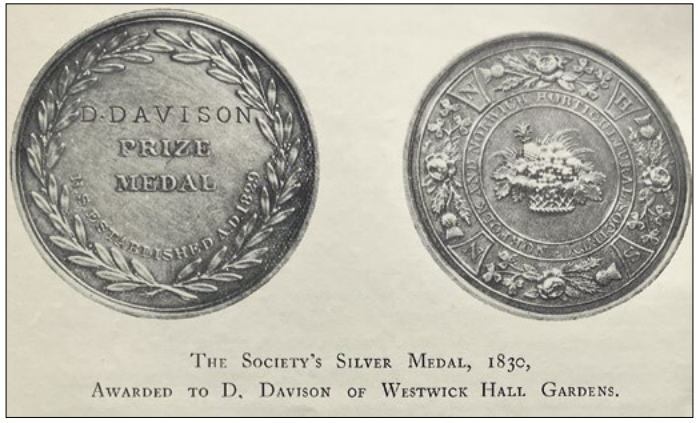


Stradsett Hall. North front 1979. Credit: Historic England

The Gardener's Magazine, the first periodical devoted solely to horticulture, was founded in 1826 by John Claudius Loudon (1783-1843), a Scottish botanist, writer and landscape designer. One of Loudon's prominent design commissions was at Stradsett Hall, west Norfolk where he laid out the park and pleasure grounds of 100 hectares between 1810 and 1813.

1830 The Norfolk and Norwich Horticultural Society

In 1830, the society awarded D. Davison of Westwick Hall Gardens, near North Walsham, a silver medal. This medal (not one of mine) was designed by Leonora, daughter of the founder Thomas Starling Norgate of Hethersett Old Hall. However, 'cottagers', who preferred something practical, could choose to receive silver spoons instead.



Davison's medal. Credit: Norfolk and Norwich Horticultural Society

A Life in Horticulture

Terry Bane, former Norwich City Council Horticultural Officer



Old greenhouses and cold frames at Earlham, 1980



Summer bedding, Red Lion St, 2003

In 2024 Norwich City Council will publish its strategy for green spaces with a heavy reliance on volunteers and sustainability. Here, Terry Bane remembers how city gardening was done before his retirement in 2020.

My passion for gardening and nature started as a child in my father's allotment on Hall Road, where my four brothers and I would help harvest fruit and vegetables; when we moved to Lingwood in 1969 I was allowed to grow what I liked in my own small garden. My passion was further inspired during Mr. Bidwell's Rural Science class at Acle Secondary Modern where I dug and planted a shared allotment. At school I loved the greenhouses and making compost in the potting shed while at home I made shelves in dad's home-made tomato greenhouse. Perhaps horticulture was in my DNA for my great uncle had a market garden at Billingford.



'Amberol' baskets, Golden Ball St, 2017

My career proper began in 1974 with a year's full-time training at The Norfolk College of Horticulture, Burlingham. After I did summer work in the grounds and greenhouses of Colman's Norwich, a year's training at The Royal Gardens Windsor greenhouses with day release to the Berkshire College of Agriculture and Horticulture where I passed City and Guilds and RHS Exams.

Then I came back to Norfolk to begin my 43-year career with Norwich City Council. My ambition had been to work in greenhouses to sow seed and propagate plants but I began as a top-grade gardener based at Castle Gardens in the heart of Norwich. There, I helped maintain Castle Meadow, All Saints Green, the Cathedral and churchyards planting-up autumn bedding displays. From June 1977 I was based at the council nurseries at Earlham Park. The scale of public planting in those days can be judged from the fact that my colleagues and I planted rows of 100,000 myosotis, pansies, polyanthus and wallflower seedlings in the nursery



Crocuses on Grapes Hill, 2000

field. These had to be kept watered, weeded and disease-free until October when they were planted in winter/spring display sites across Norwich. During my time at Earlham Park I witnessed the demolition of Edwardian greenhouses and their replacement with aluminium greenhouses, all now replaced by the UEA Enterprise Centre – a sign of things to come.

Each day I managed stove (exotic plants), orchid and propagation greenhouses, cold frames and polytunnels, my colleagues and I also helped to produce 120,000 summer and 100,000 winter bedding plants for park and highway displays around the city. Initially, we sterilised loams and leaf mould and hand-mixed with peat, sand and fertilisers to make our own composts. Later, to save resources, we bought ready-made composts, winter bedding grown in the open ground was changed to container-grown, and we installed semi-automatic irrigation systems.



