

# Staffordshire Gardens & Parks Trust

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# News LETTER

## The Landscape Disciple (Walking the Wright Way)

**"and blest is he, who tir'd with his affairs,  
from all noise, all vain applause, prepares  
to go, and underneath some silent shade  
which neither cares nor anxious thoughts invade,  
dose for a while, himself alone possess.**

*René Rapin, On Gardens"*

2011 will mark the tercentenary of the birth of Thomas Wright, a man of many talents and described as "the only genius between Kent and Brown". Astronomer (he was the first to describe the shape of the Milky Way), mathematician, instrument-maker, natural philosopher, architect and garden designer, he left his mark on many eighteenth-century landscapes including Shugborough Park, where three of the monuments, The Shepherd's Monument, The Cat's Monument and The Ruin, are attributed to him.

To mark this anniversary and to raise money to re-plant the ground around The Shepherd's Monument, now being suffocated by rhododendron planted in Victorian times, Joe Hawkins, the Head Gardener at Shugborough, undertook a sponsored walk covering three hundred miles and lasting three weeks. The new planting, due to be carried out next year, will be carried out by Joe and will reflect eighteenth-century history, philosophy and style, and while a surge of diseases will not allow some historical evidence to be pursued, more suitable surroundings will be provided for the monument and will enhance the estate's biodiversity.

This initiative will be supported by David Jacques, an eminent garden historian well known to SGPT members and author of

"Georgian Gardens – The Reign of Nature", and John and Eileen Harris, authors of a biography of Thomas Wright.

The walk, which took Joe through some of the most outstanding eighteenth-century landscapes in the north of England, began at *Lumley Castle*, now a luxury hotel, but once the home of Richard Lumley, the second Earl of Scarbrough (sic), one of Thomas Wright's earliest patrons (Thomas Anson became Wright's patron after Lord Scarbrough committed suicide in 1740 as the result of offending the King, George II, and forfeiting the royal favour).

After calling at *Byers Green*, near Spennymoor, the village where Thomas Wright was born, Joe visited the church where a window designed by the children of the local school has recently been dedicated, and he also enjoyed an unscheduled guided tour of the actual birthplace.

At *Durham*, he was able to satisfy himself that the not-entirely-harmonious baroque-style crocheted pinnacles designed by Wright for the Cathedral's impressive medieval towers were never erected!

In the grounds of *Auckland Castle*, the historic home of the Bishops of Durham,



An allée at Bramham Park

the *Deercote*, built in 1760 to a design by Thomas Wright, provided overnight shelter for Joe's tent, and, while there, he visited the house and inspected the Zubarán paintings. A series of thirteen portraits of Jacob and his twelve sons painted by Francisco Zubarán, a sixteenth-century Spanish artist known as "the Spanish Caravaggio", they are now at the centre of a heated controversy following the decision of the Church Commissioners to sell them, and a public campaign has been launched to raise the money to save what many regard as a part of the cultural heritage of the North of England from falling into the hands of a private collector.

Next on Joe's itinerary was *Raby Castle*, where, in the 1740s, Wright created an ornamental walled garden with ha-ha, ponds and hedges and where a White Ischia fig tree, brought to Raby in 1786, still survives. *Aske Hall*, the home of the fourth Marquess of Zetland, is a

continued overleaf

Georgian treasure-house, boasting exquisite eighteenth-century furniture by Robert Adam and Thomas Chippendale, paintings by Thomas Gainsborough and Henry Raeburn and porcelain by the Meissen factory. In 1763, the estate was bought by Sir Lawrence Dundas (known as the "Nabob of the North"), who commissioned John Carr of York to furnish him with "a suitable seat for a new dynasty and a controlling interest in the parliamentary borough of Richmond".

Described by Joe as "an architectural kaleidoscope", the grounds contain a thirteenth-century pele tower, an eighteenth-century stable block converted into a chapel with an Italianate interior, a number of follies including a three-storey temple designed by Daniel Garrett, a lesser-known eighteenth-century architect who had a practice in the north of England and also worked at Castle Howard and Temple Newsam House (It was in the temple that Joe spent the night).

*Constable Burton Hall* stands at the entrance to Wensleydale, and has been the home of the Wyvill family since the sixteenth-century. While the Hall was erected by John Carr of York in 1768, the gardens date back to the seventeenth century and the park to medieval times, though not landscaped till the 1700s. Here, his host, Sir Charles Wyvill (the family has now dispensed with the final "e"), insisted that Joe slept in a bedroom in the Hall, a gesture typical of the generosity Joe experienced throughout the walk.

Joe next moved on to "*Hackfall's calm retreats, where nature reigns*". A landscape renowned amongst eighteenth-century travellers, it was visited by William Beckford and William Gilpin and painted by J. M. W. Turner. Amidst such natural beauty, Joe's back no longer ached, his blisters no longer hurt, and he felt "as excited as a child at Christmas"!

