

From our Chairman, Sir Ron Cooke.

Since I first became involved with the arboretum, at the turn of the century, it seems to me, there has been a fundamental change in public attitudes towards trees. In the past trees have always been of interest but they are increasingly seen as an indispensable ingredient in the responses we can make to reduce our 'carbon footprint' and to ameliorate climate change.

Arboreta like ours have a vital role to play in promoting this change to public attitudes. The arboretum is much more than a delightful, safe place to enjoy the peace and quiet of the countryside, as a good place to walk the children, the dogs, or both. It is also a rare location where trees can be saved, where species can be protected and it is where everyone can easily compare species, study them and enjoy their great variety. Increasingly people see the arboretum as a place where they can invest personally in our environmental future.

We have recently received a number of generous benefactions from people who love trees and who seek to ensure trees are planted and cared for. Such benefactors are massively important for our future and we are most grateful to them.

So one of the wettest summers on record has not deterred our membership which continues to grow and it has certainly encouraged our trees!

After the successful completion and the official opening of the John Simmons Visitor and Education Centre, our new café, under the management of Dorianne Butler, is becoming increasingly popular with its reputation for excellent locally sourced food. At the same time we have begun our education programme, directed by Alan Suggett and led by Katherine Forsey, already we are beginning to attract school parties and parents with children on a range of educational activities. The new centre has also enabled us to host events; societies, clubs, professional groups and private parties can all book and use the centre for private events and enjoy the very special ambience of our extensive grounds.



All these amenities help to support our recurrent income which we are able to direct towards our main activity: the nurturing of trees. The management of the trees needs to be carefully planned and we are now preparing master plans for both the arboretum and Ray Wood. To this end John Simmons (happily continuing as our consultant curator) Arabella Lennox-Boyd, one of our trustees and Tony Kirkham of Kew and others are generously advising Chris Edwards and Neil Batty in this task, which we hope will lay the foundations for both short and long term management arrangements. We have quite a backlog of work which we hope to reduce soon so that we secure our future and can take such initiatives as new plantings, new information guides, new labelling, new seating, new walks and so on.

I have said before that the arboretum is only sustainable because of the help from our small army of volunteers. We rely on them and our only two full time staff, Neil Batty and Ken Cherry, and the part time staff Maurag Carmichael, Chris Edwards, and Joyce and Harry Kingman for an array of horticultural and other activities (from grass cutting to running the visitor centre, promoting the arboretum to external groups and supporting our education programme). Kathryn is presently looking for volunteer explainers to assist with school visits. Do you know anyone who might be interested? We provide a short induction programme. I am also beginning to wonder if we could organise a North of England Woodland Festival, to match that at Kew, but first I need an experienced project manager!

Ron Cooke
Chairman

Visit by new Director of Kew

In August we were delighted to welcome Professor Stephen Hopper on his first visit to the Arboretum .

Professor Hopper took up his post as Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew in 2006. Previously he was the Foundation Professor of Plant Conservation Biology at the University of Western Australia and before that Director of Kings Park and Botanic Garden, Perth.

Professor Hopper has an impressive reputation and broad experience in plant science and plant conservation. He is the author of more than 200 publications, including eight books. He is a passionate conservation biologist and has been engaged in practical plant conservation for almost 30 years.



Events in the centre

This year we have had several events in the centre. Seating a maximum of 60 people for a buffet supper the venue has proved popular for birthday and anniversary parties. Early evening tours followed by supper proved a big hit and a champagne tasting and supper by candlelight was voted 'the best ever' by its participants.



Details of hiring the centre from admin@kewatch.co.uk or 01653 648650

The Collection

The sources of the Arboretum's plants fall into three main groups. Firstly the early plantings of rare and interesting trees and shrubs already in cultivation, often from historically important original introductions and mostly propagated by cuttings or grafting. Then there are the many attractive plants, such as the very red, Red Maple, *Acer rubrum* 'October Glory' that have been added for their aesthetic appeal, but the bulk are field expedition seed raised plants. These are the most scientifically valuable for use in research and genetic conservation.



The latter have been greatly added to by the Kew and Wakehurst nurseries, but amongst other sources we are particularly indebted to one of our Benefactors, Lord Howick, for his continuing donations, now amounting to more than 630 expedition-sourced young plants, from his arboretum's nursery at Howick.

The present gardens at Howick Hall have been developed since the 1920s. Then from 1985 the present Lord Howick started to collect seeds of trees and shrubs throughout the temperate world, many on joint expeditions with Kew and the Quarryhill Botanic Garden in California. The resultant 65-acre arboretum consists exclusively of plants collected from these expeditions amounting to about 11,000 specimens from 1,800 different species, and was first opened to the public last year.

In recognition of this amazing personal achievement, and Lord Howick's help and advice to many other important gardens, he was this year awarded the prestigious Veitch Memorial Medal by the Royal Horticultural Society. So in adding our congratulations we must also say grateful thanks for his many gifts to our arboretum. *John Simmons*

New in 2008.

