



INSPIRATION EDUCATION CONSERVATION

# THE YORKSHIRE ARBORETUM

Annual Review 2018



#YorArb

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**Volunteer Coordinators**  
Mrs Christine Pietrowski, Mrs Jackie Ray

## FROM THE CHAIR OF TRUSTEES

This has been an outstanding year for the arboretum. Most importantly, there has been obvious progress with both enhancing the collection and restoring the beautiful landscape in which it sits; these, after all, are our core responsibilities. The lake, a feature of the historic landscape which was rapidly disappearing due to silting and encroachment of vegetation, has been dredged and re-landscaped, and the new Woodland Garden above the lake has come on apace. If we had achieved nothing else, this would have been a good year.

On other fronts, too, we can look back on the year with pride. We had record numbers of visitors and members, and our café and shop performed above expectations. The education team received a record number of schoolchildren and numbers at special events were very promising. All this bodes well for the future and suggests that word is getting out about the pleasures of a visit to the Yorkshire Arboretum. None of this would have been possible without the really excellent work of our very professional staff team and our wonderful volunteers.

In addition to these achievements, the staff have been pushing forward three major development programmes. The most advanced is the construction of a new Operations Centre to house our growing and essential stock of equipment, generously funded by Fondation Franklinia. Hot on its heels is the exciting project to create the UK's first training centre for tree health matters, for which we have already raised £500,000 with an ongoing fundraising campaign to reach our target of £750,000.

Finally we are still developing plans for better access pathways and interpretation and greatly expanded public engagement, for which the Heritage Lottery Fund gave us development funding last year. Even for a large organisation, that would be a challenging programme, so it is a huge credit to the team that so much progress has been made and we are deeply grateful to our donors and funders.



Five years ago, the Trustees approved a financial plan which contained a number of targets and aspirations. Reviewing those, I was struck by how conservative we had been: we have exceeded most of the targets and where not, it is usually because we have had the opportunity to embrace something new. Had we stuck precisely to the plan we would (so the plan said) now be in financial surplus. We're not there yet, largely because we have used capital investment and new posts to raise the quality and profile of our operation very substantially, but it is not fanciful to imagine that we shall achieve that nirvana in the reasonably near future and I thank the Board for backing this imaginative programme.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alastair Fitter'.

**Professor Alastair Fitter CBE FRS**

## FROM THE DIRECTOR

In June 2018 we launched our Friends scheme, for supporters who pledge a regular donation for five years, contributing to a nominated development project each year, such as the restoration of the lake. We look forward to building this group in future, encouraging committed supporters to help us grow

In looking back at 2018 it is difficult to know where to start, but it is clear that it was the most successful year so far in the arboretum's history. A total of 31,000 visits by members and the public far outstrips any previous figure, and there are now nearly 1,300 members, an increase of 12% on the previous year. We also had the pleasure of welcoming notable visitors including representatives from the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in northern England, senior Vietnamese civil servants and the Belgian Dendrology Society.

Our Heritage Lottery Fund Development Phase Project 'If Trees Could Talk' enabled us to create new trails and activities, and lay on more events, which have been very well supported, giving us encouragement for later stages. The reopening of the restored lake area with its new path has been welcomed by all visitors, including a family of sixteen Mandarin ducklings. As I write, construction of our new Operations Centre is beginning and plans for the Tree Health Centre are well-advanced. I am deeply grateful to the staff for the hard work that has made all this possible, the Trustees for their support and our donors for their faith in the value of our institution and its ambitious plans.

2019 will mark the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary since George Howard and Jim Russell first planted on the site, and with this in mind we move forward into another important and no doubt memorable year. Our priority – despite all the apparent distractions of development projects – remains the collection and site. It is gratifying to hear from many visitors that the arboretum has never looked better, but that is a changing baseline!



**Dr John Grimshaw FLS**



## THE COLLECTION

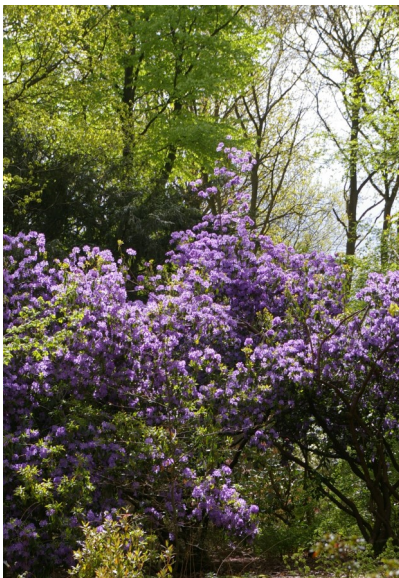
2018 was a year of meteorological extremes with a very wet and cold winter giving way to a long and punishing heatwave over the summer. Despite this, the Operations Team of staff and volunteers managed to plant over 500 specimens in late winter and early spring, and what's more, managed to keep almost all of them alive through the drought by diligent and very time-consuming watering. A further couple of hundred specimens went in during the autumn planting season.