William Kent's design for *Hackfall House*, near Ripon, is included in the world-famous Frog Service, a dinner and dessert service for fifty people designed and manufactured in 1773-4 by Josiah Wedgwood for Catherine the Great of Russia. It features hand-painted views of British scenes, including three in Staffordshire - Shugborough Hall, Trentham Hall and Blithfield Hall. The majority of the original pieces have survived and are housed in The Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg.

Here, Joe was able to reconnect with Thomas Wright, pitching his tent for the night in Wright's Rustic Temple and waking to a sun-filled morning!

While in North Yorkshire a visit to *Studley Royal*, where John Aislibie created one of the finest water gardens in Europe, was inevitable. Laid out along the wooded valley of the river Skeld, and now cared for by The National Trust, its attractions include ponds, cascades, waterfalls, temples, tabernacles, a banqueting house and classical statues. A woodland walk ends with a magnificent view of the ruins of Fountains Abbey, brought into the estate by John's son, William, when he succeeded his father.

Fortuitous timing meant that Joe arrived here just in time to partake in an ox roast, which saved him the trouble of cooking his own evening meal, before returning to sleep in The Temple of Piety!

The landscape at *Brimham Park* has been described as "rather like the landscape at Madrid", but not, Joe thinks, in the rain! After another wet night under canvas, Joe was able to sleep the next night in James Stuart's Orangery at *Newby Hall*.

Still in Yorkshire, Joe visited another of the County's premier landscape gardens, *Braham Park*. Here, the house is surrounded by an eighteenth-century landscaped park ornamented by a series of follies and allées, avenues lined on either side by beech hedges twenty feet high and ending in vistas, in the French fashion. Both Andre Le Nôtre and George London have been mentioned as designers of the garden, but, in all probability, it was designed by the owner, George Benson, who had made the Grand Tour. A memorable visit was made more memorable for Joe by the head gardener, who brought bottles of Guinness and pint glasses and stayed to talk gardens landscapes and the delights found therein!

*Temple Newsam Park*, landscaped by 'Capability' Brown and blighted by opencast mining; *Nostell Priory*, a Palladian house close to Wakefield, built in 1733 by



*Studley Royal - Moon Pond with Bacchus in foreground and Temple of Piety in background*

James Paine on the site of a twelfth-century priory, to which Robert Adam later added the distinctive double staircase at the front of the house (here Joe was given a landscape tour by the head gardener); *Wentworth Castle*, enclosed by fifty acres of Grade I listed gardens which include the Sun Monument, an obelisk erected in honour of Lady Mary Wortley Montague, who introduced the smallpox inoculation into this country from Turkey (incidentally, the first monument in the country to be dedicated to a woman who was neither a queen nor a goddess!); *Sandbeck Park*, near Maltby, formerly the site of Roche Abbey, where, in 1775, Lord Scarbrough commissioned 'Capability' Brown to landscape the area, which he did by demolishing the remaining buildings and turfing the site, leaving only two transepts as romantic features in the landscape; all of these were memorable landmarks in Joe's journey south.

So, too, was *Worksop Manor*; once the site of an Elizabethan house built by Robert Smythson and, with over five hundred rooms, said to be one of the largest in England, it was burnt down in 1761. Due to be rebuilt in the Palladian style to a design by James Paine, it would have been one of the largest private

# VISIT TO SUGNALL WALLED GARDEN AND FERME ORNÉE

In October, seventeen members of the Staffordshire Gardens and Parks Trust joined members of the Garden History Society in a visit to the walled garden and ferme ornée at Sugnall Hall, the home of Dr. and Mrs. David Jacques. The day began with coffee, which was served in what had once been the kitchen of the Georgian mansion demolished at the end of the nineteenth century. Now listed, it is the only part to survive.

Previously, the site had been occupied by a Jacobean mansion, built by Sir John Pershall, whose father, Thomas, a very successful lawyer, had used his wealth to purchase land not only in Staffordshire but also in Cheshire, Derbyshire and Hampshire. Unfortunately, no illustration of the house has ever been found, though surviving fragments give some indication of scale and size.

In 1611, Sir John Pershall had purchased one of the very first baronetcies, a rank and title created by James I in order to raise money to pay for soldiers to carry out the pacification of Ireland.

The site, which was on top of a hill, had been chosen for the panoramic view it offered, but first the hill-top had to be flattened. A series of formal gardens covering four acres was then in the grounds of the mansion, though it was likely that the site of the walled garden would have been covered by orchards.

After coffee, the party was divided into two, the one to be taken on a guided tour of the walled garden by Karen, and the other down to the ferme ornée by David.

## The Walled Garden

Work on laying out the walled garden, we learnt, began as early as 1737 and was completed by the following year. The bricks used in constructing the perimeter walls, more than a quarter of a million in number, were all made locally. To the south-east the wall dips at its centre owing to the unusual topography of the garden. The line of the north wall is interrupted by the double-fronted Head Gardener's House, built in the style of a Swiss chalet by the owner, Walter Williams, around 1880.

