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Norfolk Gardens Trust

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Editors, Clive Lloyd and Sue Roe
Magazine Designer, Karen Roseberry

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Report from the Chair - Spring 2020

Having moved house in the last few months my wife and I have inherited a small established garden in the city. The general rule on these occasions is to take no major action until a year has passed. However, given my age and the scale of the new garden, I have set about removing a few overgrown or very ordinary shrubs, thus providing me with the opportunity to interplant with herbaceous plants. I shall now just maintain what is there and take no further major steps until next winter

Seeking some inspiration as to how to develop a very small garden I have been reminded of two other small gardens, the first created by the late Mark Rumary (1929-2010) – the garden architect and author – at Magnolia House, Yoxford in Suffolk. From memory, there were three rooms in what could not have been more than a 1/4 acre at the rear of the enchanting house, including some very tender plants which must have either been taken in for the winter or securely wrapped up.

The other was created by the late Will Giles (1951-2015). He called his garden at Thorpe St. Andrew in Norwich, the Exotic Garden. On a restricted budget Will created a jungle-like wonderland complete with giant leaves, palms, statues, a two-storey tree-house together with a waterfall and a xerophytic garden. I imagine several rooms in his red brick Thirties house were given over in winter to the storage of sub-tropical plants. Will was dyslexic but with the arrival of personal computers with spellchecks he went on to write two books

on exotic plants as well as many articles for various gardening and other publications

I will have to resist the temptation to try to follow, in some modest fashion, the footsteps of either Mark Rumary or Will Giles but this does not stop me dreaming. And to remind me and you, our readers, here is a photograph of Will's garden. To see many short movies of this magnificent creation visit YouTube and search for 'Will Giles The Exotic Garden'.

Then of course there are the show gardens at Chelsea – but, on reflection, perhaps not.

And finally, if you are at all interested in Norfolk garden history, do look out for a great opportunity to join a course that we are thinking of running in association with The Gardens Trust. Please see the panel on page 43 to register potential interest.

Matthew Martin

The Plantation Garden – A Secret Shared

By Roger Connah

This year the Plantation Garden Preservation Trust celebrates a significant anniversary. Forty years ago, a handful of people were aware of a forgotten garden on Earlham Road, Norwich. Children used to find a way in to roam in the dense wilderness of sycamores, ivy and weeds that concealed the garden's structures. It was known locally as the 'Secret Garden'. Could it be brought back to life?

A group of 30 local residents met at the Assembly House in Norwich in May 1980 and formally decided to restore the garden. Work on clearance of "the jungle" soon started. A report at the time said, "We have removed several hundred sycamore trees and yards of ivy". The fountain, once uncovered and restored, became the garden's iconic structure. But what had the garden originally looked like?

In 1857 Henry Trevor, a Norwich businessman, completed his home, Plantation House, and turned his attention to creating a garden in the adjoining quarry. In his day, the garden was greatly admired and well used by the public. However, Henry Trevor left no diaries or plans to inform the Trust about his original design for the garden. In the years after his death the house had a succession of owners and the garden became progressively neglected.

Clearing undergrowth

Volunteers gather on the main lawn

Italian Terrace in 1980

The Trust's only guide to the restoration were photographs taken for the auction particulars in 1897, shortly after Henry's death, and a map of the City from 1883. It was clear Henry Trevor's garden had featured not only a fountain, but decorative walls, greenhouses, woodland paths and a large palm house.

The Trust set out to preserve as much as possible of Henry Trevor's garden, though the palm house had been demolished in the 1920s. Throughout the 1980s volunteers battled with the undergrowth and uncovered about 400 metres of paths and woodland walks, popular in Victorian times. The lower lawn was cleared and re-seeded. Although facilities were limited in 1987, there were open days; a thousand visitors viewed the garden and membership increased to 150. That year, spring flowers were planted in the long border and summer bedding on the palm house terrace, designed to mark the original position of the palm house. A rockery with a cascade feature was uncovered and this now hosts over 30 species of fern. The remainder of the main lawn was levelled, beds re-instated and the garden took the shape that we see today.

In 1989 the Preservation Trust was granted charitable status. Repairs were made to the 'medieval wall' between the palm terrace and the Plantation House and a parapet was added to complement Henry Trevor's eccentric walls – an intriguing mixture of flints, stone, clinker and architectural salvage, much of the 'fancy' brickwork coming from Guntons brickworks at Costessey.

In the mid-1990s a nursery area was created for raising plants. In 1998 a replica of the rustic bridge, which took Henry's visitors from the house to the woodland walks, was created with a substantial grant from the Norwich Society to commemorate their 75th Anniversary. A guide to the history of the garden was published, now in its third edition.

The fountain in 1980

General improvements continued. Water and power points were installed throughout the site to facilitate gardening and events. Remnants of a summer house were salvaged and re-created based on a photograph of the Trevor family posed in front. The Trust no longer had access to its original position so it was set up at the top of the Italian Terrace and provides an attractive focal point.

As the public began to visit more frequently, an honesty box was installed to collect the modest entry fees. An accessible toilet was installed, and a pavilion of English oak was built in the entrance area to give shelter, especially for volunteer gardeners. A legacy enabled the Trust to build a period style greenhouse in the nursery area for plant propagation.

A continuous programme of planting and maintenance keeps the garden looking attractive and new projects are carefully chosen to preserve Henry Trevor's original intentions while making the garden accessible to visitors.

The Plantation Garden is open to the public every day of the year for a fee of £2. The garden is advertised on our website, on social media, in local tourist information and through word-of-mouth by visitors who have discovered the garden, enjoyed the beautiful planting and found an oasis of calm so near the city centre. Footfall in 2019 was 40% higher than the previous year.

The garden's income is derived from 750 membership subscriptions, the honesty box and events such as Sunday teas, cinema, jazz picnics, and firework parties. Every day of the year sees visitors enjoying the garden, a great credit to the team of about 80 volunteers of all ages who do the gardening, steward events and make and serve teas.

The Trust is grateful to the many organisations that support it. The Heritage Lottery Fund, for example, supported the creation of free teaching materials for schools to use on visits to the garden. The Preacher's Money Charity – the garden's landowner now in its 400th year since it was founded in the will of Sir John Pettus – has provided financial support for restoration projects.

The Trust will celebrate its 40th Anniversary with a special fortnight of events from 14-28 June 2020. Please put this in your diary and come along. -See: www.plantationgarden.co.uk

Postcard - The garden today

The Norwich Nurserymen

by Louise Crawley, NGT Tate Scholar , 2019-20

Between c.1750 and c.1860, the Norwich Nursery was one of the country's largest provincial commercial nurseries, but remains a relatively unknown part of Norfolk's and England's gardening history. Also known simply as Mackie's, the nursery supplied plants to estates across Norfolk, including Felbrigg, Castle Rising, Sheringham and Anmer, and to the villa-dwelling members of Norwich's 'polite society', for over a century. Despite lacking a formal archive of its own, the Norwich Nursery's history has been pieced together through its extensive use of newspaper advertising, surviving catalogues, receipts, bills and letters in the collections of many estates across the region. Mackie's provides an invaluable insight into the logistics and operation of a commercial nursery in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

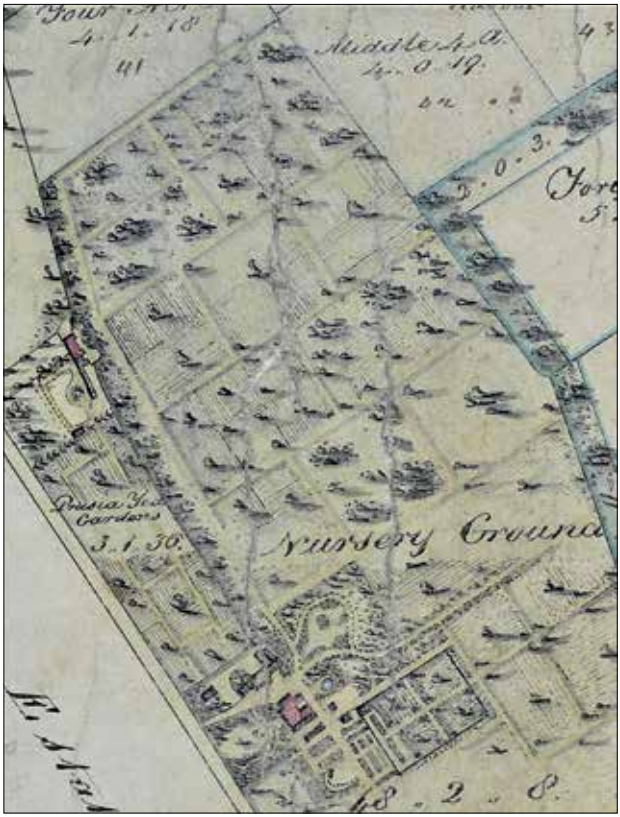


Figure 1: The Norwich Nursery Site at Lakenham c.1833 (Norfolk Record Office)

The Norwich Nursery was first mentioned in an advertisement in the *Ipswich Journal* from 1750. By 1759, the company was offering 'two-year-old Scotch Firs' at ten shillings per thousand, thus already operating in a large commercial capacity. Nationally, the English provincial nursery industry was considered to have only just begun in the 1750s, but Mackie's led the way in this region, in sophistication, modernity and productive capacity.

