CAMBRIDGESHIRE GARDENS TRUST

NEWSLETTER No. 25 NOVEMBER 2008

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

It seems only yesterday when the Cambridgeshire Gardens Trust held a Gardener's Question Time at Anglesey Abbey which I think laid the foundations on what the newly formed Trust was all about. I wonder if anyone remembers those who agreed to make up an illustrious panel. From that date we have gone from strength to strength and are now, at long last, about to publish 'The History of Wood & Ingram, A Huntingdonshire Nursery'. Whilst the Trust may seem to some members to travel at a snail's pace one must always remember that the machine which runs such an organisation works by many who give their time and services free. For all those dedicated supporters I thank most gratefully. For some reason today nobody seems to want to come forward and help run organisations like ours. Many societies are creaking along and only the other evening I lectured to a local village Garden Society which was anticipating closure only last September.

Such societies are the life-blood of this country and nothing could have proved this to be more so than our recent visits to Sycamore Farm in Over and to The Barn in Bedmond. At both gardens members spent much of the their time talking to friends who were also members of the Gardens Trust. It may be that friendships have been formed after several years of garden visiting with the Trust or that as some of us live long distances from each other, meeting in such convivial surroundings is an added pleasure to any afternoon's garden visiting.

So this year our garden visits have been very successful with sometimes over 20 members and their guests attending. Those who came recently on a reasonable evening to Trinity Hall's grounds between the Huntingdon Road and Storey's Way had a real treat to see some new planting between the college's superb new accommodation for their research students. I have never witnessed before the corner of lawns in Cambridge which turned up so dramatically at each corner. Those who came will know why!

It only remains for me to thank all those on our committee who have helped this year and for the membership who always record their thanks after visiting a new garden.

John Drake
Chairman.

WOOD & INGRAM

The 'Wood & Ingram' book is now printed and is available from the Cambridgeshire Gardens Trust. The cost per copy for members is £10 + £2 post and packing. Please send your cheques made out to 'The Cambridgeshire Gardens Trust' to The Grange, Easton, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire PE18 0TU.

The book will be available to non-members at £12 + £2 post and packing. A form for ordering will be placed on our web site which is www.cambsgardens.org.uk

The Garden History Society has asked me to bring to your attention the following event:

'FRUIT IN HISTORIC GARDENS'

This Study Day takes place at Hampton Court Palace on Saturday 15th November 2008. For more information or a booking form please email: rrma.peel@btopenworld.com or 'phone him on 07770 503759.

THE FEN-EDGE PORT OF LODE AND ITS GARDENS

VISITED ON 7th AUGUST 2008

The hamlet of Lode is named after the eponymous watercourse of Roman origin lying to the north. Formerly it was the fen-edged port for the village of Bottisham, serving a function similar to that of Commercial End with regard to Swaffham Bulbeck. A parish of 3100 acres, it was created in 1894, being the north-western half of the ancient sleeve-shaped parish of Bottisham. The latter is a large nucleated village with a narrow strip of land extending across dry chalk uplands to the south-east. Apart from a narrow strip of chalk and gault clay, the land of Lode is mostly fen. There have been few visits by the Cambridgeshire Gardens Trust to this part of the county and some people regard the Fen as dreary, flat and uninteresting but the 29 visitors to four gardens in Lode will have a different opinion. They were to discover gardens of rural charm in complete contrast to the splendid well-known gardens of the neighbouring Anglesey Abbey. In 1996 Ross Clark, in his book 'Cambridgeshire', understandably enthuses about the Abbey gardens "which show just what can be made of an outwardly dreary landscape when its owners are prepared to plant it". He continues, stating that when you leave northwards to the village of Lode "there is barely another garden between you and the North Sea". He needs to return to Lode in 2008.

Historically the heart of this hamlet had the small Victorian Gothic Church of 1853 as its focus with the vicarage, the smithy and the shops of the carpenter and wheelwright closely adjacent. Sadly rural crafts are in decline and the vicarage is no longer the residence of the vicar. The local community, however, has not died and local gardeners, some born and bred, have brought a new interest and life with their delightful and diverse gardens. The vernacular 17th and 18th century cottages of one storey with attics, framed, plastered and with thatched gabled rooves make immediate impact on approaching the hamlet. Beyond, to the north of the church, is the dominant Victorian vicarage and to the south, a newly constructed weather boarded dwelling, a sensitive replacement on the site of the village carpenter's and wheelwright's shops. Using the footprint for the workshop and digging down to the level of gault clay for a concrete base, the heir of these craftsmen has constructed a two-storey dwelling no higher than the original single storey workshop.

The cottages, thatched with reed from their own doorsteps and floated up from Wicken Fen in punts, are complemented by the vicarage of local Cambridgeshire brick and the pantiled and gabled Wild Rose Cottage. Each of the four gardens are developed on the lands of the original estates and vary in size, and two of them are adjacent to the churchyard. Befitting a residence of substance, the vicarage garden, planned and planted in the last six years, is formal and carefully designed. A small rear gate, entered from the village playing fields, offers immediate impact. Here are espaliers on the new rear wall, concealed new avenues of young trees, several knot gardens set in gravel, clipped box in carefully placed containers and well kept paths leading to a series of 'rooms', each well stocked with a variety of plants and shrubs. The main entrance to the vicarage is approached by an avenue of mature yews. Adjacent to the churchyard is a folly of reconstructed old stones. Statuary and a square of pleached lime trees provide a central feature.