Walter Williams, an iron-master from Dudley, was the latest in a succession of nineteenth-century industrialists who owned the estate, hoping to further their aspirations to enter the gentry. Indeed, when the estate was put up for sale on his death in 1893, the estate agents offered not only capital hunting, splendid fishing and excellent shooting, but "First-Class Society within easy ride of the estate.

It was Walter Williams who demolished the Georgian mansion, intending to replace it with a more flamboyant house in the Eastern style and in the meantime extending the present Sugnall Hall, built at the end of the eighteenth century. The designs for this grandiose dwelling survive, leading David and Karen feeling relieved that it was never built! A keen gardener, he put up all but one of the greenhouses in the walled garden, including the azalea house, cucumber house and peach house - and created a subterranean fernery in the cellars of the Jacobean mansion.

A greenhouse by Foster and Pearson - a firm established in 1841 which had numbered Queen Victoria, the Duke of Bedford, the Duke of Devonshire and the Duke of Sutherland amongst

its clients - was erected in 1908 and used to grow orchids and cucumbers. Now lacking its original glass, it awaits restoration.

Approximately six years ago, David and Karen took over the running of the two-acre walled garden, which by then was in a neglected state, having for a number of years been run commercially by a succession of tenants as a plant centre and a tree nursery.

The eighteenth-century layout was uncovered and re-established, though the original box hedging has been replaced only around the perimeter, and the quarters into which the garden is divided edged instead with lavender, popular with the bees from the garden's seven bee-hives. Two hundred fruit trees were planted in 2007, half apple, half pear, two trees of each variety, chosen for their productive quality. These replaced a similar number of dwarf box pyramids which had once lined the flower beds.

There no longer being twenty servants to feed, produce not sent to the house is used commercially, either served in the restaurant or marketed in natural or processed form through the shop. The slogan is "If we grow it, we sell it!" It is hoped that, in 2011, the produce on offer will include apples, pears and cider. The heavy costs of maintaining the garden have to be met from the income it generates, for, as Karen put it, "no-one is going to be able to go on a Caribbean holiday on the profits!"

A measure of self-help also assists in containing costs; manure is brought in from neighbouring stables, while chippings are supplied free by e-on, both only too glad to find someone ready to take them! Vegetable compost is made in an area close to the garden. The garden also has its own forge, whose blacksmith, in addition to meeting the requirements of the garden, accepts outside commissions.

While not organically certified, the garden is run on organic principles. To reduce the amount of time the small team of gardeners - one full-time, two part-time, all female - have to spend weeding, membrane was laid down. This also assists in water-retention at a site where a lack of water can be a problem and rain water has to be collected and stored in water butts. Spraying is kept to an absolute minimum, while pest-infestation is also combated by companion planting.

The garden is not, after all, intended to be purely Victorian restoration, but a garden for today, combining the best of the old practices with the best of the new.

Although much has been accomplished in the past six years - the end of the 2009 growing season saw a significant amount of produce emerging from the garden - , David and Karen are fully aware that there is still much that can be done, both inside and outside the garden, to increase its economic viability. Education and learning already feature strongly; already open to schools, who cultivate their own plots, the estate has just opened a garden school offering courses to gardeners and garden designers in garden history, modern planting design and the aesthetics of gardens.



Inside the garden, space at the centre has been set aside for events, and a new tearoom is planned for the Vinery when funds become available. Beyond the garden, next year's visitors will be able to enjoy for the first time both a Snowdrop Week in February and a Daffodil Walk in late April/May.

## The ferme ornée

In 1737, at the time the walled garden was laid out, the Sugnall estate had passed to Arabella, grand-daughter of the third baronet, who, in 1728, married John Campbell, son of the Earl of Breadalbane and Holland, known by the courtesy title of Lord Glenorchy. Lord Glenorchy immediately set about improving the estate, drawing his inspiration from Stephen Switzer, to whose seminal book, "The Practical Husbandman and Planter", published in 1733, he had subscribed.

Switzer, together with his contemporary, Charles Bridgeman, was amongst the first to reject the formality of the fashionable Anglo-Dutch garden, advocating, instead of large square gardens around the house, that they should be spread out in a circuitous route around the estate, ornamented by naturalistic planting and giving views out across productive farmland to the landscape beyond in a style which became known as the "ferme ornée". Thus, pleasure and profitability would be combined.

Started in 1732, the ferme ornée pre-dates by three years the ferme ornée laid out by Philip Southcote at Wooburn Farm, his estate in Surrey, long regarded as the earliest example of that style of garden design.

Work on its restoration began twelve years ago. Ditches needed clearing, the chain of pools running through the woodland down to Cop Mere ("A beautiful sheet of Ornamental Water") needed clearing out and the hawthorns lining the banks between the fields and the path leading down to the Victorian Boathouse at the side of the lake needed re-planting and laying (Yachting and boating were offered as an attraction by the house agents in 1893). The lake, one of Staffordshire's larger lakes, has now been designated a Site of Scientific Importance.