Although new trees are located throughout the site, efforts have been heavily concentrated on creating a new Woodland Garden in a former plantation site above the lake. Planned for interest at all times of year, it is already showing a lot of promise. As of October 2018 the arboretum collection boasts 6443 trees of 1214 species, ranging from ancient oaks to the recent plantings. Keeping track of these is an essential management requirement, and the Collection and Plant Records teams do a sterling job with this, placing nearly a thousand labels this year and keeping the records crisply updated.

Thanks to extensive developments made to our records database, we are now able to map the collection in our satellite garden, Ray Wood. As of October 2018, the collection there features 2282 trees of 605 species and varieties.



**Trustee and volunteer  
Chris Bridge**



“It is extremely pleasing to see the plant collection in Ray Wood providing the multifarious resources that an exemplar plant collection should: it is a prize-winning aesthetic collection available to the public; an exemplar site for those creating new woodland gardens for some of the most respected horticultural organisations; a learning resource for international dendrologists; a site for new research on 18<sup>th</sup> century garden design; and will help to contribute new information on phytochemicals for tomorrow’s biomedical research. The investments made in the restoration of Ray Wood are paying dividends.”

**Jonathan Burton, Collection Manager**

Blooms from Ray Wood swept the board at the RHS Harlow Carr Rhododendron Show once again, winning seven categories this year, including best in show for *R. "Queen of Hearts"*. Collection Manager Jonathan Burton, who leads a team of volunteers to care for Ray Wood, considered 2018 to be a challenging year for the garden, but saw prolific blooming of almost all rhododendrons and magnolias, while in autumn leaf colour was good and berry crops were very heavy. The Ray Wood team collectively contributed 2321 hours over the course of year, with several volunteers individually contributing 180+ hours. During the winter of 2017-18 a large flock of Hawfinches took up residence in the arboretum, attracted by the heavy crop of Hornbeam fruits. The birds attracted large numbers of enthusiasts, and also featured on BBC2's *Winterwatch*, giving us national exposure.



Hawfinch by Jonathan Pomroy



### TREE OF THE YEAR 2018

Cold weather in wind and early spring held the buds back on *Magnolia campbellii* 'Charles Raffill' in Ray Wood, so its flowers opened in April, unscathed by rough weather.

### SCIENCE & PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

We are fortunate to have strong links with scientists from Fera Science Ltd and the Animal and Plant Health Agency, both based at nearby Sand Hutton. This enables us to develop our expertise and interests in tree health issues, which are a particular focus of attention as we develop our plans for the Tree Health Centre and its training courses.

In early summer we undertook a research project on the provision of tree health training in the area, funded by the York, North Yorkshire and the East Riding Local Enterprise Partnership through Calderdale College. As part of this we ran two three-day courses on tree health awareness to groups of professionals involved in tree and woodland management from across the LEP region, with a further session on Ash Dieback in October.

Mixing classroom and outdoor learning, the courses were well received and will form the basis of future tree health activities.

Drone surveys were undertaken by the North and East Yorkshire Data Centre (NEYEDC) in spring, summer and autumn. The imagery is being collated and digitised, and will be used with our geographic information system, providing high-resolution images for assessing tree health and standing water. Sound records were also collected, supplying data to an orthopteran monitor study, with plans to repeat the process in future to map the development of the arboretum's acoustic ecology.

Collection Manager Jonathan Burton attended a COST Action conference in Switzerland, funded by Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI). The conference focused on sentinel plantings for detecting alien, potentially damaging tree pests, with breakout groups used to report the work of the Yorkshire Arboretum in the International Plant Sentinel Network and discuss future developments.

We were proud to host a visit of Belgische Dendrologie Belge (Belgian Dendrology Society) in October, with the members touring both the arboretum and Ray Wood, while the International Dendrology Society held a two day study period at the arboretum in November on the subject of Trees in Winter.