A labour intensive garden, beautifully kept, its size and formality offers a remarkable contrast with that of Wild Rose Cottage. Here one is conscious of the fen-edge and reminded that the Fens are a source of commercially grown turf. Greeted by a cockerel and free ranging chickens, one progresses further into the soft-turfed fen, where water is rarely more than a heavy footprint away. At the rear of the garden it is natural to find a pond as a development from the fen, but elsewhere are walks leading to unexpected finds: old fruit trees overladen with apples and plums, and a profusion of rose bushes and all the naturalness of planting which one expects of a cottage garden. Formality and intensive gardening would have diminished its charm.

Then to the former carpenter's yard, half an acre with herbaceous borders, shrubs and small trees planted around a beautifully manicured large central lawn. The garden is sheltered and enhanced by the nearby thatched cottages and takes full advantage of the churchyard boundary wall. One was aware of the owner's love of the village of his birth and of his ancestors.

Finally to the smaller quarter-acre plot of Richard Ayres, former head gardener at Anglesey Abbey who, no doubt, is a constant source of encouragement and advice to all the gardeners in Lode. He has designed and created his own garden with mysteriously winding turf paths which conceal the boundaries. There are fine modern water features and carefully chosen shrubs with several cut-leaved and variegated elders which act as backdrops to the other plants. Interesting miniature gunneras, large hostas and rheums grow in pots under the shade of his cottage's thatched roof.

When you think of Lode, think not of Anglesey Abbey. Watch out for its open gardens days and enjoy a small corner of England which preserves its continuity with the past but is not afraid to make changes.

Charles Malyon

NORTHBOROUGH MANOR

The site

The village and manor of Northborough, originally on the A 15 but now by-passed, lie six miles NNW of Peterborough in the NW corner of Cambridgeshire. They are situated just to the south of the northern sweep of the River Welland, itself the boundary with Lincolnshire, and less than two miles from Market Deeping. This site is on the western edge of the Great Level of the Fens, with drainage to the Wash. Northborough lies just to the west of a remnant of the Roman Car Dyke, which began at Waterbeach. These canals and waterways in Roman times fulfilled the triple function of boundaries, main drains and the provision of water–borne traffic. Car Dyke provided direct access for the movement of wheat, hides and wool from the southern edge of the Fens to the Roman legionary towns of Lincoln and later York. The Romans also transported Barnack stone from west of Northborough to Stonea Camp, near March.

Northborough had good connections with watercourses both natural and artificial in a low lying flat area. Aerial photographs and excavations have revealed causewayed enclosures of the prehistoric period in the vicinity of the villages of Northborough, Etton and Maxey. After the Romans a rise in the water table reduced the acreage of reliable dry ground in the Fens, but waterways were in full operation in Norman times. The Liber Eliensis records their use of Cottenham Lode which, by that time, was linked to Car Dyke. It states “Then indeed the King (William I) charged that boats everywhere with the sailors should hasten to his arrival at Cotingelode (Cottenham Lode) to carry the pile of timber and stones collected there across to Alrehethe (Aldreth)”, thereby assembling a fleet for the siege of the Isle of Ely.

In the 13th and 14th centuries monasteries took a lead in land reclamation in the Fens and the Abbey of Peterborough established a market town at Market Deeping. Dugdale in his ‘History of Imbanking and Drayning’, 1662 records that the “Weland, having its rise near Sibertoft in Northamptonshire . . . cometh at length to Market Deeping, where it entereth the fens” and the Norman Lord of Deeping Fen, Richard de Rulos, had “excluded the River Welland by a very strong embankment" and out of reclaimed land made “fertile fields and desirable land”. So the early owners of Northborough Manor had good waterways to transport stone and supplies, and to move produce from the estate to a market. They also enjoyed reasonable protection from flooding , but the waterways suffered from silting. In 1572 “An Act for making of the River Welland, in the county of Lincoln, navigable from Stamford to the Sea” addressed this problem and sought to restore prosperity to the area.

The Owners

In the second half of the 11th century the estate of Northborough was held by the de la Mare family from William I. Lands of individual barons, both demesne and tenanted, were often spread over many shires and it is not known if the de la Mares were resident at Northborough. Mac Dowdy, Fellow of Wolfson College, Cambridge believes that the land formation together with the situation of the church suggest that the present house is on a continuously occupied site since pre-Conquest times. The estate was passed to Roger de Norburgh of local origin from Geoffrey de la Mare in settlement of a debt, c.1327.