Armeria in sustainable planting, Cattlemarket St, 2016



Barrack St roundabout, summer 2012

In 1983 I was promoted to Nursery/Park Supervisor. Four years later I became Nursery Manager, using the plants grown at Earlham Nursery, I designed bedding displays across the city. During this time I was invited to become a volunteer committee member and judge of Norwich in Bloom (www.norwichinbloom.co.uk). From the Earlham Nursery I was able to supply summer hanging-baskets and planters to Norwich business as part of the NIB campaign.

Summer bedding required a heavy investment in funds and effort. One year as an alternative, I recommended a low-cost alternative – the hardy annual 'Bohemian Rhapsody'; we used it at all sites and the public approved. The displays attracted business sponsorship, which I managed until retirement in 2022. Over the years sponsorship generated hundreds of thousands of pounds which helped to maintain the visual appeal of the city. For the millennium I initiated the planting of 2 million spring bulbs on verges leading into Norwich including 400,000 crocus and chinodoxa planted along Newmarket Road.

My role as Horticultural Officer moved through different departments: Green Spaces, Neighbourhoods and Community Enabling. Externally, I also managed sponsorship, partnerships, promotion and publicity for Friends of Norwich in Bloom. Most autumns with The Friends I would arrange community bulb plantings with volunteers at sheltered housing schemes, church grounds, resident and community neighbourhoods including a 60,000 bulb snowdrop walk at Colman Hospital. For this we dressed up in red coats and pixie hats created by Jo Chiddick. It was an honour to become Chair of Friends of Norwich in Bloom in 2007 and again from 2010 to 2014, Fond Memories.

A part of my job that I really enjoyed was advising, enabling and encouraging community volunteers, helping them to network with each other and supporting partners. My favourite role was working closely with City College Norwich; with the help of friends and former colleagues from Earlham Park (John Attoe, Ian Harris and Mike Denmark) we worked to bring resources together for City College students, enabling them to grow tens of thousands of mainly sustainable plants for civic and community plantings.



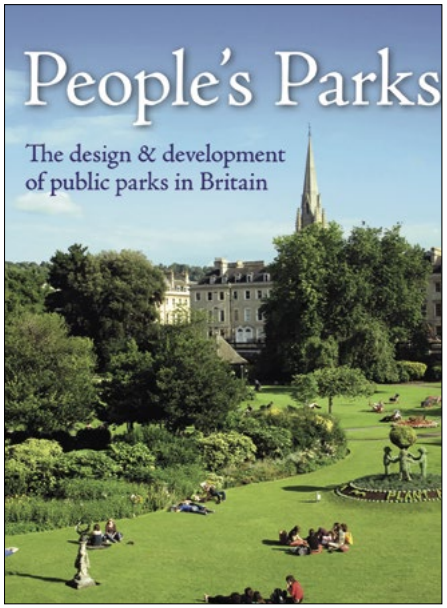
Tulips and polyanthus in Tombland, 2006

Today, my wife Mirelle and I look after our one-acre rural garden. We have four greenhouses, growing perennials, bulbs, trees and shrubs, some fruit and vegetables; our overall aim is to support biodiversity, attract and sustain wildlife. A keen photographer, I spend many hours photographing birds, bees, butterflies, hoverflies and other insects. These can be seen on my developing website www.banesbloomingbritain.co.uk along with links to further details, photos of my horticultural career and my work with Norwich and Anglia in Bloom.

(All photos, Terry Bane).

People's Parks: The design & development of public parks in Britain

By Hazel Conway & Paul Rabbitts



'To sit in the shade on a fine day, and look upon verdure, is the most perfect refreshment', said Fanny, the heroine of Jane Austen's Mansfield Park in 1814, and we can resonate with that sentiment today. Those of us who live in cities or towns have a rich legacy of parks and open spaces available to all, and we owe much of this to the Victorians.

The movement to create public parks developed largely in Victorian Britain to provide open spaces in urban areas for wide enjoyment, making bearable a rapidly industrialising and urbanising new world. Today they continue to be invaluable in promoting wellbeing, health and social cohesion. People's Parks by the late Hazel Conway was originally published in 1991 and charted the design and development of Victorian Parks in Britain. The book quickly became recognised as one of the most influential works on the history of parks and public access spaces.