## EDUCATION

Our Outdoor Education programme has a strong reputation for delivering a unique and varied learning experience and has seen an increase in demand in 2018. The year saw over 2,000 schoolchildren from 41 schools across Yorkshire visit the site and feedback from school staff has been extremely positive.

"Knowledge of staff was excellent and all activities were pitched appropriately for the age of the children"

**Bell Lane School**

The team— Education Officer Kathryn Hardaker and her volunteers—were almost at capacity throughout the extended summer, but visits occur throughout the year and into winter. Not all our children's education activities focus on the National Curriculum, as a series of Discovery Days and Junior Ranger activities are available during holidays through the year. Discovery Days are 'kids-only' offering children a chance to experience the arboretum and its wildlife through arts and crafts, music and mini-beast hunting; there is also the chance to join the Woodland Fairy for Woodland Wizard Day for a magical day of potion-making, wand-making and much more.

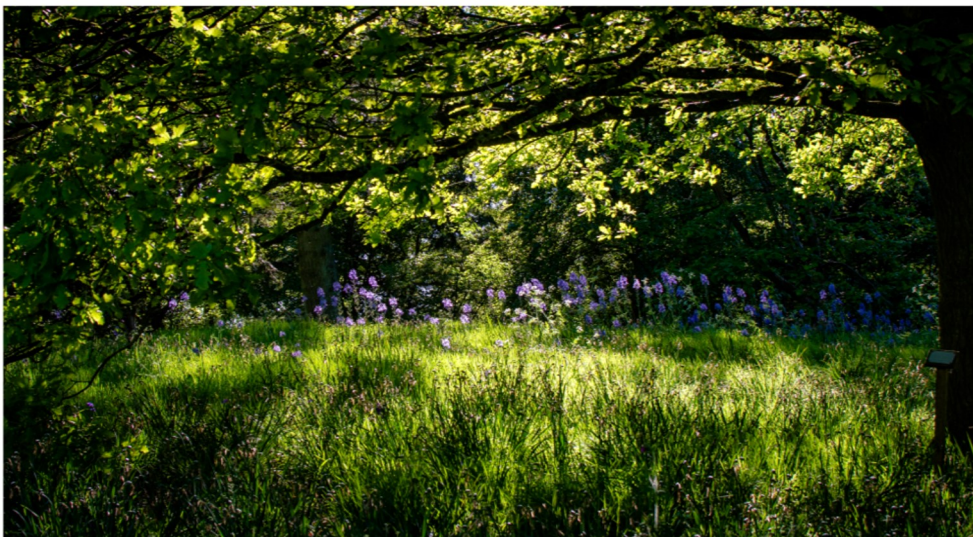
"The staff were lovely—a real asset to the Yorkshire Arboretum. The day was well structured and executed, very enjoyable and engaging and went at a good pace. We had a fantastic day.

**Home school group**



# THE YORKSHIRE ARBORETUM

Photographs by Mathew Harrison ©









Work by Artist-in-Residence  
Justine Warner

For adults the events programme in 2018 contained a great deal of interest, with further events added as part of the HLF Development Phase. These included an exhibition of maps of the Castle Howard area from 1610 onwards, a well-attended talk by Dr Christopher Ridgway on the development of the Castle Howard Estate, as well as practical sessions on wildflower meadows, pruning and winter tree identification.

The gardening talks series was fortunate to attract some eminent speakers, including Prof

Nicola Spence (Chief Plant Health Officer) and Prof David Mabberley (former Director, Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney), boosting its regional profile and attracting full houses. A plant sale was a successful fundraiser for the planting budget, as was our open gardens scheme.

Fourteen gardens were open for our benefit during the course of the year, and we are extremely grateful to their owners for opening for us. A series of exhibitions through the year showed the talent of local artists including Justine Warner, our Artist-in-Residence, who used mixed-media to depict the changing seasons of the arboretum, while both the wildlife artists Jonathan Pomroy and Robert E Fuller featured Hawfinches in their exhibitions.

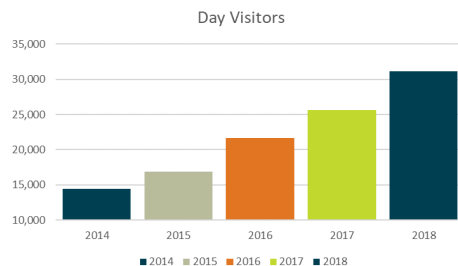


Prof David Mabberley

### THE PUBLIC EXPERIENCE

Visitor numbers to the arboretum have been growing steadily year-on-year, and have made a significant increase in 2018.