Roger, who had the present house built, was Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, Canon of both Lincoln and Hereford and from 1320–26 Chancellor of the University of Cambridge. The growth in royal administration required a constant flow of adequately trained and suitably motivated personnel, which was met by the foundations of universities at Oxford and Cambridge. Roger was one of those highly educated men in priestly orders who served the king as administrators. Prelates were important magnates in the land, advising kings, serving as chancellors and treasurers and often as diplomats. Their education and lack of dynastic ambition recommended them for royal service and Roger attracted the attention of Edward II, whose court was based in the north for long periods, 1310–23. Roger de Norburgh, Keeper of the Great Seal, 1312–16, took part in the expedition against the Scots and was captured together with the Great Seal at Bannockburn 1314. He survived this failure and the death of the unpopular Edward II and in 1340 was appointed Lord High Treasurer. His house was built in 1330–40 but he was non-resident. His new master, Edward III, expected him to provide moneys for military expeditions in France, but Roger’s failure to satisfy Royal needs brought disgrace and ruin. Roger had not survived the financial crisis, 1340–1, and passed Northborough Manor to his protégé, Michael de Norburgh, Bishop of London and the King’s Secretary. Michael often travelled on diplomatic missions and in 1349 applied for a “licence to enlarge his manor at Northborough by 12 feet towards the King’s Highway”. Might this explain the diversion of the main road from its original straight line? Michael died of plague in 1361 and the manor reverted to Hugh de Norburgh, heir of Roger

who had died the previous year. There are few surviving 15th century records and this manor was not the main residence.

In 1502 Sir William Fitzwilliam bought the manor for 1200 marks (approximately £1000). Then from 1572 there survives a deed of sale to James Claypole (Cleypole) of King's Cliffe for £500. He was probably the builder of the dovecote and he purchased more land. He died in 1594 and has a fine tomb in the local St Andrew's Church. After the death of the eldest son, John, another son Adam, husband of Lord Burghley's sister, Elizabeth Cecil, inherited. Under the Claypoles the Great Hall, which had reached two storeys to a beamed roof, was modified with a half way floor and two dormer windows after the original windows had been blocked. Adam's son John inherited in 1630. A lawyer of Gray's Inn and friend of Oliver Cromwell, he and his sons were staunch Parliamentarians during the Civil War, although Crowland, 7 miles away, was Royalist in 1643. John the Younger fought at the siege of Newark, 1645-6, married Oliver Cromwell's favourite daughter, Elizabeth and lived with his parents at Northborough Manor. Cromwell visited, sometimes at Christmas, and there is a reputed 'Cromwell's Closet' above the porch. John the Younger was prominent during the Protectorate: MP for Carmarthen, 1654 and then for Northampton, 1656; then living at Whitehall he was Lord of Bedchamber, Master of Horse and Ranger of Whittlewood Forest. His fortunes declined with the Restoration when he was permitted to return to Northborough and his mother-in-law, Elizabeth Cromwell was buried in the local church, 1665. Later the manor was heavily mortgaged and the estate was given up to creditors and, when he sold the house in 1681 to Lord Fitzwilliam of Milton for £5600, John received only £835.

There was little prosperity in this area in the 18th century and so few changes to the house, although the east wing of the 14th century house was demolished. At the turn of the century and the time of enclosure the nature poet, John Clare, moved from the village of Helpston, only three miles across the fen, to Northborough where a later Lord Fitzwilliam had offered him a cottage. To Clare it felt alien and he wrote "No brook is here I feel the loss, from home and friends and all alone." He returned to Helpston.

The manor became a farmhouse and was not properly restored until the 1970's by Roy Genders, whose work won a Civic Trust Award for Cambridgeshire in European Heritage Year. He effected a drastic remodelling which restored part of the house to mediaeval proportions and provided more comfortable 20th century facilities within the historic features of the remainder. More recently the present owners, Mr and Mrs J Trevor, have made further alterations within the original service wing of Roger de Norburgh's house in a very sympathetic manner.

The House

Roger de Norburgh's manor house had two wings, a fine hall, courtyard gatehouse and a range of high-walled buildings, which joined to the wall around the village. J H Parker addressing the Royal Archaeological Institute, 1861 said "it still contains some of the richest Decorated work of the time of Edward III that we have anywhere remaining in a domestic building". He believed this early complex of manor hall and gatehouse to be the most remarkable survival of hall and Gatehouse of a major Manor House", c1330-40.

From 1990-1 Mac Dowdy and the Wolfson College Architectural Research Group surveyed the Manor, which was built to a traditional plan with a large open hall with two wings of two storeys. There was minor modernization in the 15th century but the most drastic in the 17th century introduced an upper floor in the hall, new windows and new chimneypiece to the fireplace in the upper room of the service end. There were 17th century alterations made in the gatehouse range. Subsequently, apart from the demolition of the east wing, changes were slight until 1970 when the open hall was restored. The style of the manor suggests work carried out under the direct instructions of William de Eyton, master mason of Lichfield cathedral, assisted by Barnack masons. Lying on an east-west axis, all exterior walls are built in oolitic limestone from local quarries. There is little variation in the stones between courses, although the quoins and other dressing stones are larger in size. The roofs are of Collyweston slate with dressed coping stones in the gable stops. On the north front only the two central bays of the main wall are revealed. The main wall rises through two storeys and two windows rise from sloping moulded sills to square heads. The tracery is 14th century. A buttress is placed off-centre in the space between the windows. The eaves are broken by a large 17th century dormer window and the roof has a pitch of 50 degrees. The porch is of two storeys with a four-centred arch giving access to the front door. A two-storey cross wing projects northwards from the alignment of the hall at its west end. The south front or garden view is identical in proportions, although lacking the porch and garderobe tower. Instead of one central dormer, there are two slightly smaller ones. The four-centred arched doorway opens directly into the hall at the position of the screens. As on the north the service wing projects from the alignment of the hall. The west wall is plain with a central, arched doorway leading into a passage, which originally gave access from an outside kitchen across the service wing and into the hall. The east wall is completely plain and this is the dais end of the great hall. Beyond was a substantial wing, which would have contained Roger de Norburgh's finest chambers.