The woodland will be open to the public next year, and this will undoubtedly add to the enjoyment which a visit to Sugnall already gives to its visitors.

## Conclusion

For the fifty-three people who took part in this visit, this will have been a day to remember. Well fed and well informed, we left Sugnall filled with admiration for the energy, the enthusiasm and the dedication with which David and Karen continue to embrace the challenge of bringing the Walled Garden and ferme ornée back to life, and I for one look forward to returning in the near future when, without doubt, there will have been yet more progress.

# Greenhouse in the Undergrowth

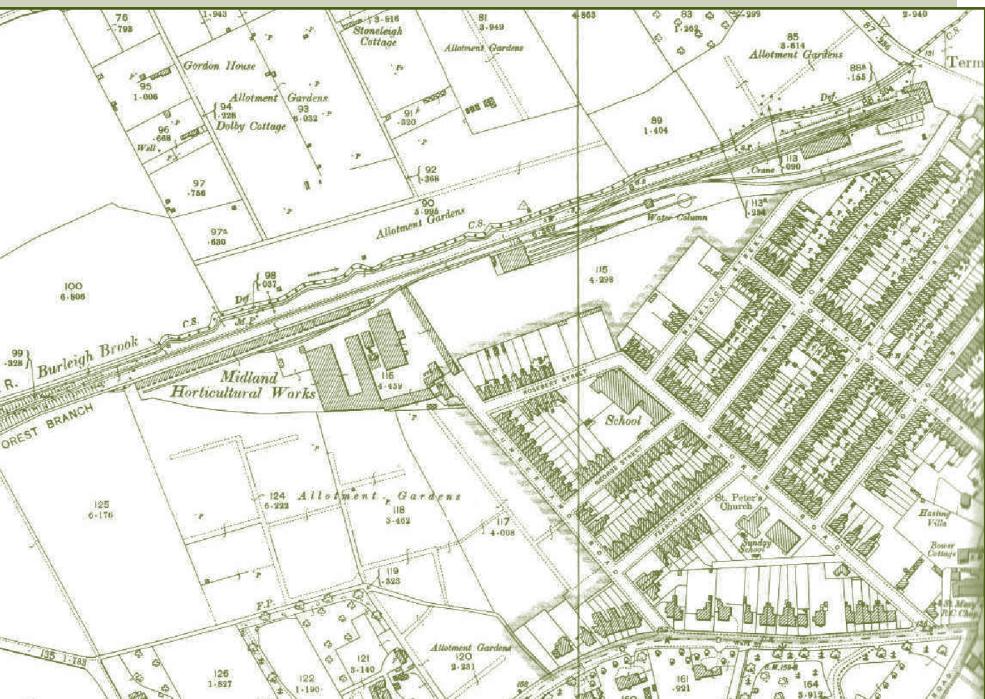
While clearing the undergrowth outside the walls of the Walled Garden at Shugborough last summer, a working party from the Wolverhampton Group of National Trust Volunteers uncovered part of the original glasshouse. Here is an account of what they found.

When we cleared the area outside the walls of the Shugborough Walled Garden we found two of the original fittings used to operate the roof ventilation system of the glasshouse still fixed to the back wall, these were shown in the photographs in the previous newsletter. Made of cast iron they carried the name of the manufacturer, Messenger of Loughborough.

Messenger & Company were formed in 1858 by Thomas Goode Messenger who had been running a plumbing, glaziers and glass fitting business in the High Street in Loughborough since 1855. From 1877 the company were listed in trade directories as horticultural builders and hot water apparatus manufacturers, they were also known as the Midland Horticultural Works. The High Street premises eventually closed in 1895.

Such was the success of the business that a substantial foundry and works was set up at the edge of town at the end of Cumberland Road in 1884; this was served by its own siding off the London and North Western Railway Company branch line. The map extract shows the extent of the works and siding in 1901.

Records survive detailing the daily quantity of castings and length of pipes (of diameters varying from 2 to 6 inches) transferred from the foundry to the works; in 1898-9 the



total was over 773 tons.

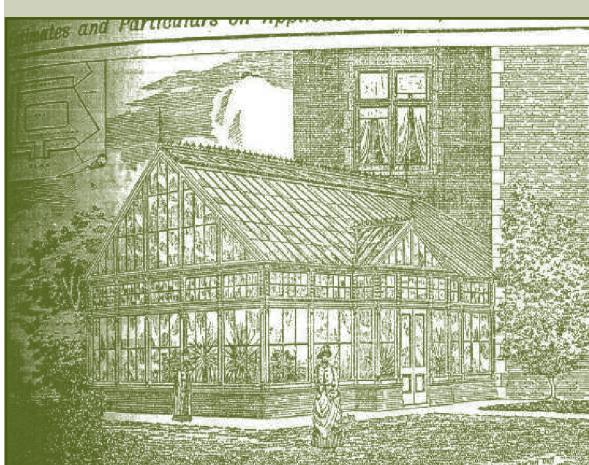
Loughborough 1901, The Godfrey Edition, 2003.