With the endorsement of Hazel's family, Paul Rabbitts offers a thorough update and expansion of the original edition. Paul is a renowned parks expert, lecturer, historian and public speaker, and is the new Parks and Open Spaces Manager for Norwich City Council. With a new sub-title to represent the extended timescale, Paul identifies the principal national and international influences on park development from the nineteenth until the current century, including the war years, the impact of the Garden Cities movement, and the decline of parks from the 1970s. The influence of the Heritage Lottery Fund's urban parks programme from the 1990s is covered, as is the more recent impact of austerity followed by the global pandemic, when the availability of local parks meant that people could take their permitted hour of exercise each day in pleasant surroundings along with their socially distanced neighbours. The book concludes with an appraisal of the future of our public parks, and a call that their continuing importance be recognised.



Eaton Park © John Fielding

The resulting work is a thorough study of the parks movement with the inclusion of familiar landmarks such as Norwich's Catton Recreation Ground, Chapel Field Gardens, Eaton Park and playing fields, and Waterloo Park. An exhaustive index encourages the reader to explore the many aspects of park life – dog washing, nude bathing, music as moral influence. This is not a book to be consumed in one sitting but a rich resource to provide interest for years to come.

Vanessa Trevelyan

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or from the distributor Boydell & Brewer directly https://boydellandbrewer.com/9781739822989/peoples-parks/



Prince of Wales opening Eaton Park 1928. Credit EDP

Garden Visits



Sunday 19th May 2 - 5pm

Lady's Wood, Melton Constable, NR24 2NF

'A woodland walk'

The original cottage, Lady's Cottage, built in the early 18th Century was owned by the Melton Constable Estate, then the seat of the Astley Family. The Duke of Westminster purchased this estate in 1948.

Lady's Cottage was occupied by estate gamekeepers and foresters until it was sold separately, with 74 acres of land, about 25 years later. The current owners purchased the cottage in 1997 and from 1998 a major upgrade took place of the cottage and surrounding grounds. The house and garaging are now three times the original size of the cottage and since 2000 it has been referred to as a 'House', rather than a 'Cottage' and the original name of Lady's Wood Cottage became known as 'Lady's Wood'.

In 1987 the gales devastated an area of well-established oak trees that the current owners cleared and replanted with oak saplings. In 2000 the lake was created in an area of wetland where underground springs run. These springs are piped to a chamber with a 'Lift Pump' to replenish the lake. There are several ponds around the property, one being an old 'Bomb Hole' from a misdirected German attack on Melton Constable Station.

The 'Lady's Wood' title is somewhat of an enigma but glance at the mural in the courtyard and chat with the owners – they might provide you with an answer.

Dogs on leads very welcome.

Teas

Open by kind invitation of George & Mary Middleditch



Sunday 9th June 2 - 5pm

West Wing, Horsford Hall, Horsford, NR10 3DB

Horsford Hall and grounds were subdivided in 1981 when the West Wing garden of 1.4 acres was created. Its current layout is the work of the present owner, David Pulling. The main axis of the garden, in a largely Italianate manner, comprises a long vista from the house over a raised circular pond with tall Italian cypress, culminating in clipped beech buttresses. A statue takes pride of place on a small grass podium. Beech and yew hedging has been used throughout with further structure provided by the house walls. A series of garden rooms flank the central vista. The formal elements are softened by relaxed planting, with hedges concealing mixed herbaceous borders. The south-facing walls provide a warm backdrop for tree peonies, hibiscus, figs and pittosporum while the shrubbery contains many unusual plants including the paper mulberry *Broussonetia papyrifera, Orixa japonica* and a number of cornus. There are nuts, pears, plums and apples including the local variety *Malus domestica* 'Horsford Prolific'. A small area of woodland completes this lovely garden.

Teas

Open by kind invitation of David Pulling and Paul Clarke

Thursday 20th June 2 - 5pm



Manor House Farm, Wellingham, King's Lynn PE32 2TH

Manor House Farm stands next to the small parish church of St Andrew in the hamlet of Wellingham. An enchanting rural haven, its four acres of stunning gardens is the inspiration of Robin and Libby Ellis.

From the house a fragrant tunnel of roses leads to a pleached lime walk providing both an axis for the gardens and a vista to the countryside beyond. The summer house remodelled from a brick and pantile cart shed is covered in roses and clematis.

The unusual walled 'Taj' garden created in 1998 in the old cattle yard is dominated by a large wisteria-covered barn. At its centre is a formal pool with a single fastigiate golden Irish yew set at each corner. The lawn is edged with clipped *Ilex crenata* and gravelled paths, its borders filled with an opulent display of rose, lilies, tree peonies and lavender. A 'hot' gravel garden is planted with grasses and grey-leaved plants with bold splashes of orange and yellow. A productive potager and a small arboretum of specimen trees meet the northern boundary where a deep herbaceous and shrub border is backed by mature trees.