On entering from the north porch there is no screen's passage but you can see where once it was. The hall is an enormous space of noble proportions. The roof timbers rise from timber wallplates just above the traceried windows. The dormer windows were fitted without too much disturbance to the timber frame. At the service end are three doorways with triangular heads. Immediately above the moulded forms of the doorway surrounds curve ogee pattern arches decorated with foliate motifs. Above are even bigger arches. Such elaborate designs and fine workmanship mean that they were intended to be seen and admired. So there was not a load-bearing screen with gallery above but a partitioned screen reducing draughts yet allowing the fine carving to be viewed from the hall. At the dais end is a stone fireplace and chimney breast with an enormous lintel-piece. The original fireplace was on the south wall where the pattern of stonework has been disturbed. A blocked-in doorway on the second storey would have given access to the upper chambers

of the east wing. The west service wing would have had a buttery or pantry and store rooms on the ground floor. Now its north side room has been redesigned and it provides a stairwell to an upper chamber, with a splendid stone fireplace replacing a mediaeval one. There is also a door leading to the small room in the porch.

The gatehouse range, also of stone with Collyweston roofs, faces the old Lincoln road. It was converted from a mediaeval appearance to its present 17th century form by the Claypoles. There is a doorway on each side wall, which would have given access to the porters' lodges. It is likely that the first two storeys of this range might have been stables, stores and barns in mediaeval times. There is a dovecote to the west of the main building range; a simple structure with gable ends and a pitched roof providing about 800 nesting boxes. This early 18th century building probably replaced a much earlier one.

So the Manor, despite the changes of the previous 670 years, continues to present a noble and imposing mediaeval image.

C H Malyon

The Garden

Immediately to the south of the hall, the layout of the garden is the design of Roy Genders, who wrote over 300 gardening books and articles while resident there. Today the planting with low hedges of lavender and santolina around a formal plan is evocative of mediaeval gardens, and the east garden has a sympathetic timber trellis walk for growing vines and has a central urn. An avenue of weeping willows leads to a live willow seat by Andrew Basham near the vegetable and cutting garden.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY – DEVON GARDENS TRUST

The Devon Gardens Trust was among the first of the county trusts to be established. The Official Launch was on 22nd April 1988 at Bicton Park, East Budleigh. Twenty years ago the awareness of our environment was rather less than it is today. The concept of forming Gardens Trusts had a pioneering element. The enlightened guidance of the Steering Committee and the early Councils of management ensured that the Devon Gardens Trust was both progressive and successful in its activities.

Now, twenty years later, the Trust is reviewing what it has achieved and what decisions it should make for the future.

Two of its very recent publications have been sent by the Chairman to the Cambridgeshire Gardens Trust both for members' interest and for comments.

One of the decisions taken for the future is the annual publication of a Journal. *The Devon Gardens Trust Journal Issue 1* is a very handsome publication. The contents are ambitious – the sheer number of subjects covered make one wonder what is still to come in future issues – but each is of interest. Of particular enjoyment are the illustrations throughout the Journal. Most are quite small, all in colour, and each a little gem whether a photograph taken by an author or a reproduction of an early estate map or painting.

Although it is invidious to select only a few of the 14 or so articles in the Journal perhaps their less usual subject matter is a vindication. 'Garden Information from Sales Catalogues' by Carolyn Keep describes the rewarding and extensive research, ongoing, by volunteers in the Trust. They are looking systematically at Sales catalogues held in Record Offices throughout the county and are recording the information relevant to 'gardens' – in the widest context of this word. This should be an inspiration to other Gardens Trusts, especially to those who may have not discovered this fruitful and ready source of information.

A major article by Peggy Upham entitled 'Devon Bath Houses in Context' is most entertaining. The following quotation shows the deftness with which this author handles an in-depth study of these unusual garden buildings: 'Architecturally bath houses differed in size and style. Most were rectangular but some were round and some semi-circular. All had a fire place and a pleasure room in which to recover or to get courage for the plunge'.

A concise article by John Clarke, Conservation Officer for Devon Gardens Trust and Garden History Society S W Region, describes the estate of Rousdon, near Lyme Regis and how it has passed from Victorian splendour via 60 years as a school to present day multiple housing development. This is an excellent example of how strong, informed, guidance to developers and planning authorities can lead to acceptable change in an historic site. Surely this is something all Garden Trusts should aim to do.

Devon Gardens Trust should be congratulated on its newly launched Journal.