The firm was famous, particularly in the Victorian and Edwardian period for making greenhouses, verandahs, summerhouses, cucumber frames, melon pits, mushroom beds, orchid stages, vineries and peach houses. Their customer base covered not only the United Kingdom but across the world. An advert from an edition of 'The Builder' magazine, published in 1888, for their catalogue is shown below.

When the company closed in 1980 their business records were split between the Leicestershire Record Office in Leicester and the Museum of Rural Life at the University of

Reading. The Contract Books for 1866 to 1877 held at Leicester have a diverse range of customers but no reference to Shugborough. Work covered the installation of staging at the Glasgow Botanic Gardens, a heating system at Oakham Police Station, a heating system for the Peach House at Ashton Hall, Sutton Coldfield and glasshouses for the Veitch nursery in Devon. By the 1920s, the next available books, sales to Durban are recorded and the catalogue of documents at Reading show customers in countries including India, Australia and New Zealand, Argentina and Egypt.

Messenger & Co. were one of several large glasshouse manufacturers of the period; among the others are R. Halliday & Co. from Manchester who supplied the conservatory at Sunncroft in 1880 and Richards of Darlington, manufacturers of the Peach House at Wightwick which was completed in 1891.



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Ann Brookman

houses in Europe, but only the North Wing was completed before building was abandoned following the death of the heir of the family, and even this was pulled down by its new owner, the Duke of Newcastle, who converted the staff quarters into a more modest mansion. Bought in 1880 by Sir Thomas Robinson, a breeder of thoroughbred horses, it is now the home of the Worksop Manor Stud.

However, Joe's destination was *Castle Farm*, a Grade II\* listed building attached to the estate and credited by English Heritage to James Paine, but believed by Joe to be the work of Thomas Wright. It was here that he spent that night.

Now back in the Midlands, Joe's next destination was *Newstead Abbey*, the home of the Byron family for nearly three hundred years until the poet sold it to a friend, Thomas Wildman, who used a substantial personal fortune to rebuild it in its present Gothic Revival style. A generous host, he included Franz Liszt and Washington Irving amongst his guests. It has been in the ownership of Nottingham City Council since 1931. Lord Byron buried his favourite dog, a Dalmatian called "Boatswain", at what he believed was the site of the High Altar of the earlier medieval abbey and expressed a wish to be buried with the dog when he died, but his family interred him in the parish church at nearby Hucknall instead!

Undeterred by the possibility of ghostly midnight howling, Joe pitched his tent next to the tomb - and enjoyed a good night's sleep!

Ever closer to home, Joe now passed back into Derbyshire, calling at *Kedleston*

*Hall*, where Charles Bridgeman and William Emes had been employed. However, it was Robert Adam, relatively unknown at the time, whom the owner, Nathaniel Curzon, employed to "take in hand the deer park and pleasure grounds", and it was Robert Adam who was given charge of mansion, gardens and grounds. He replaced the formal gardens left by Bridgeman with a more naturalistic-looking landscape, adding temples and follies, the most famous of which is probably The Fishing Pavilion.

Now back in Staffordshire, Joe pitched his tent at the entrance to Rousseau's *Grotto*, in the grounds of *Wootton Hall*, the home of the Hon. Johnny Greenall, whose family once owned Greenall Breweries, before spending his penultimate night at *Blithfield Hall*, the home of the Bagot family since the late fourteenth century.

Back home at *Shugborough*, Joe spurned the opportunity of a long soak and the comfort of his own bed, instead spending the very last night of his epic journey in The Chinese House, a fitting finale to an enterprise, the accomplishment of which will without doubt give him enormous satisfaction for many years to come.

The challenge faced by Joe was daunting; a walk of three hundred miles, mostly along main roads, made an unprecedented call on his powers of endurance, yet only once did Joe ever consider giving up, when blisters made the action of walking almost unbearably painful (He averaged between ten and twelve miles each day, though on one occasion he covered over twenty miles in order to arrive at the next destination on his itinerary). But apart from raising

money for a project which may otherwise not have left the designer's board, Joe acknowledges that there were great personal benefits too, first and foremost, the kindness and generous hospitality of so many people from all walks of life. In Joe's experience, Durham people are fantastic and Yorkshire hospitality is legendary!

Joe maintains that working in the landscape has brought him great comfort. Since time immemorial, turning to the landscape has been a way of relieving stress, and, for Joe, walking along main roads amid the hustle-and-bustle of daily life accentuated the contrast of being surrounded by the serenity and tranquillity of an eighteenth-century landscape, which releases the tension which has built up during the day, and he believes that both his knowledge and experience of eighteenth-century landscapes have been greatly enhanced as the result of undertaking this walk (The territorial and political dominance of great land-owners like the Earls of Scarbrough, the Dukes of Norfolk and the Dukes of Newcastle and the cultural dominance of architects and garden designers such as Robert Adam, James Paine, James 'Athenian' Stewart and Lancelot 'Capability' Brown became increasingly evident as the walk proceeded).