31,000 people (18,000 day visitors and 15,000 member visits) came to the arboretum in 2018 an increase of 21%, and we now have over 1,300 members, an increase of 12% on the previous year.



Door surveys taken during peak times indicated positive visitor experiences, with 90% of visitors likely to recommend the arboretum to a friend.

It has been a delight to see so many families enjoying the arboretum, with games such as Giant Jenga and croquet laid out on the Visitor Centre lawn during the summer months. The arboretum receives most visitors in a few weeks in October and November, when the autumn colour is at its peak, resulting in increased pressure for the Visitor Services team and the Arboretum Café. Both handled this year's influx with calm aplomb. The appointment of Katy Thompson as Café Manager in April ushered in a season of development and progress, becoming almost a family-run business with four Thompson sisters working for us.

"It is nice to have a series of smaller attractions that don't distract from family time—other places sometimes feel a bit suffocating...it made for a nice change".

**Young family visitors**

## VOLUNTEERING



The Education team lead a school visit

We benefit very significantly from the generous contribution of time by our loyal and dedicated volunteers, almost a hundred of whom contributed 10,250 hours of service to the arboretum in 2018. The diversity of jobs they undertake is truly vast, from carpentry in the Visitor Centre to path-making in Ray Wood, installing and maintaining commemorative benches, felling trees to filling envelopes:

the list is endless.

Recruitment remains strong, with new teams being formed for work in the arboretum on Wednesdays and Fridays, and most teams recruiting new personnel as required. We are very lucky indeed to be supported by such lovely, loyal people.

After over five years' service our Volunteer Coordinators Christine Pietrowski and Jackie Ray stepped down in November: they provided essential support in a very unobtrusive way, for which we are very grateful. Both are now committed to other volunteering roles at the arboretum!

## STAFF

In 2018 the arboretum expanded its staff team. The appointment of Inesa Čaikytė-Katkienė as Finance Assistant saw our book-keeping brought in-house, and we welcomed Jonathan Cridford on board as Communications Assistant. Pamela Emery moved from a long-standing volunteer role to become Plant Records Assistant for one day per week, and during the summer we were joined by Louis Pitsch as HLF Events Coordinator.

We said a fond farewell in November to Anne Ainsley, our Visitor Services Manager, who has retired. From 2016-18 Anne was the backbone of the visitor experience at the arboretum, from the management of the desk to membership administration, coordinating the events calendar and ensuring the smooth running of our workshops, tours and talks throughout the year. We presented her with a picture of the arboretum from our 2018 artist-in-residence exhibition by Justine Warner. She was replaced in January 2019 by Celia Knott, as Visitor Services Coordinator.

The Yorkshire Arboretum is committed to the continued development of its staff and encourages them to take up opportunities that will benefit both them and the arboretum:

- Education Officer Kathryn Hardaker won a place on the Learn to Engage programme organised by BGCI for participants from Portugal, Italy and the United Kingdom. This involved a programme of home-study and assignments as well as a week-long course in Trento, Italy, covering education development in botanical gardens
- Jonathan Burton, Collection Manager, completed LANTRA training and is now an approved LANTRA-trainer. He also attended a BGCI-funded trip to Switzerland to discuss the development of the International Plant Sentinel Network
- Chief Operating Officer Mathew Harrison is currently undertaking an MBA apprenticeship in Strategic Leadership through the University of Sunderland
- Café Manager Katy Thompson is studying for a hospitality management apprenticeship under HIT Training Ltd.

- Operations Manager Neil Batty celebrated 35 years at the Yorkshire Arboretum in 2018, having worked closely with founder Jim Russell on site from 1983.

## DEVELOPMENT

The Lake Restoration Project, funded by a successful appeal in 2017, commenced in December 2017 with the draining and dredging of the lake basin, removing the large growth of aquatic plants that had choked the open water in recent years. With the sludge banded in large lakeside pits it was necessary to close the lake area until this was dry enough to remove.

Once this was done, and the banks regraded, new stoned paths were installed around the lake perimeter and the area was reopened in late August. We celebrated the restoration with a tea party in early November, at which donors joined Life Members and Friends, though the final item in the project, the creation of a new pond-dipping platform was completed later. It was generously funded by the Wilfred Jackson Trust.



Following a successful funding application to the York, North Yorkshire and East Riding Local Enterprise Partnership, and a pledge of match-funding from a charitable foundation, plans went ahead to begin work on the Tree Health Centre at the Yorkshire Arboretum.