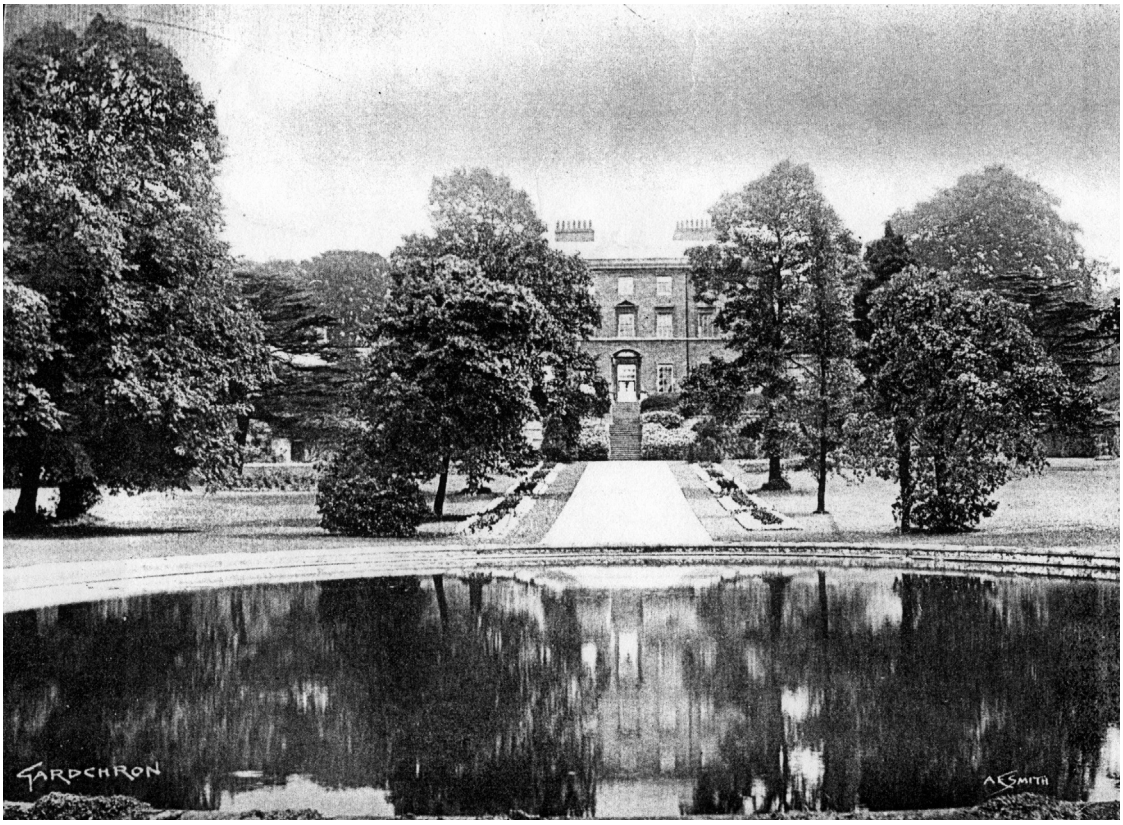
The second, much smaller, publication is *Devon Gardens Trust: A Short History 1988–2008*. For the most part this is an opportunity to name and thank those who initiated and sustained the activities of the Trust over the past twenty years. The inside cover lists 37 names and organisations who contributed to the work of the Steering Committee. For any county contemplating establishing a Gardens Trust or those only recently launched, the contents of this booklet could be helpful.

Both publications are available for purchase: the History for £3.50 and the Journal for £7.50, inclusive of postage, from Mrs Clare Greener (Chairman), 26 Linden Road, Dawlish, Devon EX7 8QA.