An unaccompanied walk also gave Joe the opportunity for personal reflection that the demands of a working life do not often allow, while solitary nights punctuated by the sounds of lowing cattle and screeching owls, the occasional barking stag and the early dawn chorus were reminders of how close he was to Nature.

Three hundred miles, five counties, twenty-five locations, at different times drenched in torrential rain or bathed in warm sunshine, three stones lighter, more than two thousand pounds earned in sponsorship money, surely the achievement of a lifetime, one to reflect on in the comfort of later years? Time to resume a busy life? Not quite! Joe is now planning another sponsored walk next year, this time in the south of the country, this time focussing on chinoiserie. Money raised will go towards fulfilling another of Joe's projects – the creation of a Chinese garden at Shugborough. Such indomitable spirit will surely receive the support it deserves.

W. B. S.



The Chinese House at Shugborough

# VISIT TO THE NATIONAL MEMORIAL

The visit began with an introductory talk given in the Chapel by one of the National Memorial Arboretum's trustees, followed by an informative talk by John Bryan, who told us about exciting new plans for the future.

The article which follows is based on Mr. Bryan's talk, supplemented by the author.

Since its formal opening in 2001, there have been many changes; at present, the Arboretum covers 150 acres and contains 50,000 trees and over 160 monuments.

One of the most recent additions to the landscape is The Polish Armed Forces Memorial, created in Poland and brought by lorry for erection at the site. Made of bronze and costing £3m., it is comprised of four back-to-back figures crowned by an eagle, the Polish national emblem - a pilot commemorates the contribution of the Polish Air Force in the Battle of Britain, a sailor those who sailed on the Arctic convoys, a soldier those who fought and died in the Battle of Monte Casino, and a female figure the Polish Resistance.

Also added in recent months is a memorial to The Household Division which bears comparison with a similar memorial situated at the end of The Mall, in London. Lined with London planes, it is made of Portland stone and crowned with a copy of the railings on top of Chelsea Barracks, the original home of the Division. The interlocking stones at its base represent England, Wales, Scotland and North Ireland, each of which has its own Division.

The main feature of the Arboretum is the striking Armed Forces Memorial, built to commemorate those who, since the end of the Second World War, had been killed on duty or as the result of terrorism.

Designed by Liam O'Connor following a competition which attracted world-wide interest and built of Portland stone, work on the Monument began in August 2006, and it was dedicated in the presence of Her Majesty the Queen in October 2007. Raised above the local flood plain, it has the appearance of an ancient Bronze-Age burial mound.

A spiral pathway winds its way to the Memorial in emulation of a pilgrim's way, while stone steps lead its visitors away, though most use the latter as both entrance and exit.

To date, sixteen thousand names have been carved into the walls, starting from the end of the Palestine conflict in 1948. They appear in yearly order and do not record rank, the names of naval personnel first, the Royal Navy being the Senior Service, followed by those from the Army, and then the Royal Air Force, the Junior Service, last.

Alphabetical order is not observed, except in the case of groups, such as the crew of HMS *Affray*, a submarine lost in 1951, when all perished at the same time.

With the help of laser-guided engraving machines, the stone masons worked twenty-four hours a day, six days a week for six months to carry out the initial carvings. Now, every year, further names are added, first tracing each name and then engraving it with hammer and chisel. This could be done only when the temperature was right; too cold and the stone would crack.

It is clearly of great comfort to grieving families to have the sacrifice of their loved ones recorded in this way; one couple sat all day watching the name of their son being carved on the wall.

Two sets of bronze statues stand inside the Memorial; one is of a group of servicemen carrying a colleague aloft on a stretcher, on either side of which a family group, including a mother and child, symbolise all grieving families; opposite, the dead soldier is prepared for burial. Both groups are a poignant reminder of the sacrifice paid by servicemen and their families alike.

These figures were designed by Ian Rank-Broadley, who was responsible for the design of the Queen's head found on our coinage since 1998.

A half-open door indicates passage to another world, and at 11.00 a.m. on the eleventh day of the eleventh month a shaft of light shines through a gap between the walls, dissecting the centre of the Memorial in a manner similar to Stonehenge.

But not all the monuments are dedicated to branches of the armed services; the GPO, which had its own rifle brigade in World War One and which, in World War Two, laid telephone cables on D Day, incorporates a green letter box in its memorial, green being the colour adopted between 1871 and 1901, while each of the 2525 vessels lost by The Merchant Navy during World War Two is commemorated by an oak tree planted in Merchant Navy Wood. The liner "The HMT Lancastria", sunk by a German dive-bomber during the evacuation from Dunkirk with an estimate loss of life of between three thousand and eight



The Polish Armed Forces Memorial

thousand lives, has its own memorial set in a clearing in the middle of the Wood.