Mackie's was run by four generations of

the same family, alongside partnerships with other local nurserymen, allowing rapid expansion of the business whilst ensuring the Mackie name continued to dominate. From 1818 to 1833, the nursery was run by Sarah Mackie, following the death of her husband and brother-in-law. Her 1833 obituary in *The Gardener's Magazine* commended her management as a fine example of 'modern improvement'. Sarah forged greater links between the nursery and the newly formed *Norfolk and Norwich Horticultural Society* from 1829, which held many of its annual flower shows at the nursery grounds.

The nursery's main site was formed of two plots extending to around a hundred acres, now either side of the Daniels Road and Ipswich Road crossroads in Norwich. This site remained in use from c.1777 until the sale of the company in 1859. Figure 1 illustrates this site in c.1833. Mackie's was so extensive that clients recorded 'driving' around the grounds to choose their plants. In addition to this site, the Norwich Nursery operated a warehouse in the city centre. No. 10 and 11 Exchange Street, now a pub opposite Jarrolds, gave a 'shop front' to the out-of-town nursery. Selling catalogues, seeds and taking orders for the nursery, the shop ensured that Mackie's was easily accessible for passing trade. Contemporary directories suggest that this area was home to several other seedsmen and nurserymen.

In 1849, Mackie's purchased the *Bracondale Horticultural Establishment* that had operated as a nursery since the 1830s. The site now lies under housing on Corton Road, although the brick house at the centre of the site remains (fig 2). Once spread over three sites, Mackie's was reorganised into departments including the 'Greenhouse, Forcing and Floral' at Bracondale. Photographs taken c.1855 by Mackie's last partner, John Stewart (figs 3,4), show the site's extensive glasshouses that allowed fashionable 'hot-house' plants such as grapes to be grown.

The scale of such an early provincial nursery is unimaginable today. Mackie's held an auction of 'one million forest trees' in 1849. Its catalogues typically offered over 650 types of trees and shrubs, and 376 individually named roses in 1825. Mackie's could also supply tens of thousands of plants in a single shipment: the Ffynone estate in Pembrokeshire purchased 60,000 trees from Mackie's in 1796. Whilst this remains the only known delivery outside eastern England, the distance and extent of this shipment suggests the nursery was nationally known. Mackie's supplied trees to the Duchy of Bedfordshire's Oakley estate, despite the Rivers Nursery in Hertfordshire being half the distance. Mackie's was evidently one of the few nineteenth-century nurseries in England capable of meeting the vast orders for plantations on large estates. However, at Felbrigg during the same period, William Windham bought vast numbers of trees from the Gateshead Nursery in County Durham, having stated he would 'never advise anyone to purchase trees of Mr Mackie', following the failure of his own plantation.

Mackie's owed much of its success to the innovation of its delivery methods. As transport evolved from waggon, to

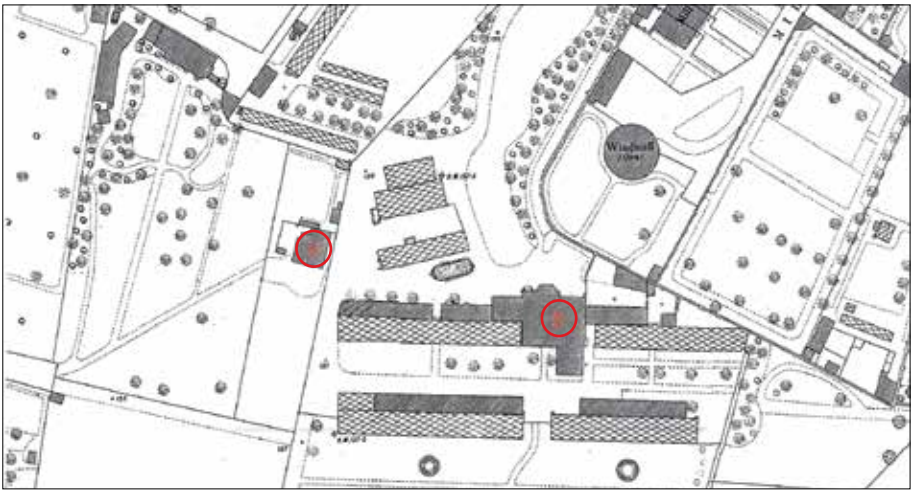


Figure 2: OS Map of The Bracondale Horticultural Establishment's glasshouses, 1880. Point 'A' marks the position of the photographer of Figures 3 and 4. Today, all that remains of the site is a single glasshouse attached to the central brick building marked 'B'.

Figure 3: Photograph of Bracondale Windmill taken by John Stewart, showing glasshouses of Bracondale Horticultural Establishment, c.1855. Courtesy of Norfolk County Council.

canal, to rail in the space of less than a hundred years, the nursery dramatically improved its delivery capability. The rail connection between Norwich and London in 1845 enabled the nursery to offer pre-selected planting groups to clients in the capital. These 'instant arboretums' of 650 varieties of trees and shrubs for £35 – just over £4,000 today – with free rail transport offered to make the most of this new opportunity.

Figure 4: Photograph of Bracondale Windmill taken by John Stewart c.1855. Courtesy of Norfolk County Council.

Figure 5: Bill from John Bell who purchased the Norwich Nursery in 1859, continuing to evoke the Mackie name (Private Collection, courtesy of Pamela Clark).

Mackie's highlights the significance of an industry that has largely been overlooked in the creation of designed landscapes and gardens. Its early sophistication and productive capacity remain an astonishing achievement, only possible as a result of the rapid social, economic and technological changes in this period. The last Norwich nurseryman, Arthur Mackie, emigrated to America with his family in 1859, ending their century-long domination of the Norwich nursery industry, although the Mackie name continued to be evoked by their successors (fig 5).

My thanks for the Norfolk Gardens Trust's generous sponsorship of my Masters Degree at UEA, without which this research could not have been conducted.

Norwich Botanists' Garden

by George Ishmael

Norwich has made an enormous contribution to the science of botany but there is little to celebrate this apart from a few street names – Hooker Road and Lindley Street – and even fewer historical plaques. This is about to change, with the construction of a small commemorative garden located in the churchyard of St Martin-at-Palace. It is being built and tended by volunteers of the Heavenly Gardens project and partly funded by the Norfolk Gardens Trust.

Botanical and horticultural endeavour in the city can be traced back to medieval times. Detailed account rolls were kept of the Cathedral Priory gardens during the C14, which indicate large fruit and vegetable gardens, the cultivation of herbs for a variety of uses including the brewing of beer, the dyeing of wool and for medicines. The Benedictine monks who tended the gardens, would have carried on these activities since their arrival around 1100. It was the monasteries that had kept alive the skills of growing plants.

England's earliest recorded private herb garden (*herbarium*) was that of a thirteenth century Jewish physician named Solomon who would have had to have studied botany since medicines were derived from plants. His garden was located in Saddlegate, now White Lion Street, Norwich.

The medieval apothecary. Woodcut from Ortus Sanitatis, 1511. Courtesy of John Innes Foundation

Four hundred years later, the physician Thomas Browne had a garden, just around the corner in Hay Hill. When John Evelyn visited in 1671 he wrote: *"his whole house and garden is a paradise"*. This probably referred also to a second garden which Browne had within the cathedral precincts: an area of meadowland where he studied the native flora.