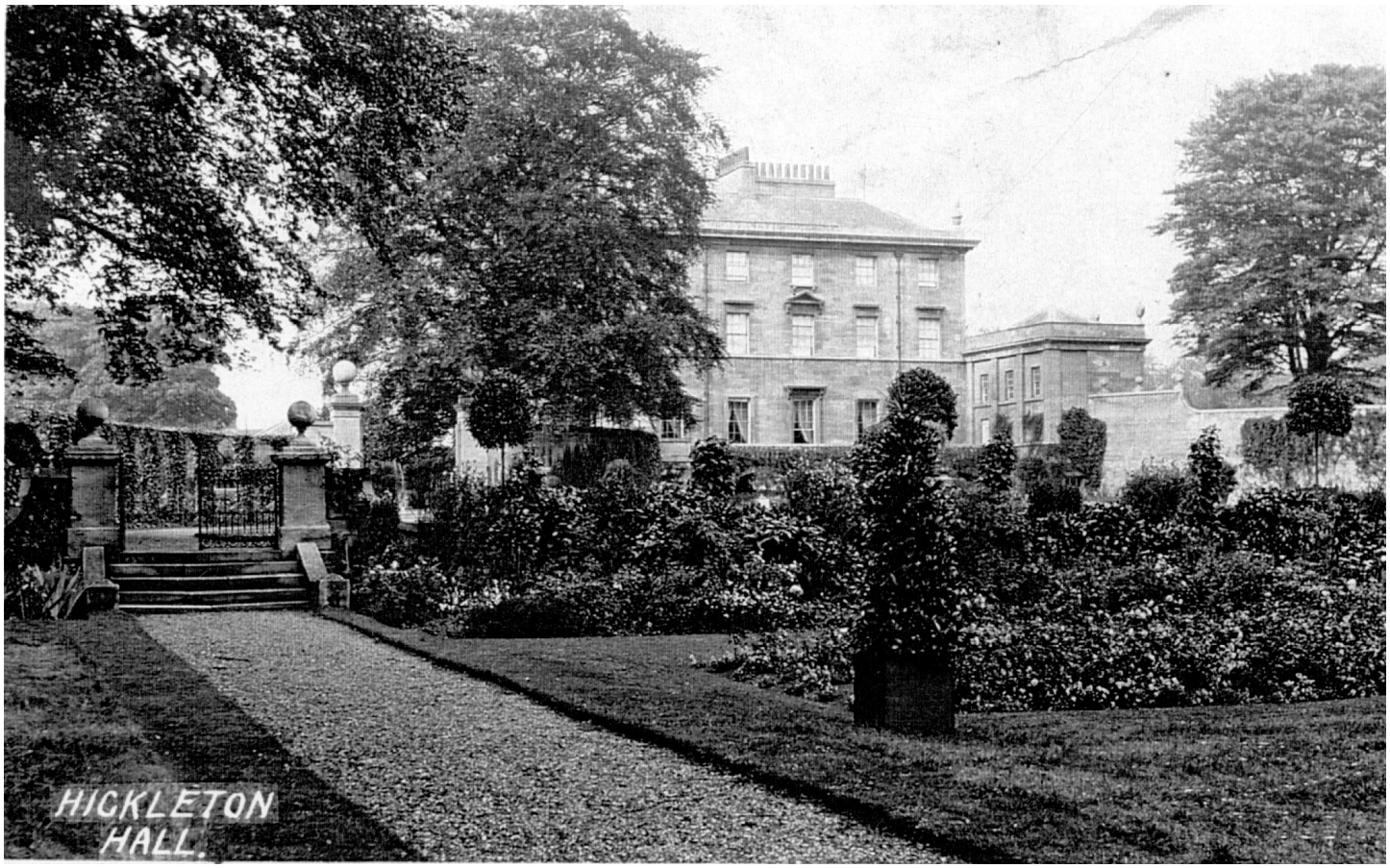
Jill Cremer

SUE RYDER GARDENS IN CAMBRIDGESHIRE AT RISK

Earlier this year I was informed that the two Sue Ryder Homes in Cambridgeshire were looking for more suitable premises to move to in the county. Whilst many may consider Lady Ryder's aim to provide hospices in Stately homes an inappropriate use of these buildings, many families with ageing relatives have relied on these facilities and will miss them when they close. I worked for Lady Ryder for several years as her gardens advisor and with local teams arranged evening lectures during the winter months to raise funds for their restoration and their improvements. I often worked with the architect regarding car parking provision and local planners. Perhaps the most exciting Sue Ryder garden I was responsible for was Hickleton Hall in Yorkshire which was once owned by Lord Halifax who played an important part in the Second World War. Here the gardens had been laid out earlier in the twentieth century with extensive terraces and



Hickleton Hall, Doncaster – the seat of Viscount Halifax. The Gardeners' Chronicle Feb. 1904



Hickleton Hall, Doncaster c.1912

high retaining walls, and now were suffering from the nearby coal mine which was causing the lawns to subside. Perhaps the most disappointing grounds were at Nettlebed in Oxfordshire where the house committee wanted to tarmac over the terraces and Lady Ryder was always complaining when they allowed scenes in the house and grounds to be filmed on her premises. Ken Russell filmed D H Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* there, much to her concern. Nettlebed was once the home of the Fleming family, who became famous by way of the James Bond novels. At Thorpe Hall in Peterborough I once witnessed actors dressed as German soldiers arriving by car at the north door of the house; the gardener sent her a tape of this event which really upset Lady Ryder.

In Cambridgeshire both Thorpe Hall and The Old Bishop's palace in Ely now have mature gardens which until recently have been well maintained by a team of excellent gardeners. Recently I went to have a look at Thorpe Hall and the garden looked superb. My friends who came with me thought it was as well maintained as many National Trust gardens. The hedges and topiary were well trimmed and the planting was luxuriant and in many cases dramatic to say the least. But cutbacks are on the horizon and the gardeners are very worried. Similarly at Ely the gardener experienced even more difficulties: he had been asked to take on other responsibilities regarding maintenance of boilers etc and has now left. It is a great pity that this organisation has to go down this route of cutting back garden maintenance staff when it is already at a minimum. Gardens, if not properly maintained, deteriorate very quickly and soon the whole site looks as if it has been left. Both these gardens are of historic importance, not only because of the stone walls at Thorpe Hall, which are the original walls built in 1665, and who they were built for, but also for the collection of trees and other plants they contain. At Ely there is a remarkable collection of mature trees in this comparatively small garden which includes one of the largest Plane trees in the county grown from a specimen which came from Oxford Botanic Garden in 1674 and today looks superb.

Thorpe Hall contains an extensive collection of plants grown in this country in 1656 and a remarkable collection of conifers and evergreens planted in 1860 and now looking their best. I think that Thorpe Hall and its surrounding garden should be put on the endangered list of historic buildings, and lets hope that a certain educational establishment will acquire The Old Bishop's Palace in Ely when the Sue Ryder Foundation move to other premises.

John Drake

VISIT TO APETHORPE HALL, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Introduction

Apethorpe Hall has been open to visitors during the last two summers on completion of the extensive repair work carried out by English Heritage, following the compulsory purchase of the property from a Libyan businessman Mr W M Burweila in 2004. It is understood that Mr Burweila purchased the property in 1983 with the intention of founding a Libyan University on the site, but following the Libyan embassy siege in 1982 he left the country. Apethorpe Hall deteriorated over the next 20 years until rescued by English Heritage who have concentrated on repairing the roof and restoring the exquisite plasterwork in the Elizabethan/ Jacobean State Apartments, and extensive oak panelling in the Long gallery.

