

LEAVES FROM A TREE MEASURER'S DIARY

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE TREE REGISTER OF THE BRITISH ISLES

100 new champion trees discovered in 1997!

It has been a particularly busy year for those of us directly involved in the day to day running of the charity. Following the AGM at Leonardslee Gardens, West Sussex the TROBI Alan Mitchell Memorial Lecture was held. Guided walks around the gardens, led by Tony Schilling and Robin Loder, were followed by John Simmons OBE VMH who gave an interesting and entertaining talk and slide show on trees and plants of North America. The now infamous "silent auction" caused much competition as guests outbid each other for rare and unusual plants donated by friends of TROBI. The event raised £1,180 for TROBI and our grateful thanks go to all those who attended and especially our kind hosts Jane and Robin Loder who also provided the superb and appropriate American style food.

The summer months saw the ever increasing band of volunteer tree measurers getting out in the sunshine to re-measure champion trees and discover many other exceptional trees, previously unrecorded. Dr Owen Johnson re-measured the Queen Elizabeth Oak (*Quercus petraea*) at Cowdray Park, West Sussex, confirming it had grown to champion status. He then came across a huge Sweet Chestnut growing nearby which is now also a British champion, as the huge tree at Canford School,

Dorset has gone into decline. Other tree measurers had equally exciting days resulting in more than 100 new champions and 2,000 new trees being entered on to the Register.

Entry of records on to the computerised database is struggling to keep up with all this activity, but steady work means we can now access 70,000 tree records at the touch of a button. Although requests still often involve the process of double checking with original hand written records, data is more readily available. TROBI has helped many people during 1997, from private individuals keen to know if the tree in their garden is special, to private consultants, local authorities, botanical gardens, students and scientists alike.

To mark the 50th anniversary of the introduction to these Isles of the Dawn Redwood (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*) TROBI would like to hear from anyone prepared to purchase and plant such a tree on their property and report annually on its growth to continue research on this fascinating species.

If you are interested in this project or wish to make a donation please contact the Secretary Mrs P A Stevenson, 77a Hall End, Wootton, Bedford MK43 9HP or e-mail us at trobi@aol.com.

DAVID ALDERMAN



Mrs C Land (co-owner) and local Tree Warden Dr John Moon record the largest measurable Common Lime (*Tilia x europaea*) in Hampshire at Abbots Ann. Never previously recorded, its 7.10m girth measured at 1.2m above ground level, its narrowest point, makes this one of the largest lime trees ever recorded in the British Isles.

SHEFFIELD PARK GARDEN

EAST SUSSEX

Sheffield Park Garden is situated on the east side of the A275, midway between Lewes and East Grinstead. It is a site of considerable antiquity. Simon de Montfort held the Manor and nearby he won the Battle of Lewes in 1264. Other owners followed through the centuries, but the garden we see today began when John Baker Holroyd (later created Earl of Sheffield), a politician and friend of Edward Gibbon the historian, bought the property in 1769.

In 1775 he started to rebuild the house with James Wyatt as his architect, and soon decided he wanted a landscaped garden. He employed Lancelot 'Capability' Brown to lay out the grounds, although the extent of his work is unclear. It is thought that he improved the shape of what are now the Upper and Lower Woman's Way Ponds, and the areas farthest from the house. In June 1789 Humphry Repton was asked to improve the design of the garden, but again no Red Book or records of his work survive. Years later he said 'I often regret that Sheffield Park is almost the only place of consequence on which I did not deliver my opinions in a Red Book.' The garden at this time was planted with a mixture of oak, beech, larch and Sweet Chestnuts. The first exotics planted appear to be a group of *Pinus pinaster* (Maritime Pine) by the second lake in about 1800. These were reputed to be from a planting by Sir Joseph Banks (1743-1820). The largest remaining specimen in this group is 27m high.

Henry North Holroyd became the Third Earl of Sheffield in 1876. He immediately started work on the garden and, with the help and advice of his groundsman, William Moore, began planning a beautiful garden out of part of the park land. He created the First and Second Lakes from the series of ponds that Repton had formed, and employed the services of Messrs. Pulham and Sons to create the magnificent Waterfall between them. He also carried on the planting of the garden, started by his grandfather, and introduced many of the western North American conifers that were being introduced at the time - *Abies procera* and *Sequoiadendron giganteum*. A fine example of *Abies procera* grows between the first and second lakes and has reached 31m. This species is notable for its ability to withstand exposure, but the crown becomes stag-headed when mature. The largest of our *Sequoiadendron* is 38m high, not a particular giant, but a well shaped specimen whose characteristic spire dominates the skyline. Fortunately none has yet been struck by lightning.