The Fire & Rescue Services and the Ambulance Service are both represented by memorials, as are those who have died in road accidents and still-born babies.

Today, nearly forty organisations are in the process of applying for or erecting new memorials that will cover the diversity of faiths found in a multi-cultural society to the provision of a shelter for the Special Armed Service Memorial gardens. Nowadays, the Arboretum applies strict design criteria to all new applications, including the submission of full designs and scaled drawings. Furthermore, Lichfield District Council can require planning applications to be submitted for some of the larger memorials, and, since a large proportion of the Arboretum is within the flood plain, The Environment Agency requires a Flood Risk Assessment report to be produced in order to ensure that compensation storage can be provided if the proposals

# ORIAL ARBORETUM

rial Arboretum's 120 voluntary guides. This was followed by an or the future development of the Arboretum. ed by information from printed sources.



Figures in the Armed Forces Memorial

impede the natural storage of potential floods.

The popularity of the Arboretum had been growing since it was first opened to the public; annual visitor numbers have risen from sixty-two thousand then to three hundred thousand in 2010 and are projected to rise to half a million in the coming years.

To that end, the National Memorial Arboretum Future Foundation Appeal was launched by Prince William, its Patron, in April 2009, with the aim of raising £8m., which will be the cost of carrying out the changes to visitor facilities.

The proposed Armed Forces Pavilion will provide an all-the-year round venue for functions, events and acts of remembrance, while The Square will allow major events to be hosted under cover, providing seating for a thousand people and standing-room for 3500.

A new Remembrance Centre will allow the expansion of the educational work already being carried out with children and provide much-needed exhibition space for visitors and events alike.

First, however, the project has to satisfy the requirements of a Heritage Lottery bid, namely, that it should have the potential to deliver high-quality benefits and value for money.

Thanks to the ongoing generosity of Lafarge Aggregates, the site is set to double in size by 2023, when more land becomes available as quarrying ceases. The prospect is both fascinating and exciting, involving the laying out of roads, earth sculpture and water features.

The first part of the scheme will involve changing the lay-out of the area beyond the Chapel, replacing what is there at present with a walking mall and incorporating a traditionally-designed "Gardens for All". This will involve replacing some of the existing plots, though, generally, plot-holders have been supportive once the scope of the scheme has been explained to them. The date for starting work could be as early as Spring 2011.

Attention will then turn to the area around the entrance, including the car park; work here could start in 2012, subject to meeting fund-raising targets.

Plans for re-designing the Arboretum will involve the removal of some of the existing fifty thousand trees in order to soften the existing tree lines by creating groves. There will be a re-grouping of memorials which will bring a greater coherence to the general lay-out, and some will be elevated on mounds, giving them a greater prominence.

It should be remembered that, since the management of the Arboretum was taken over by The Royal British Legion, whose first act was to abolish admission charges regular income has been dependent on the introduction of modest parking charges (currently £2 a day), and income generated by the on-site shop and the restaurant; capital projects must rely on government grants and the continuing generosity of businesses and individuals.

Donations can be sent to The NMA Appeal, c/o The National Memorial Arboretum, Croxall Road, Alrewas, Staffordshire DE13 7AR, or online at [www.thenma.org.uk](http://www.thenma.org.uk).

## JAMES BATEMAN, 1811-1897

James Bateman, creator of the celebrated gardens at Biddulph Grange, was born in 1811, and the bi-centenary of his birth is being celebrated in 2011 by a number of events including an exhibition at the Potteries Museum and Art Gallery at Stoke-on-Trent and a series of talks at the Museum's Conference Centre from July 12th till July 14th.

These will be given by Brent Elliot, on "Biddulph and Victorian Gardens" and Richard Wheeler, The National Trust's Gardens Curator, on Biddulph itself. Canon Tony Barnard, formerly of Lichfield Cathedral, who currently serves on The Erasmus Darwin Foundation, and has been researching the theme of "Faith, Doubt and Reason" amongst nineteenth-century scientists, will address the philosophical world that James Bateman lived in.

Pam Wolliscroft, formerly Curator of the Spode Museum Trust, will speak about the links between Bateman's orchids and Spode designs, and Steve Manning, the author of "Discovering New World Orchids", will speak about orchid collectors in South America.

Paul Baker, until recently Property Manager at Biddulph Grange, is preparing a paper on the Geology Gallery in which he will stress its key role in understanding Bateman's approach to his garden.

The exhibition will explore further the links between James Bateman and key developments in Victorian Britain, and, in particular, connections with the local Pottery industry.

This promises to be a landmark event, in which the SGPT will play its part as one of its sponsors, and members will be sent further information early in the New Year.