Roy Ward and Myra Minns will be available to take guided tours on the first Tuesday of the month (times later). The tours are free for members and last for approximately 2 hours. Come along and join the tour. Please book in advance by ringing 01653 648598 or 648650.

Winter Wellie Walks

Our thanks to Lesley and David Mather for their immensely popular walks on Boxing Day and New Years Day. The hot punch and Lesley's cake is much appreciated.

The John Simmons Centre - Official Opening

Although in operation for some time, the official opening of the centre on took place on 16th May 2007. The opening ceremony was performed by Lord Selborne, Chairman of Trustees, The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.



The idea, inspiration and driving force behind the new centre was John B E Simmons OBE VMH. Curator of the Arboretum, but made possible through

the generosity of many benefactors, friends and members. We acknowledge also the work of Peter Marshall, OBE, who undertook the task of raising funds, Hamish Currie who masterminded our Defra application and Castle Howard Estate who made the additional land required available to the Trust.

When John retired from The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, in 1997 he came north to set up the Trust for the estate. His gentle demeanour conceals a passion for plants and a formidable knowledge of all aspects of arboriculture as well as great vision for the future.

We hope that the original founders of the arboretum, George Howard and James Russell would be proud of the efforts of this generation.



It was great to welcome John back for the official opening of our new centre where he was joined by many friends old and new. Lord Selborne presented John with a cheque and two botanical paintings by May Townsend.

The Arboretum Goes Travelling

Through the new Education Programme the Arboretum is



getting about more than ever! The British Association for the Advancement of Science (BA) held their annual festival in York this year and the Arboretum was involved with the Festival for the whole week,

delivering our travelling Super Trees workshop to over 250 local school children at The University of York. Many more Super Trees were created at The Great Yorkshire Show and Countryside Days over at the Show Ground in Harrogate. I would like to thank George & Betty Pope and Bill & May Townsend for their help at the Great Yorkshire Show and especially Geoff Acomb for his hard work and enthusiasm at all of the above events, I couldn't have done it without you! *Katherine Forsey*



A different kind of family tree!



The Abies concolor 'Wattezii', planted in 1979, was adopted in July 2006 by Norma Butlin and Helena Coroneo in memory of their parents.

The picture shows Norma Butlin, her son Ian and two granddaughters Polly and Crea.

Wedding Reception.

Rachel Deighton and Andrew Fox were married on 7 July at Coneysthorpe Chapel by Rev John Richardson. Rachel is Event and Sales Manager at Castle Howard and Andrew is a Senior Account Manager at On-Communications Group based in Sheffield.

'We all had a great time at the Arboretum and it is such a beautiful setting. We did think at one point the marquee was going to be floating on the lake, but thankfully the weather turned just in time!' said Rachel.



Prince's Trust

At a dinner held in Castle Howard, to raise funds for the Princes Trust, the Arboretum Trust donated 10 rare trees for sponsorship.



The trees were grown from seed collected between 1999 and 2003 by expeditions from RBG Kew to central China. The seed was propagated by RBG Kew and transferred as seedlings to the arboretum where they are now planted out and flourishing.

Ten generous benefactors bid for the trees with proceeds being divided between the Princes Trust and The Arboretum Trust.

Guided tours

We have two Arboretum guides who are a great addition to our team of volunteers. Roy Ward has been guiding tour throughout 2007 and one glorious afternoon in May, Roy and the Wild About Ryedale group spent over 3 hours just walking and talking trees in the sunshine.

We are also delighted to welcome Myra Minns as a new tour guide, Myra, who has moved north from Gloucestershire, was for many years, a tour guide at Westonbirt, the national arboretum. Myra will be a great asset to the Trust and we hope she will enjoy guiding with us.

Date for your diary
Oddssocks return July 6th to perform
'Much Ado About Nothing'

Fun for the whole family

This year has seen the Arboretum host several fun packed family activity days during the school holidays. Children



brought along their mums, dads and grandparents to take part in a whole host of activities delivered by Katherine, our Education Development Officer and at times it was hard

to tell who was having the most fun! We plan to hold plenty more family activity days in the future so keep an eye out for posters in the visitor's centre or our website for details and remember, if you can't make it to one of our activity days then there are always children's activities and trails that can be picked up from the visitors centre.

Wollemi Pines



The Wollemi Pines loved the rain!

We reported their acquisition in our 2006 newsletter and they were held over winter in the shade tunnel.

The photograph shows one which was planted out in early spring on Bracken Hill.

Experts return

We were very pleased to welcome 50 members of the International Dendrology Society when they made a return visit on 1st June

Many of the society had been on the visit in 2004 and were delighted with the progress which has been made in the arboretum in three years.