From Elizabethan times, Norwich hosted a large population of 'Strangers', religious refugees from the Low Countries who brought their weaving

Teasel, Dipsacus fullonum. Woodcut from Ortus Sanitatis, 1511 Courtesy of John Innes Foundation

skills to the city. They also brought a deep interest in plant life and horticulture which led to Norwich becoming a leading light in the field of amateur botany.

Norwich botanists during the 18th century were among the first to classify plants using Carl Linnaeus's system of nomenclature, thereby contributing enormously to the growing science. Linnaeus's *Elements of Botany* was translated by the apothecary, Hugh Rose (1707 -1792) and the Rev. Henry Bryant – both members of the Norwich Botanical Society (ca 1760).

Later, Sir James Edward Smith FRS, the foremost botanist of his day, was to praise the contribution of Norwich botanists and acknowledge the early influence of the Strangers. Smith was the son of a wealthy Norwich wool merchant and trained as a physician. He never practiced medicine however, because he became totally immersed in the study of plants, much to the dismay of his father who nevertheless funded his son's purchase of the Linnean collection. Smith went on to found the Linnean Society and was a prolific author, including the 36-volume *English Botany*.

Woolly Mullein, Verbascum pulverulentum from J E Smith's English Botany, vol 7.
Courtesy of John Innes Foundation

Chicory, Chichorium intybus from J E Smith's English Botany, vol 8.
Courtesy of John Innes Foundation

Smith used his connections to help aspiring young botanists. One such was Sir William Jackson Hooker (1785 - 1865), born in Magdalen Street and a pupil at the Cathedral School. Smith gave him work as a plant illustrator and introduced him to Sir Joseph Banks. In 1841 Hooker was to become the Director of Kew Gardens. His son Joseph Dalton Hooker followed him in that post and was a great plant hunter, with many species of plant being named after him, eg. *Sarcococca hookeri, Inula hookeri*.

W J Hooker, in turn, helped other aspiring botanists, including John Lindley (1799 - 1865). He introduced him to Sir Joseph Banks who employed Lindley as an assistant in his herbarium. Lindley went on to be a renowned secretary of the Royal Horticultural Society after whom the largest horticultural library in the world is named.

More recently, Arthur Roy Clapham (1904 - 1990), a student of Eaton City of Norwich School, was a co-author of Clapham, Tutin and Warburg's *Excursion Flora*, the most popular botanical field guide of the twentieth century. Clapham also invented the word 'ecosystem'.

The role of women in the development of botany is not so easy to discern although it was certainly deemed a 'suitable' pastime for young Victorian women, as was the illustration of plants. Joyce Mildred Lambert (1916 - 2005),

J E Smith as a young boy. Engraving by Mrs Dawson-Turner. Courtesy of the Linnean Society

Inula hookeri, named for Joseph Hooker. Photo: G Ishmael

a student of Norwich High School for Girls, went on to become a botanist and encouraged by the Norfolk naturalist A.E. Ellis and A. R. Clapham, then at Oxford University, she began studying the ecology of the Norfolk Broads. She is best known for her work in revealing that the Broads are actually medieval, man-made peat diggings.

The plants used in the new commemorative garden largely reflect those used by the early apothecaries, such as hyssop *Hyssopus officinalis*. The garden also reflects the interest in native plants, particularly those first recorded in the area, such as the wild tulip (*Tulipa sylvestris*) in 1790 and the woolly mullein (*Verbascum pulverulentum*) in 1745. Some plants are associated with individuals, such as chicory (*Chicorium intybus*), which Sir James Edward Smith said was the flower that first got his attention as a boy; or peony (*Paeonia officinalis*), the petals of which were described by Sir Thomas Browne as "*noe ordinarie peece of Art*". Some of the plants are named for particular individuals, such as those with the specific name *hooker*i and *lindleyensis*.

An explanatory leaflet will be available in the church, which is usually open to the public on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The garden is under construction so best visited from July 2020 onward.

A Norfolk Gardening School

By Ruth Darrah

The Norfolk School of Gardening was founded in early 2019 at Ketteringham Hall. Easton & Otley College was in difficulties and several horticulture lecturers had left. They had lost RHS accreditation and there was no longer anywhere in Norfolk or Suffolk where professional and amateur gardeners could go for short courses or qualification courses. We felt this was a serious issue and a small group of us, including two of the former lecturers from Easton, decided to set up a gardening school.

We had been looking for some time for a suitable venue that was accessible to Norwich and the rest of Norfolk and Suffolk when a friend tipped us off that the owners of Ketteringham Hall, just south of Norwich, were looking for someone to use the newly cleared walled-garden. When we first came to look at the one-acre garden in October 2018 it was completely empty apart from a few Irish yews which had been cut back to about 2 ft (apparently 40 years of neglect meant they had collapsed and could not be otherwise rescued) and a semi-circle of similarly reduced variegated box around a curious throne, which has a plaque with a bishop's mitre. Otherwise, there was a well in the centre and a beautiful two-storey tool shed built into one corner of the walls. The backdrop to the garden includes the church on one side and the Hall on another. There were no beds, no paths and a metal label from 1871 marking the spot where a pear was trained. None of the many fruit trees, which would have lined the walls, remained; just rough grass and a lot of creeping buttercup, couch grass, dandelion and comfrey. However, it was a beautiful and peaceful space, five minutes from the A11 and eight from Thickthorn Roundabout and the A47.

1. The Walled Garden, June 2019

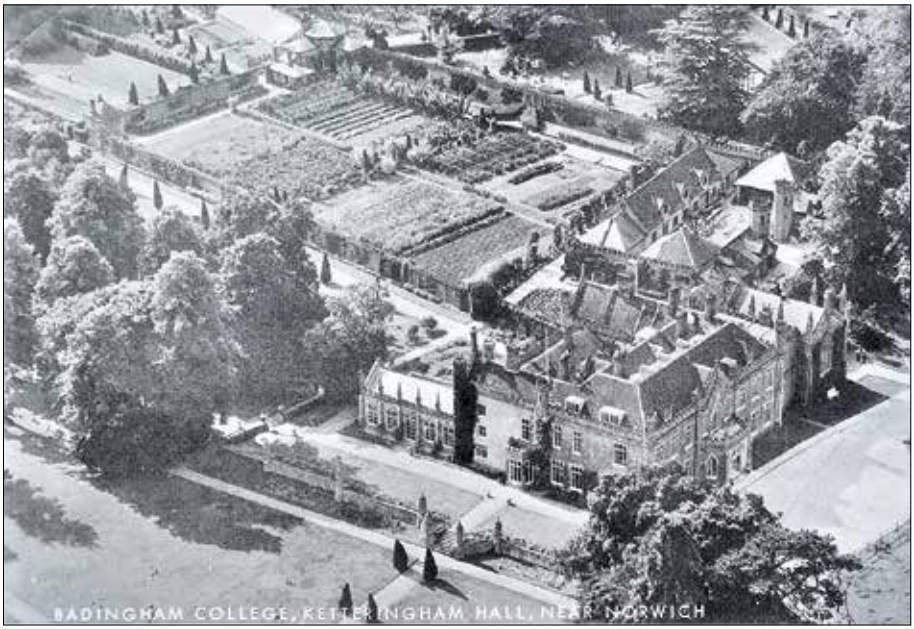
The history of the Hall revealed that it had last been lived in before the Second World War. The C15th Hall was acquired in 1836 by the Boileau family who lived here until the 1930s. In the C19 the Hall was largely rebuilt in the Gothic style by Wymondham architect, Thomas Jeckyll who added turrets and battlements. In the

2. C19th Potting Shed

walled garden, the tool shed and head gardener's house were built – again with input from Jeckyll who embellished the gateways and increased the height of the walls with castellations.

3. Learning to dig, Certificate in Practical Horticulture

After the last Boileau died, the house was sold to the Duke of Westminster. This was the end of formal gardening at Ketteringham Hall. During the war it was used by the US Air Force 2nd Division who undoubtedly grew vegetables in the walled garden. From 1965 to 1968 the Hall was occupied by Badingham College, a private boys' boarding school. More recently, the Hall was home to Lotus Cars after their founder, Colin



4. Walled Garden in the 1960s

Chapman, bought the estate in 1970; it is still owned by the Chapman family who now rent it out to various businesses.