Designed in partnership with SALT Architects, who were commissioned to prepare plans for the building, the Tree Health Centre will be a single storey, purpose-built facility for teaching professionals and members of the public about the risks, challenges and practicalities of managing all aspects of tree health. Work is expected to begin in July 2019.



The development phase of our Heritage Lottery Fund Project ‘If Trees Could Talk’ commenced in January and will conclude in February 2018. It has enabled us to assess our options for better public engagement with a wider range of visitors, and a programme of summer activities and the creation of a series of new trails began that

process to great effect. In addition to considering our needs for interpretation we have been able to prepare plans for a learning centre, a log-cabin lookout and for a hard path to form a loop on the south side of the site. With the festive period in sight construction began on our new Operations Centre, a steel-framed building that will be clad in larch timber. The building will allow for smoother-running outdoor operations with easier access to the arboretum grounds, additional machine storage, a new workshop, and space for volunteers. The building is expected to be completed in March 2019; it has been generously funded by Fondation Franklinia, with support from the Tom Sherwood Bequest.

### **FROM THE TREASURER**

The Yorkshire Arboretum had a satisfactory financial year in the 12 months to 31 January 2019. As the charts show, total income amounted to £383k and total expenditure to £457k, resulting in a reduction in reserves of £74k.

It is particular pleasing to see the further increase in income from admissions and membership in the year which was 21% higher than in 2017/18. Over the last five years, this figure – which must surely be a good measure of the arboretum’s appeal – has increased by 110%, a fantastic achievement.

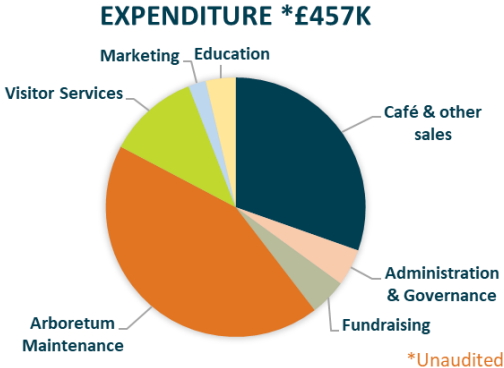
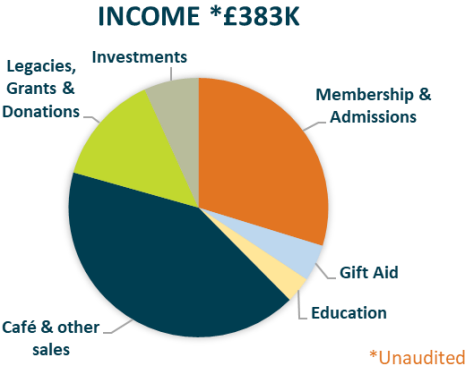
For the Arboretum, our income and expenditure account tells only half the story. Equally important is the movement on capital expenditure and how it is funded. As this Annual Review has already reported, the Lake Restoration project was successfully completed and the new Operations Centre substantially advanced in the year, thanks to generous funding from our supporters.

Exciting plans lie ahead for the building of the first Tree Health Centre in the UK: whilst we are delighted to have secured some two-thirds of the cost up-front, there remains a significant fund-raising challenge for the balance to avoid a major drain on our precious reserves. We hope that once the Centre is fully established it will make a significant contribution to closing the present gap on our income and expenditure account.

Reserves at the year-end amounted to £815k. This gives us confidence to proceed with our exciting plans, though at the same time we are very conscious that they are only able to be spent once.

We are hugely grateful to our many friends and supporters, including our wonderful band of volunteers, our funders and benefactors, and our magnificent staff team, for all their endeavours in caring for 'this wonderful garden of trees' for present and future generations.

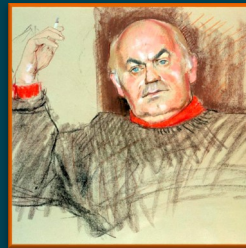
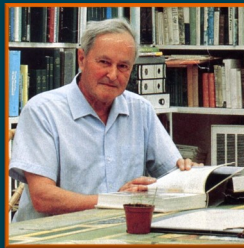
**Michael Sturge FCA**



## Background

The Yorkshire Arboretum was founded in 1979 with the first plantings of trees by George Howard and James Russell. In 1996 the Castle Howard Estate and Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew established the Castle Howard Arboretum Trust - the Trust holds the site on a 100 year lease from the estate.

In addition the Trust cares for the woodland garden in Ray Wood at Castle Howard.



### For further information:

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