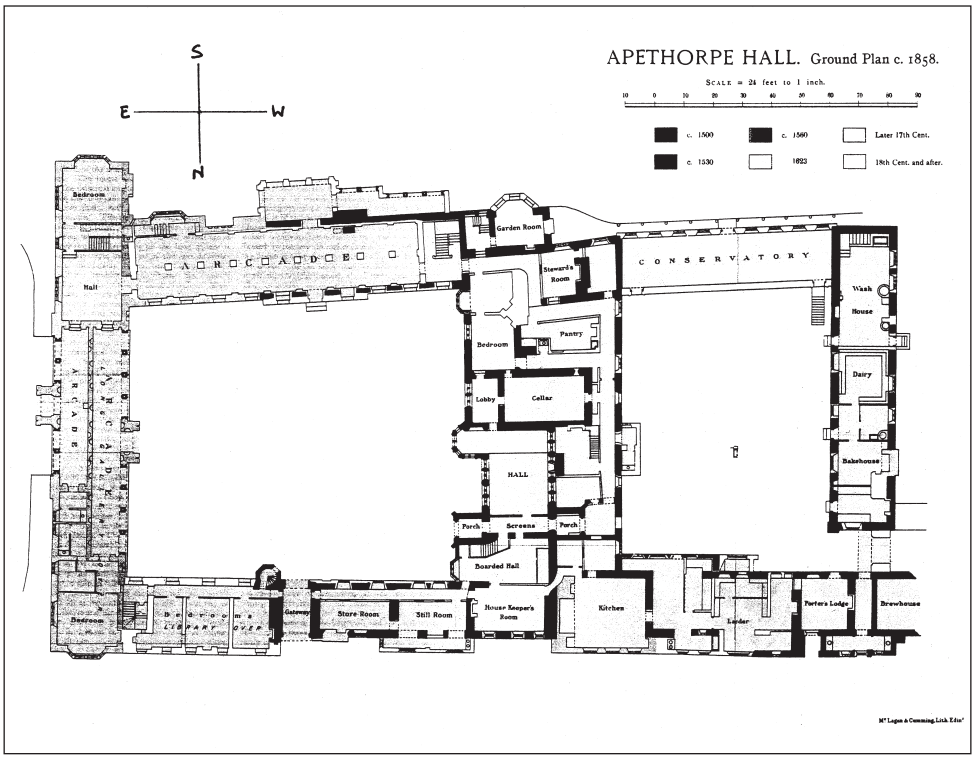


Fig 1 Ground Floor plan from The Victorian History of Northampton

The original builder of Apethorpe Hall in the 15th century was Sir Guy Wolston, Constable of Fotheringhay Castle. The manor and park of Apethorpe were acquired by the king in 1543, and in 1551 the manor and park were granted to Sir Walter Mildmay, who became Elizabeth 1's Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1559. He died in 1589 and the estate passed to his son Sir Anthony Mildmay (Sheriff for Northamptonshire). On his death in 1617 the estate passed to his daughter Mary and his son in law, Sir Francis Fane (Ist Earl of Westmorland). The manor and park remained in the Fane family as their principal country residence until 1904 when the estate was sold to Mr Brassey (later Lord Brassey of Apethorpe). Lord Brassey sold the hall with 45 acres of lawn in 1949 and it was used as a Roman Catholic young offenders' institution until closed in 1982. At this point the estate was acquired by Mr Burweila as mentioned above.

Tour

The English Heritage guided tour was excellent, and began by entering the main courtyard through the medieval north entrance. In the courtyard it is possible to see all the architectural periods from 15th to 20th century by examining the north, west, south and east wings as shown in Fig 1. The oldest part dating from the end of the 15th century or the beginning of the 16th century is the block of buildings separating the two courts extending along the north side to the north gate shown on Fig 2.

Fig. 2 North and Central wings and North Gate House

With the exception of the orangery/conservatory added in 1718 by Thomas Fane 6th Earl, the buildings around the second courtyard also date from this early period and comprise the bake house, dairy, laundry etc. The second courtyard is not open to the public, but it is interesting to note that the current road access to the north gate is along Laundry lane which was the tradesman's entrance. The main road entrance was retained by the Brassey family

to service their property which they kept when they sold Apethorpe Hall in 1949.

John Fane 7th Earl commissioned the architect Roger Morris to rebuild the house in the Palladian Style. This resulted in the rebuilding of the courtyard side of the south wing; the east side of the north wing was rebuilt as a library and the building of the dovecote.

The tour continues through the entrance into the oldest wing on the left of Fig 2, which contains the 16th century hall complete with kitchen, buttery etc. a layout similar to an Oxbridge College. To commemorate the fact that Sir Walter Mildmay funded the building of Emmanuel College Cambridge, Lord Brassey presented the crest of Sir Walter that originally appeared above the fireplace to the college.