The walled garden had not been cultivated since the 1960s. It was designed for a previous era when there would have been a dozen gardeners and no mechanised equipment. The gateways had therefore never been widened to allow access for anything more than a small ride-on mower, and there was no road access to bring in pallets of compost or other materials. The paths within the garden had disappeared, making it harder to transport heavy barrows across the site. As is typical of the later, more decorative walled gardens, this one is very close to the house, originally attached to the stable block. This was an advantage as we could rent a room in the Hall as a classroom and yet get easily and quickly out to our beautiful outdoor learning space. We were thrilled to discover such a near perfect site so close to Norwich.

We took on the lease with a vision to create an inspirational learning space. We want people to come into the garden and be inspired by the location and the sense of history but also to feel they could replicate much of what we do in their own garden: our raised vegetable beds are domestic in scale; our mixed beds would work in a medium-sized garden; and our compost bins are made from recycled pallets. It will evolve over the next few years as we grow and adapt the space to our needs, but we do not plan to restore the garden to its Victorian

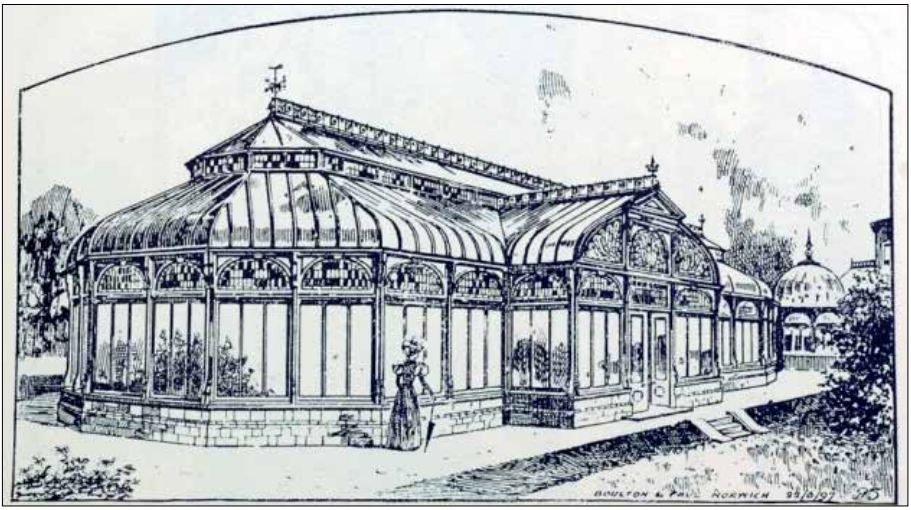
5. The Walled Garden under vegetable cultivation, 1960s

6. Plant identification exercise, Certificate in Practical Horticulture

glory days. The original glasshouses are long gone but we had fantastic support from Rhino Greenhouses and Direct Plants in supplying a greenhouse and polytunnel which have proved invaluable come rain or shine, for both teaching and growing. We have begun to replant the fruit trees which were trained along the walls and are using the existing Victorian vine eyes. Life has returned to the walled garden in the shape of people and plants and pollinators (and a few pests). We are welcoming a growing number of people every week, coming to learn everything from garden design to practical horticulture, from propagation to pruning, from growing flowers to arranging them, from bricklaying to building a pond. We want to make what we do accessible to anyone with a passion for gardening in Norfolk and this is just the beginning.

Boulton and Paul Glasshouses

Written by Bob Greef and edited by Sally Bate



From the Boulton and Paul catalogue

The history of the growth of protected crops can be traced back to Roman times. Pliny the Elder described beds mounted on wheels that could be moved into the sun but on wintry days moved under frames glazed with transparent stone (probably lapis specularis, mined in Spain).

Further afield, in 1459 a doctor to the Korean Royal Family wrote about a building whose framework was covered in oiled paper to protect crops grown in soil warmed by an underground system.

From the 16th century, Italian-influenced glasshouses began to be built in The Netherlands and England. In Britain these came in the form of orangeries, made to shelter citrus fruits imported from Spain, and often heated by charcoal under the floor. In the 18th and early 19th centuries, the Industrial Revolution brought glasshouse construction into mass production, culminating in the spectacular Palm House at Kew Gardens. Designed by Decimus Burton and constructed in 1844 by Richard Turner this provided a home for tropical plants brought back by explorers. But the record-breaking dimensions of Kew's Palm House were soon to be trumped by Joseph Paxton's Crystal Palace for the Great Exhibition in 1851. These developments in glasshouse design coincided with the abolition of punitive taxes on glass (by weight) in 1845 and windows (by area) in 1851, which provided the opportunity

The conservatory at Carrow House

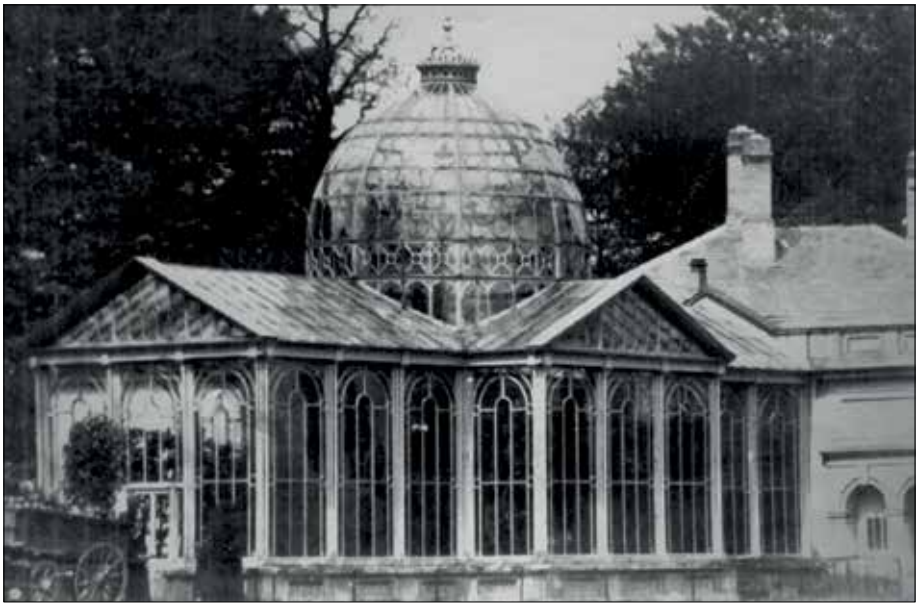
for the emerging middle classes to enjoy glasshouses in their more modest gardens.

Boulton and Paul

William Boulton joined Moore and Barnard's Norwich ironworks in 1844 and after his promotion to director in 1870, the firm was renamed Barnard and Boulton. Subsequently, Joseph Paul was made director and the firm became Boulton and Paul (B&P). Over its history, manufactured products ranged from pre-fabricated buildings to military planes to electricity pylons to wire netting. Among the myriad items you could purchase from B&P were a number of glasshouse designs.

In their 1898 catalogue, B&P proudly lists their high-status customers: their Royal Highnesses the Prince of Wales, the Duke of Edinburgh, the Duke of

The B&P glasshouse at Raveningham



Catton Hall Camellia House ca 1934 Courtesy of Ray Jones, Old Catton Society

Connaught and the Duke of Albany and followed by 14 dukes and duchesses, 15 marquises, 47 earls, 16 viscounts, 84 lords and 12,000 other leading families in the United Kingdom. However, the catalogue contains a section of smaller greenhouses of more modest dimensions,'for the amateur'. B&P's smallest lean-to greenhouse was 10' x 7' and cost £8 10s 0d while a span-roof greenhouse (10' x 8') was offered at £10 10s 0d, including free delivery. These 'amateur' prices were out of reach of the agricultural labourer or factory worker but aimed at the salaried senior clerk, lawyer, doctor or clergyman.

Amongst various testimonials the 1898 catalogue includes a conservatory for the Bishop of Thetford at North Creake. The catalogue also mentions the 'recently erected conservatory at Carrow House, Norwich'. This beautiful and elegant free-standing building is still there today and was restored by John Youngs Builder in 2009. We also know that JH Gurney Snr had Edward Boardman design a Camellia House at Catton Hall. This Paxton-inspired structure was built by B&P in the 1850s but its cupola was removed in WWII to prevent enemy planes using it as a landmark (figure).