Teas

Open by kind invitation of Robin & Libby Ellis



Saturday 13th July 6 - 8.30pm

Hindringham Hall, Blacksmiths Lane, Hindringham NR21 0QA

The gardens at Hindringham Hall will open for an early evening visit.

(Pre-booking - includes wine or a soft drink and canapés)

One of Norfolk's secret places, described as the kind of delightful surprise that can only exist in England, Hindringham Hall is the most delicious little moated manor house straight out of a story book with its medieval moat and fishponds, working walled vegetable garden, formal and informal borders, all wrapped around a brick and flint Tudor Hall.

The Hall dates from 1538 and earlier and was built by Martin Hastings, a courtier to Henry Fitzroy, the illegitimate son of Henry VIII. The moat dates from 1150 and is one of only a handful of complete moats in Norfolk. The Fishponds cover 3 acres and include 5 ponds and, along with the Moat and land within the Moat, are a scheduled Ancient Monument.

Despite its provenance as a historical site there is no record of the gardens. The man who restored the Hall in 1900 was in a wheelchair and his restoration focused on the buildings. The current owners have developed the gardens over the past 30 years working sympathetically with the site.

Shortlisted for Historic House Garden of the year Award 2020 the garden is open by kind invitation of Charles & Lynda Tucker



Thursday 27th June 2 - 5pm

Model Farm, Holkham Wells-next-the-Sea NR23 1RP

The building, designed by Samuel Wyatt, was built in 1786 as a public house – 'The New Inn at Holkham'. For some 40 years prior to its restoration to a house the 'inn' was used as a grain store. Work was started on the garden 15 years ago.

The double wooden gates lead to an oval lawn with a circle of pleached limes. Blue agapanthus are planted in the gravel and around the farm buildings. Through an archway is a small park on the other side of the Charles Dean farm buildings.

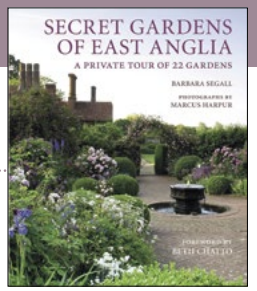
The main garden faces east and south, with a magnificent view of the park at Holkham with grazing fallow and red deer. There is a large expanse of lawn with a curved deep ha ha at the end. The wide and curved herbaceous borders are backed by an ilex hedge on one side and a hornbeam hedge on the other. A parterre, which used to be a rose garden, was replanted in 2023 and is now simply planted with ornamental pears, yews and Portuguese laurel with a central statue of Leda and the Swan and a stainless-steel obelisk as a sundial. In another part of the garden there is a small fountain and reflective oblong pond with two gazebos either side, designed by George Carter and recently restored. The lawn leads down to an orchard and woodland garden and onto a walled 'picking' garden beyond, with raised beds, and a greenhouse.

Teas

Open by kind invitation of Sarah, Countess of Leicester

Events

AGM & Talks



AGM 2024

Saturday 20th Apr. 2024

All Saints Church, Catfield, Great Yarmouth NR29 5DA
By kind permission of The Reverend Noyes and Churchwardens.

Followed by a visit to The Old Rectory, Catfield. Massed planting of spring bulbs.
By kind invitation of Mrs Penny Middleditch
Teas

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

Saturday 12th October 2pm
'Secret Gardens of East Anglia'
An illustrated talk by Barbara Segall from her book of the same name.
(pre-booking only)

Saturday 23rd November 2pm
'Benton End : The Revival'
An illustrated talk by Matthew Hodges.
(pre-booking only)

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MANNINGTON
ESTATE



2024
WALKS OPEN DAILY
Gardens and Tearooms open
From May 15th to end August
Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Sunday 11-5/4
Many events - see website and socials - include:
April 14th - Dog Day
May 12th - Vintage Fair
June 15th - Wild About Mannington with Bioblitz
July 12/14th - Little Theatre Events
August 9th - Open Air Theatre
September 1st - Charity Day
Art Exhibitions in Stable Gallery
Nature Days and Walks
www.manningtonestate.co.uk 01263 584175
admin@walpoleestate.co.uk mannington_hall



Norfolk Gardens Trust

norfolkgt.org.uk