Fig. 3 Long Gallery

The next area to visit was the State Apartments on the first floor of the south and east wings with the exceptional plaster ceilings and elaborate chimneypieces. This is the area of special historical interest that will be required to be made accessible to the public by any new owner, now that the property has been put on the market for sale. The suite of State Apartments were originally created by Sir Walter Mildmay for Queen Elizabeth I's visit on 1556, but were later remodelled by Sir Francis Fane for James I and the long Gallery added in 1622–24. Fig 3 shows the extensive oak panelling of the Long Gallery, and the length of the ceiling that had to be supported during the English heritage restoration. A recent study of mason marks has attributed the building work to Thomas Thorpe, based at the nearby village of King's Cliffe, his father was master mason for Kirby Hall.

James I was a frequent visitor to Apethorpe and first met his favourite, Villiers, later the Duke of Buckingham at Apethorpe in 1614. The bedchamber near the King's Chamber is the Duke's chamber (with an inter-connecting door). A life size statue of James I, which once stood in the main court, still stands in the enclosed hall under the Long Gallery. Sir Francis Fane created the State Apartments expressly for the entertainment of the king, who indulged his passion for hunting in the royal forest of Rockingham. The rooftop walk along the east wing ending above the State Apartments in the south-east corner was designed to allow visitors to view the hunt. This part of the tour was a fitting climax to an exceedingly interesting tour to Apethorpe Hall.

Garden

Our guide allowed us to visit the main features of the garden including the 18th century Yew Walk, period walled kitchen gardens and glasshouses laid out by Sir Reginald Blomfield, a sunken garden complete with lily pond and yew topiary (see Fig 4), a rose garden, a stone pavilion, and a parterre garden. All formal garden areas have been well maintained by the gardener/caretaker Mr George Kelly who resides in the second courtyard area. Unfortunately, visitors are unable to enter the area containing the heated glasshouses, due to their poor state of repair. There were many mature trees to see, including a Cedar of Lebanon planted in the early 1880's. In the parkland

Fig. 4 Lily Pond and Yew Topiary

Fig. 5 South Wing showing Conservatory and the State Apartment garden outlook

north west of the Hall is a Grade II listed circular stone dovecote dating from the 1740's.

Most of the formal gardens of the Hall are on the south side (listed Grade II in the Historic Garden Register). Records indicate that the gardens were originally being laid out as early as 1598, with a wilderness in 1713 and kitchen garden in 1714. The overall garden layout is shown on a plan of a view taken in 1721 which is preserved in the National Archives (British Museum). The 1721 plan shows that the space between the ancient yew avenue, which still survives, and the south side of the Hall, included a bowling green, a terrace walk, and an orchard to the west of the yews. There was a gravel garden in front of the east façade of the Hall, which was surrounded by a wall with a garden house at the two outer corners. The porch on the east front of the Hall originally only led to the gravel garden which no longer exists, but has now become the main entrance to the Hall.

The gardens have been developed from the 16th century through to the 20th century. The 'garden' additions to the house include the Orangery by the 6th Earl in 1718 and the first floor conservatory in the mid 19th century by the 11th Earl. Fig 5 is the south wing viewed from the Yew Walk with the conservatory shown first floor centre next to the State Apartments, the last development taking place when Lord Brassey employed Sir Reginald Blomfield to modernise and restore the Hall, garden and the village.

Bill Emmerson

Editor's Note:
During the 20th century the Brassey family placed several orders for plants with Wood & Ingram. A typical order is included in the Trust's book about this Huntingdonshire Nursery.

VISIT TO THE GARDEN AT SYCAMORE FARM, OVER

On the 10th July this year a group of about 20 members and guests visited Sycamore Farm in Over. This garden is a secluded treasure on the edge of the village and was opened to the public for the first time in June as part of the National Gardens Scheme. The farm and outbuildings are thought to have their origins in the 15th or 16th century and the current house has a Queen Anne frontage. The sycamore tree after which the house takes its present name, was planted in 1897.

In 1981 Dr and Mrs Hook acquired the house in a derelict state with overgrown gardens which they have progressively developed. It has apparently been a series of trial and error with some earlier planting schemes failing, mainly due to garden designers not correctly judging the conditions. However it now represents every element of gardening from Dry Garden to Bog Garden. The Walled Garden was designed in 1984 when the first pond was attempted. The current Llily Pond and Dry Garden adjacent to it were constructed in 2002. This leads to the Orchard Garden which was acquired in1993, and two years later there was an unsuccessful attempt to create a wild garden. It was landscaped in 2000 and is now divided into various areas which are cleverly interlinked with swathes of curved lawns and interesting walkways round the outer edges, including a wisteria pergola and woodland walk.

The Rose Garden was designed and planted by Richard Beales in 2001 and contains mainly old-fashioned roses. The newly planted avenue of Prunus 'Amanagowa' in the central lawn replaces previous plantings which had not thrived. They are well spaced to allow an interrupted view across the garden. At the time we visited the lavenders produced a stunning sea of blue. The large Wildlife Pond, which has just been revised and replanted, is kept topped up by an ingenious pumping system involving the natural water table which then feeds the Lily Pond.

There are lovely specimen trees and wonderful herbaceous borders with unusual plants. Mrs Hook was kept busy answering our plant identification queries. The pink ceanothus was a novelty to most of us. It would be interesting to see this garden again in a few years time.

Daphne Dobson

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