Another large B&P glasshouse can be seen in Raveningham Gardens, again beautifully restored over the past decade. Over 49 feet in length, with a projecting, off-centre floral display section, the three-quarter span roof has an ornamental cast-iron arcade ending in the distinctive B&P finials.

Smaller versions of the three-quarter-span models can be found in Suffolk at Ringsfield Hall (near Beccles) and

B&P greenhouse at Flordon

Abbots Hall near Stowmarket (Museum of East Anglian Life), both in the process of restoration. Wood Hall, Hilgay, has a modest-sized three-quarter-span model in its walled garden, with the remains of a simple roof-line arcade. The conservatory that once graced the east end of Wood Hall has the appearance of a B&P model, too.

A Norfolk example of a smaller full-span B&P greenhouse can be found in Flordon and was rescued by its current owners. Originally built at Hethersett Old Hall, twenty years ago it stood in the way of a proposed new classroom and was therefore re-erected at its new site. Slightly modified to fit the space available, and to include a workshop at one end, this model number 49 glasshouse is serving its original purpose again.

Sadly, Bob had only just got started on his B & P research and was looking forward to visiting and recording more examples. We would like to find a B&P revolving summerhouse, cold frames, iron garden structures and other glasshouses, can you help? If so, please let Sally know (sally.bate678@gmail.com). We are aware that the Norfolk Historic Buildings Group is amassing an archive of B&P buildings and we are particularly interested in the garden buildings and smaller products they made.

With thanks to: Rebecca Greef, Peter Woodrow and Mr and Mrs David Harrison for help with this article.

Ringsfield Hall greenhouse

B&P branding, Flordon

Bob Greef 1946 – 2019

It was with great sadness that the Norfolk Gardens Trust learnt of the death of Bob Greef on 11th September 2019. Bob attended the inaugural meeting of the current research group in August 2014 and although he told us he didn't have formal garden history training it soon became clear that his background in building, extensive knowledge of Norfolk and his deep-seated love of wildlife and the natural environment, added much value in our research and site visits. His witty sense of humour and ability to cut to the core of subjects we discussed will be greatly missed along with his friendship to us all.

It could be said that Bob had a slightly unfair advantage when it came to Norfolk garden history – his father, Fred, was the Head Gardener at Oxburgh Hall and Bob's happy childhood was spent exploring the gardens, parkland and wider estate. A pupil of Oxborough village school and then the Sacred Heart Convent in Swaffham, Bob successfully secured a place at Hammond's Grammar School although, by his own admission, he was keen to leave school at 16 and enter the world of work. Bob was a great example of a life-long learner and enrolled himself as a mature student at Bretton Hall College in Yorkshire, going on to end his working life as a lecturer at the College of West Anglia. As well as joining the NGT research team, in his retirement he was able to help the current NT gardening team with skills and knowledge at Oxburgh Hall, enjoy his long-held passion for angling and take part in projects recording and studying the history of Breckland.

Bob contributed towards both our Capability Brown and Humphry Repton books and had moved his attention onto the subject of Victorian glasshouses, and in particular, the Norwich manufacturer, Boulton and Paul, as part of our current 1837 – 1914 Gardens and Horticulture in Norfolk project. In late August last year, I was fortunate enough to spend a sunny afternoon with Bob and Rachel visiting a Boulton and Paul greenhouse in Flordon. Ever conscientious, Bob wrote up his findings the next day and sent his whole research file to me. As a tribute to Bob's work with the NGT Research Group, selected items from his file were combined to make the previous article.

Peter and Val Woodrow represented NGT at the celebration of Bob's life in early October at Lynford Hall and have passed on some of the above information. We would like to extend our condolences and warmest wishes to Rachel (Bob's wife), Rebecca (his daughter and former NGT researcher), and the rest of his family.

Sally Bate

Janet Johnston 1931 - 2019

Janet was a founder member of the NGT in 1988 and served on the committee from 1999 - 2016. Between 2003 and 2009, she edited the Trust's Newsletter and gave valuable local knowledge when we surveyed and compiled the Trust's Norfolk Gardens book.

Janet grew up in Norwich, attending Notre Dame High School for Girls before going on to Goldsmiths College and onto a career as a teacher of art. She met her husband, Colin, through their mutual love of Janet's Siamese cat and after their marriage they had three daughters, and later six grandchildren. On retirement they moved from London to King's Lynn, where their garden, which was detached from the house, was overlooked by the medieval Merchant's Tower. Though small it was very tranquil and had numerous climbers on the surrounding walls, a pond and a wonderful old potting shed.

Many people will remember Janet for her warm, friendly personality and ability to get people to do things, whilst fitting them into the right job for their capabilities. This was particularly noticeable at King's Lynn NADFAS (now the Arts Society), which she helped to set up in 1988. She also formed a Heritage Volunteers group to work at the library at Oxburgh Hall and another to conserve textiles at several big houses in NW Norfolk. Both these groups are still thriving. Janet was a judge for 'Britain in Bloom' in Norfolk, an active member of CPRE, the King's Lynn Preservation Trust and a Blue Badge guide for the town, designing their distinctive badge.

Despite her increasing mobility problem, Janet – thanks to Colin – was able to see two of the Trust's open gardens in 2019 and our last trip out together was in the autumn sunshine, to the gardens at West Acre Nursery.

Pat Bray

The Best of British

By Christopher Grey-Wilson

Our gardens are full of colourful and exciting plants. Many have been gathered by diligent plant hunters over past centuries, including: rhododendrons and magnolias from the Himalayas and China, tulips from Central Asia, wisterias from China and Japan, phloxes from North America and acacias and eucalyptus from Australia. Yet our gardens have also been enriched by native species.

A classic example is the primrose, *Primula vulgaris*, one of the most cherished native plants, found widely in woodland and along hedgerows. The wild plant is excellent in the garden and will seed around once established.

The related oxlip, *Primula elatior*, has flowers of a similar colour but bunched rather than solitary. Oxlips are a speciality of the ancient woods of eastern England, particularly East Anglia. Like the primrose it is an excellent garden plant, relishing moist leafy soil in dappled shade. Flowering at the same time, the two species readily cross to produce intermediate hybrids, referred to as False Oxlips.

The third member of this alliance is the familiar cowslip, *Primula veris*, a plant of sunny banks and meadows in drier places.

At home in this country, but maybe not native, are the snowdrop (*Galanthus nivalis*,) and the Snakes Head Fritillary (*Fritillaria meleagris*). Through long

Yellow and white primroses, Primula vulgaris, in cultivation

Oxlips. Primula elatior, thriving in a garden border, in Norfolk.

Cowslip, Primula veris; Chippenhall Common, Suffolk

Cowslips naturalised in a meadow, Kenninghall, Norfolk.

association they can justifiably be called 'native' with snowdrops forming magnificent carpets on many East Anglian estates. From humble beginnings the snowdrop has emerged as a connoisseur's item, with hundreds of recognised variants. Galanthophiles seek the rare and unusual, sometimes with ridiculous prices.

Fritillaria meleagris, the Snakes Head lily, established in a meadow in Norfolk.

The chequered purple lanterns of *Fritillaria meleagris* are wholly delightful; a denizen of wet meadows there are excellent examples, particularly in Suffolk (Fox Fritillary meadow is outstanding!). In the garden, moist soil is essential; it will seed nicely once established. Other exciting selections include the charming white 'Aphrodite' and darker selections mostly named after the planets, like 'Mars' and 'Jupiter'. The species was first described in the C16 by herbalist John Gerard. Today it is far less common than it once was, particularly as a result of the destruction of many fine water meadows since the Second World War.

Fritillaria meleagris, showing variation common in flower colour.

The bluebell, *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*, is another familiar spring bulb, enhancing woodlands and copses with a sea of blue.

Snowdrops, Galanthus nivalis, in a Norfolk woodland.

East Anglia has fine examples: Wayland Wood near Watton is one of the best, its bluebell display enhanced in late spring by foamy white blossoms of bird cherries, *Prunus padus*. The bluebell is an eye-catching garden plant, especially for naturalising, but has been replaced in many gardens by the more robust and invasive Spanish bluebell, *H. hispanica*. The musk mallow, *Malva moschata*, has been cultivated for hundreds of years and was an important apothecary plant. A British native, it was once a familiar sight in old meadows, with its hollyhock-like pink or white flowers. A robust herbaceous perennial, it grows to 90 cm tall, sometimes more, flowering over

A drift of bluebells, Hyacinthoides non-scripta, in Wayland Wood, Norfolk.