The property was acquired by Arthur Gilstrap Soames in 1909 on the death of the Third Earl of Sheffield. Over the next 25 years he transformed the original garden and the landscape around the lakes by building up a magnificent collection of

exotic trees and shrubs suited to the favourable acidic soils and climate. The acidic Wadhurst clay produces a soil of pH 5.5, and the annual rainfall is 762-889 mm.

A wealth of plants was being introduced into cultivation during this period of the garden's history, particularly from China, Japan and the Himalayas. Neighbouring garden owners at Borde Hill, Leonardslee, Nymans and Wakehurst introduced these new plants into their collections. Mr Soames however did not get caught up in this excitement for oriental plants. He concentrated instead on building up a collection of North American plants to provide the rich autumn colours that we have today. It is the boldness of his plantings of *Nyssa sylvatica*, *Amelanchier lamarckii*, *Quercus coccinea*, *Vaccinium corymbosum* and *Fothergilla monticola*, to name just a few, which were planted by the hundred, that gave this garden its unique character.

Nyssa sylvatica has become synonymous with Sheffield Park. Four hundred seedlings were reputedly raised by Arthur Soames as soon as he acquired the garden. The seed was obtained from Monsieur Vilmorin in 1910. Seed variation shows in the varied autumn colours of individual plants, ranging from butter yellow to rich dark crimson. Often there can be a variety of colour on one tree, including leaves that are still green. They are of a lax, weeping habit, the largest now reaching 19m in height.

Amelanchier lamarckii is planted in drifts throughout the garden. Both this species and the closely related *Photinia villosa*, all raised from his own seed, which was also planted en masse, combine the attributes of white flowers in spring with the bright red leaves in the autumn.

Fothergilla monticola plants were grown from layers of a plant given to Arthur Soames by Sir George Holford of Westonbirt. The large specimens of today make a considerable contribution to the autumn scene, with leaves turning to bright red and orange in full sun, while plants in the shade are more yellow. In spring, the white bottlebrush-like flowers are an added bonus.

Apart from this rich tapestry of autumn colours, Arthur Soames utilised the still waters of the lakes to produce mirror-reflections of his lakeside plantings. The lakeside plantings were so arranged that shape, outline, texture and colour can be viewed in a panoramic fashion from a considerable distance, against the rich dark backcloths of pine, oak and beech.

A collection of conifers was added during this period which greatly contributes to the overall landscape effect. Here, the North America rule was relaxed, and we find many examples from China and the Far East. Notable specimens

include *Ginkgo biloba*, which contributes to the autumn colour, the largest plant having reached 16m.; *Juniperus recurva* var *coxii* was a favourite of Arthur Soames and 10 trees planted about 1925 are original introductions from Upper Burma. The largest has reached 12m in height. *Sciadopitys verticillata*, the umbrella pine, a native of Japan, grows well in our acid soil. The largest specimen planted in 1911 has now reached over 14m in height and is a well clothed plant.

In 1954 the estate at Sheffield Park was put up for sale, and the garden was threatened with the break up of the estate. The National Trust stepped in and purchased the garden. Since 1954, the Trust has continued to maintain and develop areas of the garden in keeping with its style of 20th century plantings in an 18th century setting.

The storms of 1987 and 1991 devastated the shelter belts around the garden, tore up majestic specimen trees and mutilated the mature oak canopies that provided the under planted

specimens with their much needed shade and protection. Many of our prize trees were destroyed such as the *Pseudolarix amabilis*, which used to shine like a torch in autumn. Other trees have suffered and died since the storm through climatic variation and from fungal attack, one of the effects of root disturbance from falling trees. The latest trees to be removed were two *Acer maximowiczianum*, victims of honey fungus, one at 10m and our champion at 14m.

And what of the future? We are fortunate in the National Trust in that our properties are secure for the future. At Sheffield Park the garden is managed according to a long-term plan for its conservation, taking into account its history, significant qualities, contents, opportunities and constraints. A garden cannot by definition remain static, but the underlying structure and style can be maintained by sensitive planting and removal of poor specimens. The aim is to maintain that quality of planting that is the hallmark of the landscape at Sheffield Park Garden.

NIGEL DAVIS

The Trees at Sutton Place

Most of the new tree plantings at Sutton Place date from 1980 although there are remains of previous plantings with a number of very large trees gracing the landscape. Many of the older specimens were lost during the gales of October 1987 and January 1991 as well as from the ravages of Dutch Elm disease.