# **- ASSOCIATION OF GARDENS TRUSTS -**

## **- ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING -**

### **(October 1st to 4th, 2010)**

**Two members of the SGPT, Peter and Pat Magee, attended the AGT's 2010 Annual General Meeting and Conference on the Isle of Wight and their account of a wet but interesting and enjoyable weekend follows:**

The Conference was hosted by the Isle of Wight Garden Trust, and the full programme began on Friday morning with an optional visit to Brading Roman Villa Museum. We continued to Nunwell House, the home of the Oglander family until 1980, when it became the home of the Aylmers, founders of the IWGT. As we had very heavy rain, our tour outside was quite brief. We went into Lisle Combe St. Lawrence for our lunch-stop with the family of the poet Alfred Noyes, who died in 1958. This is a Victorian seaside residence in the "cottage ornée" style, on land owned by Lord Yarborough, a member of the Worsley family of Appuldurcombe.

The next visit was to Haddon Lake House, a new dwelling which has been built on the old Birdland site by the owner, a landscape gardener. The restoration is being supported by the IWGT. We were told of the extremely difficult job of clearing the site of all the old cages made from wire and concrete, some of which were in the lake, which meant a huge job of dredging the debris. The garden is a delight to see, even in the pouring rain, with the owner, Philippa Lambert taking us around.

We returned to The Brunswick Hotel in order for members to attend the AGM. Despite the small size of the room, as many as possible listened to future plans of the AGT working with Natural England and English Heritage. The Chair recommended abbreviated reports to be sent to each Trust. The AGT was followed by a Business Meeting. In 2011, the AGT Annual General Meeting and Conference will be hosted by the Oxford Trust. The date, the first weekend in September, will be confirmed.

After this, we were invited to attend the reception held at Shanklin Chine, with Ann Springman being our host. We were able to see parts of the Chine prior to Ann's brief talk. Dinner was served at The Brunswick Hotel that evening.

On Saturday morning we visited Ventnor Botanic Garden with the Curator, Simon Goodenough. Much work is being undertaken, but the greatest worry is the future of this extremely important garden if the local Council decide not to finance free entry. The garden was first planted by Sir Harold Hillier in the 1970s on the site of the former Chest Hospital. Sir Harold was a member of the family who founded the Hillier Nurseries, well-known as stockists of northern and temperate trees and shrubs, and his private collection, which he donated to Hampshire County Council in 1977, forms the core of the well-

known Sir Harold Hillier Gardens in Romsey, Hampshire.

After lunch at the garden, we proceeded to Northcourt, which is owned by John Harrison, Chair of IWGT, and his wife, Christine. Northcourt is also on the English Heritage Register. Following a tour led by John, who showed us most of the fifteen-acre garden, tea was taken in the Music Room, kindly hosted by Christine and helpers. We then travelled to Farringford, now a hotel but the home of Alfred, Lord Tennyson, from 1853 until his death in 1892. Again, dinner was provided at The Brunswick Hotel, in Shanklin.

On Sunday, we left for Osbourne House and Gardens, still in heavy rain! Following coffee and a talk, Toby Beasley, head gardener for two years, took us round the gardens. the house was the royal residence of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, and was virtually re-built by Thomas Cubitt following designs by Prince Albert after being purchased in 1845. After his death in 1851, the Queen continued to stay at Osbourne until her own death in 1901. Edward VII gave Osbourne to the Nation in 1902. In 1983, English Heritage assumed management of Osbourne House, the gardens and grounds. There is a kitchen garden laid out around 2000 to a modern "contemporary heritage" design. The gardens appear to date from Robert Pope Blatchford's improvements in 1775

Following lunch, those not leaving for home went to Woodlands Vale, situated between Ryde and Seaview, where the main layout of the pleasure gardens took advantage of the sea view. The original house, known as "Woodlands", was built in 1839, then re-built in the 1850s or 1860s and enlarged in 1870-71 by Samuel Saunders Teulon for Colonel, later Baron, Calthorpe. Tea was enjoyed in the house itself, and we were able to explore the grounds in sunshine, much to everyone's relief! Monday was a day for optional visits, which included Mottistone Manor, owned by The National Trust, Carisbrooke Castle, owned by English Heritage, where Chris Beardshaw, an award-winning garden designer and former presenter of BBC's "Gardeners' World" designed the new Princess Beatrice Garden, named after Queen Victoria's youngest child, and Appuldurcombe House and Park.

Great thanks are due to our hosts, the Isle of Wight Garden Trust, especially to John and Christine Harrison. If the Isle of Wight is unknown to any of our members, we recommend it as an excellent holiday destination.

## **STOP PRESS**

### **CONGRATULATIONS!**

**We send our heartiest congratulations to our President, Sir Patrick Cormack, who has just been made a life peer.**

### **TRUST WEBSITE**

From January 1st, 2011, the Staffordshire Gardens and Parks Trust will have its own website, which can be accessed on [www.staffordshiregardensandparks.org](http://www.staffordshiregardensandparks.org). We are greatly indebted to Richard and Jackie Moseley, whose expertise has enabled the Trust to set up this website, and we are especially grateful to Richard, who has agreed to act as Web Manager.