Common Bugle, Ajuga reptans, flowering in Wayland Wood, Norfolk.

much of summer. As well as enhancing meadows and other grassy places it makes a colourful plant for the herbaceous border, often seeding around. The common bugle (*Ajuga reptans*) has had a long association with our gardens. A denizen of woodland glades and hedge banks its neat leafy columns of purple, two-lipped flowers attract bumble bees. Various selections are available to gardeners.

East Anglia's coastal communities have also provided interesting additions to the garden. Walk along shingle beaches like Minsmere or Shingle Street and you are likely to come upon tall cabbage-like clumps of *Crambe maritima* with waxy leaves and sprays of small white flowers. You may also see the yellow horned poppy, *Glaucium flavum*, and the sea holly, *Eryngium maritimum*. All three species share tough resistant leaves capable of withstanding salty sea-spray. In our gardens they are especially effective in dry, sunny, gravelly places.

All natives mentioned so far have been

perennials but annuals are also important constituents of our gardens. Today we pine for the flowery meadows of fifty years ago that added diversity to the landscape and were important places for insects, birds and small mammals. Efforts are increasingly made to re-establish meadows, both traditional hay meadows and colourful annuals of arable land flora. Gardeners can help by putting an area aside for these annuals that rely on yearly disturbance of the soil. Cornflowers, corn marigolds, corn chamomile, common or corn poppy, and corncockle, are all important elements, providing a rich medley of colour.

I must finish with one native species that has become increasingly rare in the past hundred years. The Pasque-flower, *Pulsatilla vulgaris*, a close relation of the anemone, is found in just a few sites in Britain today. It blooms at Easter, hence the name 'Pasque' (cf. "Pashal' of Easter) and is a plant essentially of ancient chalk grassland; its decline is due to changes in land use. A protected British native, it is illegal to collect it from the wild; however, it has been long-established in cultivation and is, like all the plants mentioned in this article, available from garden centres and nurseries.

The Pasque-flower, Pulsatilla vulgaris, photographed at Thersfield in Hertfordshire, where it colonises the rises on the golf course.

Malva moschata, the Musk Mallow, both pink and white forms, thriving in a Norfolk meadow.

Annual meadow at Fersfield, Norfolk, a wonderful colourful medley of cornflowers, corn marigolds, poppies and corn chamomiles.

Crocosmia: 'The Earlham Hybrids'

by Guy Barker

For many gardeners, crocosmia (or monbretia) is a taboo word, related to the plant's ability to romp through gardens, covering swathes of England and Ireland in bright green leaves and fiery orange flowers. However, that particular beast, known as *Crocosmia X crocosmiiflora*, is a hybrid between two species, *C. pottsii* and *C. aurea*. Other members of the genus are more beautiful in my opinion and, due to their flowering period, are fantastic for bridging the gap between early and late summer.

Fig 1. Crocosmia 'George Davidson'. Courtesy, John Jearrard

Fig 2. Crocosmia 'Prometheus'. Courtesy, John Jearrard

My personal obsession with crocosmia began with work experience at Blooms of Bressingham, followed by working at Howard Nurseries in Suffolk. Both are powerhouses in the horticultural world, having bred and introduced many garden plants. (Blooms are responsible for unleashing *Crocosmia* 'Lucifer' upon us, a metre tall, bright red monster). Under David Howard's watchful eye I began to appreciate the art of plant history and collecting. David was a stickler for traditional garden plants, most of which were bred or discovered in East Anglia, and I began to learn the history behind crocosmia. The name derives from the Greek words *krokos* (saffron) and *osme* (odour), referring to

the smell released from dried leaves.

I also learned stories linked to the Norfolk and Earlham hybrids – 'Earlham Hybrids' being an umbrella term to describe the plants created by George Davidson, George Henley and John E. Fitt between 1895-1939.

Fig 3. Crocosmia 'Star of the East'. Courtesy, Jaime Blake

In 1895, the breeding programme began under Head Gardener George Davidson at Westwick Hall, Norfolk, where he created approximately 13 varieties of crocosmia. It wasn't until he used one of the progeny of a C. X *crocosmiiflora* and C. 'Golden Sheaf' cross, then back-crossed it with C. 'Golden Sheaf', that he achieved success. The resulting plant had clear golden yellow flowers, good form and flowered in July rather than August. It was named *Crocosmia* 'George Davidson' (fig 1) after him; it gained an RHS Award of Merit in 1902 and is still widely used in the landscaping and gardening

Fig 4. Crocosmia 'Queen of Spain'

Fig 5. Crocosmia 'His Majesty'. Courtesy, John Jearrard

industries. Another two of Davidson's Earlham Hybrids that have stood the test of time are C.'Prometheus' (fig 2) created in 1904 (RHS AM 1908) and C. 'Star of the East' (fig 3) created in 1910 (RHS AGM 2002). Both are wonderful plants with commanding blooms.

Davidson's collection passed to Sidney Morris of Wretham Hall, Norfolk, where he and head gardener George Henley continued the breeding programme. Wretham Hall sat within 6,400 acres of Breckland, near Thetford, and is one of Norfolk's great lost country houses; it was destroyed twice: gutted by fire on Boxing Day 1906 and its replacement was demolished in 1948. After the fire, the gardens at Wretham were maintained by George Henley, allowing him and Morris to continue the breeding programme. Six varieties were born at Wretham with two of those forms, *Crocosmia* 'Queen of Spain' (fig 4) and *Crocosmia* 'His Majesty' (fig 5), still available.

Morris then moved to Earlham Hall in Norwich (fig 6) with Henley as head gardener. Henley had retired by 1918 and the position passed to John ('Jack') E. Fitt who had been under-gardener to Henley. Despite the move to Earlham Hall, the outbreak of World War I, and the promotion of Jack Fitt, the crocosmia hybridization programme went on unabated, with as many as 35 good new varieties produced and sold directly from the nursery at Earlham Hall – the first release of C. 'His Majesty' in 1920 attracting a price of two guineas (roughly £60 today).

When Sidney Morris died in 1924, Jack Fitt inherited the collection now called 'The Earlham Hybrids'; he relocated to Breccles Hall, Norfolk (fig 7) and continued breeding crocosmia until the 1930s. Many later cultivars reflected the social and horticultural visitors that came to Breccles Hall, such as Lady Churchill,

E.A Bowles, R.C Notcutt and Queen Mary.

Unfortunately, there is no complete record of the varieties created in Norfolk by Davidson, Henley and Fitt and we do not know how many beautiful hybrids were created and now possibly extinct. But in the early 2000s Terry Bane set out to find the remaining Earlham Hybrids. Many were considered lost but, with help from plant collection holders and friends, Terry was able to compile a living historical collection for people to study and enjoy. Kathleen Rowlands now heads the volunteers who care for and maintain the collection, ensuring that these plants remain part of the rich horticultural history of Norwich and Norfolk.

Fig 6. Earlham Hall, Norwich.

Fig 7. Breccles Hall, Norfolk.

As mentioned earlier, my love for crocosmia began with learning about the Earlham Hybrids. In 2015, I started working at Breccles Hall as gardener. Knowing the property's connection to the Earlham Hybrids made it all the more exciting to work there – and so I started collecting. With Kathleen's help I managed to obtain many of the existing hybrids and then, through a knee-jerk decision, I inherited a national collection from Mark Fox in Linconshire. Safe to say, that's a lot of plants – even for a collector!

Unfortunately, my time at Breccles Hall was short, so the Earlham hybrids and National Collection moved to my home at Wilby Hall, Norfolk. Here, my aim is to kick-start a new generation of Norfolk crocosmia breeding as was done so successfully in the past; this should ensure that the Earlham Hybrids, with all stories and connections to Norwich and Norfolk, are not lost.

Matthew Martin, Dairy Farmhouse, Swardeston

Why are your answers to these questions in the past tense?
After over 40 years enjoying life at Dairy Farmhouse, we decided to downsize and move into Norwich for our old age. With much sadness we sold our Swardeston home last summer leaving our garden for others to change and enjoy.