The visit was organised as part of a week long tour in Yorkshire by Sir Richard Storey and his team at Settrington House



After coffee at Castle Howard and a welcome from The Honourable Simon Howard, the group visited Ray Wood in parties lead by Sir Richards's Head Gardener Lin Hawthorne and our Plant Records Officer Joyce Kingman.

The group then enjoyed a picnic lunch by the arboretum lake. The day became very warm, so that during the afternoon tour of the arboretum, shade was very welcome. Some members of the group eventually succumbed to the temptation of tea and cake and a seat on the terrace at the arboretum café.

It was a particular pleasure to meet Adolphe and Ghislaine, Vicomte and Victomtesse Spoelberch, from Belgium. Adolphe is a second cousin of Philippe, who is generously sponsoring the work of labelling the collection in Ray Wood. The administration of this support is now handled by Dr. Koen Camelbeke, Director of the Sticking Arboretum, Wespelaar, Belgium.

News from the Education programme

It amazes me that from been a twinkle in the eye of the 2006 newsletter I have now been at the arboretum for nearly a year. I am pleased to report that the Education Programme is in full swing and for those of you who regularly pass through the visitors centre I hope you have found the time to take a look at the new children's activities and trails we have on offer.



Activities include Leaf Bingo and a Treasure Hunt, an Arboretum Explorer and a seasonal Story Trail so if you are ever stuck for activities to do with the children or grandchildren the Education Programme can help!

We have also welcomed several school groups to the arboretum this year, with groups coming from as far a field as Birmingham and Scarborough. The groups explored the arboretum through our new curriculum linked activities menu, which includes pond dipping, minibeast searches, habitat design, bark art and much more. The Arboretum now offers a variety of opportunities for outdoor learning and provides a beautiful and safe environment for developing field study techniques. The interactive, hands-on activities are delivered by myself and a team of enthusiastic volunteer Education Explainers and can be combined to create a bespoke day or half-day of activities.

Group bookings are now being taken for the spring and summer terms and prices range from £2 to £5 per child depending on the number of assisted activities selected. I have also created a teacher pack, full of activity ideas and example risk assessments, for groups booking unassisted visits. For further information you can come and see me at my desk in the visitors centre, have a peek at the education pages of our website or e-mail me on education@kewatch.co.uk.



The education programme is always looking for new volunteers to assist with delivery of activities to school groups, if you enjoy working outdoors and are keen to encourage children to learn more about their natural environment I would love to hear from you. *Katherine Forsey, Education Development Officer.*

Dog Fun Day 9th September

Many months ago, Kay Inman had the idea of a day when the dog walkers of the arboretum could get together for light-hearted competitions and demonstrations. She enlisted the support of Dorianne Butler and a group of like minded people and on 9th September the Dog Fun Day took place. Eric and Marjory Cowham settled in, ready to issue tickets and waited to greet the dogs and their people. It was an anxious time as estimates of possible numbers varied from five to five hundred!



In fact, blessed with a fine day and ground which was firm and dry, about two hundred people took part. There were a lot of first time visitors and families and they joined in enthusiastically. The sausage eating competition proved especially popular!

Representatives from Ryedale Dog Rescue, Hearing Dogs for Deaf People and Pets as Therapy set up stalls and Hearing Dogs put on a demonstration showing the wonderful work their dogs are trained to do.

The event could not have happened without the wonderful support of Pauline and John Verity and their team. They provided and set up the agility and flyball courses and gave demonstrations throughout the afternoon. Many other people also gave their time, particularly Lesley Mather and Eileen and Dick Taylor and friends.

The charities were pleased with the opportunity to raise awareness of the work they do and over the following weeks, many people returned to visit the Arboretum, having discovered what a marvellous place it is. *Joyce Kingman*

Thanks from John Simmons

I felt extremely honoured to have the new entrance building named after me and was delighted to be able to return and see it in operation. In use it more than exceeded my hopes and expectations as it is both aesthetically pleasing and functional and its situation and structure will also allow its simple adaptation to any likely future needs.

When, as Curator of Kew, I was seeking to secure the future of the Arboretum at Castle Howard and its collections, I had no concept of becoming so personally involved through the first decade and more of my retirement. How to progress the Arboretum on what, by Kew's standards, were miniscule resources, was a great challenge. But it proved to be a very rewarding experience and made so by the enthusiasm and commitment of all involved who have given so much. I thus extend my appreciation of this to the Arboretum's dedicated staff and volunteers, the many equally supportive staff of Castle Howard, the Howard family, the Trust's Trustees and Benefactors and of course the underpinning support of so many at Kew.

I was also rather overwhelmed by the generosity of those who gave to my farewell gift. It was quite unexpected but very much appreciated. The silk pictures now grace my home and the cash will go towards long planned house improvements that will help us in our advancing years!

Finally, our thanks also to all our members who continue to support the Arboretum and its work, your continued support is deeply appreciated.