How big was your garden?
An acre around the house and a one-acre paddock adjoining it.

What was your garden like when you arrived?
My wife and I bought Dairy Farmhouse at an auction in 1978. The house was derelict, having previously been tenanted

off the Unthank Intwood estate. There was a range of dilapidated barns and cowsheds and, apart from a vegetable garden, the remainder of the so-called garden was completely ignored and overgrown.

How was the garden developed?
The very first thing to be planted was a belt of trees along the northern boundary. This was thinned over the years but not as rigorously as was desirable; crowded trees in a domestic garden produce an unsatisfactory outcome. Also, a small apple orchard was planted near the vegetable garden. The best of these was a russet which was truly delicious if eaten fresh off the tree. Having removed some, but not all, of the derelict barns the remainder of the one acre was ploughed up and seeded with grass to form a blank canvas. The first border to be created was a rose garden, designed by the late Peter Beales who, at the time, still had his rose nursery in Swardeston.

The concept for the remainder was an informal cottage-style garden. In the early years, and without appropriate advice, various planting schemes had been tried but were not to our liking. So after about 20 years we engaged the services of Marj Wilson, lead gardener at the Plantation Garden in Norwich, for a complete makeover. Nine borders needed major attention: a great number of shrubs were removed but a few were left to create height. The inter-planting largely consisted of herbaceous plants

with some roses, again from Peter Beales.

What did you like most about your garden?
As with most enthusiastic gardeners there were moments of delight. For me, these occurred particularly in late May and June, when all that work in the winter months was rewarded.

As time passed, more emphasis was put into winter and late summer flowering, avoiding yellow and orange colours, which some like but which I do not.

With the remaining barns now timber-clad there was an opportunity to use climbing plants including clematis and roses. There was also a fig tree that I would have liked to have replaced with a more suitable one I'd seen at Great Dixter, with smaller leaves, but in the event I did not.

I would not be honest if I did not accept that over the years a number of cardinal errors were made, particularly with the location of two large borders. I think this was caused partly by not having an overall strategy and partly my lack of expertise. Like many gardeners I would have welcomed the opportunity to have my time again with years ahead to rectify some of those mistakes.

However, I have many hundreds of photographs to remind me of all those years of work and not a little enjoyment

For me it is a land of lost content.

A New Book for the Trust

by Roger Last

The Trust produced its first book 'Norfolk Gardens and Designed Landscapes' in 2013. At 460 pages it was a major publication by any standards and has to date sold 2250 copies. It was the result of the research work of Trust members and the University of East Anglia, and three main authors Patsy Dallas, Roger Last and Tom Williamson, with Roger Last acting as overall editor and picture editor. This was followed up by two books expertly edited by Sally Bate: 'Capability Brown in Norfolk', in 2016 to coincide with the 300th anniversary of Brown's birth; and 'Humphry Repton in Norfolk', to commemorate the bicentenary of his death in 2018. Both were the result of detailed research by the Trust's Research Group and extremely well illustrated, with much material not published before. Now, in 2020, we hope to add to our book total with a new publication that I am editing: 'Enticing Paths – A Treasury of Norfolk Gardens and Gardening'.

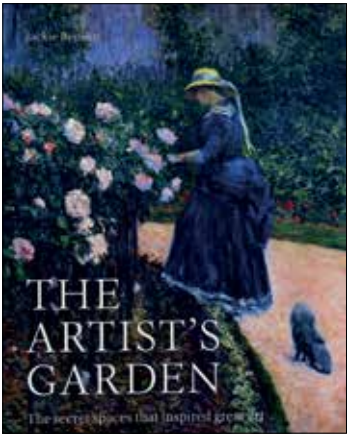
The book was suggested by our current Chairman, who pointed out that the excellent material produced for our Journals between 1998 to 2012 deserved a much wider readership having only been seen by NGT members over that period. Originally, more than seventy articles on a very wide range of topics were especially commissioned by the Trust from an equally wide range of writers. Articles were on such topics as individual gardens, designers, elements within a garden – fountains, water works, lakes or grottoes for example – garden manufacturers, plants and plant collectors; the list is a long one. The unifying factor was that all of the material had to relate to gardens and gardening in Norfolk.

Templewood, Northrepps

The intention now is to reproduce 23 of the original articles, but all of them updated and revised as necessary. Currently, we are gathering full colour versions of the original images and new photographs have been taken over the summer. Next comes the designing, formatting, proof-reading, indexing and other time-consuming tasks. And, in order not to spend all our income on a project such as this, we are looking to find grants from charitable trusts, to offset the expense.

Work is well advanced but there is a great deal more to do if we are to have this ready for next autumn and the run up to Christmas. There may even be a year's delay; we hope not but this is an exciting project and we hope you will find it well worth the wait.

The Artist's Garden: The secret spaces that inspired great art. By Jackie Bennett (2019) *White Lion Publishing £30.*



The gardens in this fascinating book are based on real gardens that were often planned, planted, tilled and hoed by the painters themselves; Kandinsky – we read – even managed to give himself a hernia through gardening.

No single artistic thread runs through the gardens themselves for they are as various as the painters. What emerges from Jackie Bennett's book is that gardens were a place of solitude and quiet inspiration: think only of Claude Monet and the garden at Giverny where, for the latter part of his life, he painted little other than water lilies.

You might have thought that the artistic temperament went hand in hand with bohemian wildness but the German Impressionist Max Liebermann used geometrical principles in laying out his box-hedged compartments and even the wild walled-garden we see in present day Charleston was well-tended when Vanessa Bell and friends first made it. Inevitably, colour figured highly, especially once artists could take tubes of oil paint into the garden to compare their paintings with the real thing; placed side by side, Matisse said that flower beds made his paintings look dull. Monochromatic gardens underline this heightened interest in colour but Vita Sackville-West's famous White Garden at Sissinghurst was not the first – 30 years earlier the French painter Le Sidaner laid out colour-themed beds of yellow or white or blue.

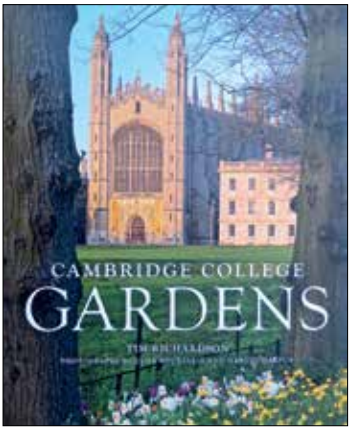
To have one's own garden required sufficient financial security for the artist to put down roots but others, perforce, had to borrow gardens. Poor – literally poor – Vincent van Gogh painted the lilies in the garden of a Provençal asylum in contrast to Cedric Morris, the Suffolk gardener-artist, who was free to paint lilies at his own art school in Benton End. Luminaries such as Vita Sackville-West and Beth Chatto came to the garden to see the irises he bred with a painterly eye.

Jackie Bennet has divided the book into the gardens of individuals and those of artistic communities. Both are fascinating but I was particularly absorbed by the latter: William Morris and his circle; the Bloomsbury Group at Charleston; and a personal favourite, E A Hornel's garden in Kirkcudbright where the Glasgow Boys (and Girls) introduced japonisme into their painting. A beautifully illustrated, thought-provoking book.

Clive Lloyd

Cambridge College Gardens. By Tim Richardson.

White Lion Publishing £40.



Cambridge is home to one of the world's finest collection of historic gardens, many of which are hard to access and virtually unknown. In this exhaustive study, Tim Richardson shows how the gardens are entwined with the history of the colleges they adorn, and how they have been shaped by the taste, skill - and sometimes whim - of generations of head gardeners and highly-opinionated dons. We learn how the planted environment has evolved to meet changing needs, with archery butts and piggeries giving way to bowling greens and plunge pools, and these in turn to today's Instagrammable backdrops designed to lure undergraduates and conference delegates.

Richardson is well equipped for this task. He has a sympathetic understanding of architecture old and new, a connoisseur's eye for a choice plant (how many mulberries, tulip trees and catalpas are mentioned here!) and a nose for a good story. Whether it is Lucy Cavendish College's failed experiment with using a herd of guinea pigs to trim grass, or a drunken Edwin Lutyens spoiling Gertrude Jekyll's hopes of designing Newnham's garden, Richardson has an entertaining anecdote for every college. And, despite the density of information, it is invariably leavened with wit ("Some of us are seen to best effect from behind. Clare College falls into this category"). Nor does he shy away from criticism: he maintains, for example, that most of the gardens could benefit from the help of a professional landscape gardener.

Cambridge College Gardens is illustrated with plans of each college and sumptuous photography by Clive Boursnell and Marcus Harpur. These, together with the author's detailed notes on the planting of notable beds, will give future generations a remarkably vivid picture of how the gardens appeared in our age. This is not a guide to lug around a garden, however: at over 1.5 kilos, it would soon tire the arm. Buy it, read it, and then visit – it will greatly enrich your appreciation of these special places that have been celebrated by poets for hundreds of years.

Tony Hufton

Tim Richardson has been booked to speak about the Cambridge College gardens at our Trust's Tate Talk in March 2021.

Garden Visits

Friday 8th May 10:30 start
Elmham House, North Elmham, Dereham NR20 5JY

A morning walk with Professor Tom Williamson (UEA) around the park, pleasure garden, walled kitchen garden, 18th century ice house, circular brick dovecote and game larder.

The original hall built in 1727 was demolished when the estate was acquired by a developer in 1924 and a new house was built in 1928 alongside the original outbuildings and a small garden now exists on the site of the old hall. The pleasure garden lies to the west of the house bounded by a ha-ha and fencing and contains a number of fine trees including an unusual *Catalpa fargesii* and two Cedar of Lebanon, rhododendrons and spring flowering shrubs, roses and azaleas. Ongoing clearing of laurel has revealed old walls and paths. The ice house (restored in 2017) lies in the west of the park with open panoramic views towards the lake and beyond. The dovecote (restored 2002) and game larder are both dated 1840 on cast iron plaques above the doors. The 18th century walled kitchen garden also survives and is surrounded by 3.5m high red-brick walls with raised, grilled sections to the north and south where glasshouses once stood and an ancient vine, still productive, grows in the ruins of an 19th century glasshouse. The gardener's cottage and ancillary buildings are situated on the east side. A rectangular brick-built water tank with steps leading down is at the centre of an area of fruit and vegetables; the remainder being laid to grass with an ancient mulberry tree.

Refreshments

£12.50. ADVANCE BOOKING ONLY

Open by kind invitation of Tom & Jo Fitzalan Howard

Saturday 6th June 2 - 5pm
Wretham Lodge, East Wretham IP24 1RL

Wretham Lodge is a Georgian rectory built in 1810 surrounded by a 10 acre garden. The entire garden is encompassed by a flint wall. The garden includes a double herbaceous border, yew hedges, topiary and a shrub and rose border. Within the grounds is a walled kitchen garden which is maintained in the traditional manner where a wide range of vegetables, fruit and perennials are grown. The garden contains a large selection of fruit trees with over twenty varieties of apple, six of pear, peaches, cherries, nectarines, plums and quince.

In the grounds are over 100 varieties of roses including the Wretham rose which was discovered here and named by Peter Beales after the house. The garden has featured in Peter Beales' Book, Vision of Roses and in numerous magazines including Country Life, House and Garden, English Garden, and Country Living and in 2019 was included in

Kathryn Bradley-Hole's English Gardens, which is taken from the archives of Country Life.

Teas

Open by kind invitation of Gordon Alexander & Ian Salter

Visit to Helmingham Hall Gardens, Stowmarket, Suffolk

A day trip by coach to Helmingham Hall Gardens has been arranged - date to be arranged. Coach pick up in Norwich.

Details will be sent to members after Easter.

Thursday 25th June 2 - 5pm
The Walled Garden at Wolterton Hall, NR11 7LY

Until its change of ownership in 2016, the Wolterton estate had been in a deep sleep for 30 years and the walled garden, previously used as a market garden by Barkers Organics, was overgrown. The restoration of the entire estate, including the walled garden, is slowly taking shape under the direction of Head Gardener, Matthew Gilbert.

Peter Sheppard and his business partner Keith Day had a vision to return the grounds to the original 18th century design with wide open vistas. Wolterton Park has always been famous for its wildlife and the new owners are keen to maintain and enhance this. Matt and his team have achieved much and the grounds are emerging from their slumber. In 2017, Natural England awarded the estate a substantial 'higher tier' stewardship grant, which has allowed for the restoration of many of the original features, including new estate fencing and major repairs to the front and rear ha-has.

The estate is starting to become productive again. With its own produce, including hens and bee hives, it expects to be more self sufficient and able to provide its luxury holiday lets with estate -sourced products. There are longer-term plans to restore all the greenhouses and the peach house, which are still used today.

This is a fantastic time to visit the estate as the restoration is starting to bear fruit, and visitors will be able to see the massive challenges in bringing Wolterton back to life.

Plants propagated on the estate will be on sale.

Teas will be served under the arcade affording a wonderful view of the lake.

Open by kind invitation of Peter Sheppard & Keith Day

Saturday 18th July 2- - 5pm JOINT OPENING
Antingham Lodge, Pond Road, Bradfield NR28 0AB *and*
Swafield Hall, Knapton Road, North Walsham NR28 0RP

Antingham Lodge

Antingham Lodge has been in the current ownership since 1999. Formerly a mill house, used to crush bone for fertiliser it was powered by the water of the huge and beautiful lake behind it.

When the Lodge was bought in 1999 the front lawn was a huge pond. To raise the garden and to fill the void, one thousand tons of soil were used to minimise the risk of flooding. A new entrance, through ornate iron gates, was created to allow the lawn to be separate from a driveway lined with aged oaks and grass-banked verges.

New plants, shrubs and material changes are being introduced all the time, thus ensuring that the garden will continue to flourish.

Open by kind invitation of Allan Davison

Swafield Hall

Tim and Boris moved to Swafield Hall in October 2014. Their first purchase was the Apollo Belvedere marble statue which takes pride of place at the end of the extensive theatrical formal hedging known as the Apollo Promenade. English landscape design had a big influence on Russian parks in the 18th and 19th centuries and Swafield Hall gardens reminds Boris of his homeland. The renovation to restore Swafield Hall to its previous glory was started in 2015 and whilst some minor finishing still needs to be done, the most important work is complete.

Teas at Swafield Hall

By kind invitation of Boris Konoshenko & Tim Payne

Talks

Saturday 17th October 2pm

Blake Studio, Norwich School, The Close NR1 4DD

"Norfolk Wild Flowers"

An illustrated talk by Simon Harrap from Natural Surroundings, Bayfield Estate, Holt (www.naturalsurroundings.info)

Together with his wife Anne, Simon runs "Natural Surroundings' based on the Bayfield Estate near Holt. Natural Surroundings covers around eight acres in one of the most beautiful corners of Norfolk. The site includes many show gardens, designed to demonstrate wildlife-friendly gardening and showcase the beauty and diversity of plants, as well as wet meadows and woodland alongside the River Glaven, From spring to autumn Natural Surroundings hosts abundant wildlife and there is nothing better than relaxing with a cup of coffee in the tea gardens and enjoying the scenery, birds, butterflies and flowers.

Teas

Saturday 21st November 2pm

Bawdeswell Village Hall, Reepham Road NR20 4RU

"Orchards of East Anglia"

An illustrated talk by Professor Tom Williamson (UEA)

Professor Tom Williamson will talk on this exciting environmental and cultural project. Funded by the Heritage Lottery and based in the School of History at the University of East Anglia, this three-year collaborative project, working with existing county orchard groups, other interested organisations and orchard owners, is devoted to discovering and understanding the past, present and future of orchards in Eastern England.

Teas

Events organised by Karen Moore

Would you like to join a Garden History course?

Garden History Grapevine, in association with The Gardens Trust, has run several successful courses across the country and have now offered Norfolk Gardens Trust the chance to host one. They normally include an Introductory Day followed up by 5 or 6 half days covering 5000 years of UK garden history. We can include a couple of garden visits too. We would like to know if this is something members would be keen to participate in, before we go ahead and book venues, etc. To register your interest and find out more with no obligation, please contact NGT Vice Chairman Sally Bate. sallybate@thegardenstrust.org or 0788 190 7735

Our membership Secretary Tony Stimpson, seen here with his wife Elizabeth, recently retired after 19 years' service to the NGT. Our heartfelt thanks to Tony and Elizabeth.

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Norfolk Gardens Trust

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