During the time that Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe's landscape schemes for the garden were being carried out (1980-1983), plantings of British native species were being used to provide shelter and cover behind the new lake (13 acres in extent) and 14,000 trees and shrubs were planted along its northern perimeter. These were also used to dramatic effect in large group plantings on the approaches to the house, causing the Tudor mansion suddenly to appear beyond its avenue of Red Oak (*Quercus robur*).

Forestry planting schemes have also been used extensively on the 900-acre estate, particularly along the line of the A3 road to give much needed protection from the noise and fumes from traffic. The oldest plantings to survive appear to be two ancient native oaks (*Quercus robur*) in the woodland garden; one is said to be three centuries old and measures 20m x 228cm diam. Amongst the many mature native and exotic trees which were lost in 1987 was a fine Turkey Oak (*Quercus cerris*) and an enormous Common Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), but another Turkey Oak in Lake Field (30m x 210cm diam) with a spread to almost ground level of 33 metres still stands as also does an Atlas Cedar (*Cedrus atlantica*) near the house (24m x 146cm diam) with a ground level canopy of 28 metres. Perhaps best of all is a London Plane (*Platanus x hispanica*) (30m x 175cm diam) which dominates the East Walled Garden.

The new planting schemes for the garden

started in 1983 when an adjoining field (formerly a golf course used by the Duke of Sutherland) was taken in as an Arboretum and Pinetum with further plantings in the woodland garden which runs down to the River Wey. Although sheltered by surrounding woodland the new plantings in the field have had a difficult start, the sandy silt-loam with a pH of between 5.5 and 6.8 being in turn dust-dry or waterlogged; a series of hot and dry summers, plus late spring frosts, have added further to the problem. Deer damage was a secondary aggravation and for a long time I despaired that the new plantings would ever establish.

The conifer and evergreen plantings used around the perimeter of the field as a secondary shelter belt were more successful. The first plantings of Monterey Pine (*Pinus radiata*) from Forestry Commission seed 1994, are now more than 6 metres tall; Holm Oak (*Quercus ilex*) was also used extensively and these, with Corsican Pine (*Pinus nigra ssp laricio*), are the backbone of the shelter planting. A wide range of other conifers, some from wild collected sources, are also doing well. One Big Cone Pine (*Pinus coulteri*) is already 4.5 metres tall whilst the Turkish Cedar (*Cedrus libani* var *stenocoma*) and Cyprian Cedar (*Cedrus brevifolia*) are almost 3 metres tall from 1990 plantings.

The deciduous arboretum planting philosophy was based upon autumn colour of which Sutton Place possessed very little. Although there were some early disappointments our own seed-raised plants now form the nucleus of the new collection: the Sweet Gum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), Rauli (*Nothofagus nervosa*), Roble Beech (*N. obliqua*), Japanese Rowan (*Sorbus commixta*) and Smoke Tree (*Cotinus coggygria*) are all growing steadily in

their new home. A Silver Maple (*Acer saccharinum*) has already grown to 9 metres with a range of *Acer*, *Cornus*, *Sorbus* and other genera gradually gaining foothold.

Although much reduced because of gales the new woodland garden planting still retains a canopy of mature trees and there were also a few choice exotic trees of note; *Pinus sylvestris* 'Watereri' has grown particularly well as also has a fine example of *Ilex x altaclarensis* 'Camelliifolia'. The first trees to go in were Common Oak from Forestry Commission seed which are currently 4 metres tall and should help to fill in the much reduced canopy. Some species have thrived amidst the combined advantages of shelter, extra moisture and the better soil that this woodland provides. The Paperbark Maple *Acer griseum* has reached 3 metres tall with *Acer barbinerve* almost as large. A number of 5 metre tall Katsura Trees *Cercidiphyllum japonicum* colour well each autumn and the rare *Cercis chinensis* has reached 2.5 metres in a sheltered corner. The graft hybrid *+Crataegomespilus dardarii* has recovered well despite deer damage and bore fruit for the first time last year, and in a sheltered sunny spot *Emmenopterys henryi*, although once 'defoliated by late spring frost', has grown slowly to 2 metres. The Kentucky Coffee tree (*Gymnocladus dioica*) from the South East

United States is another of our successes; in spite of a slow start it is now 3 metres and growing strongly. We have had mixed fortunes with the Golden Rain Tree (*Koelreuteria paniculata*); several seed-raised young trees have produced their best results in good deep soil in a sheltered spot. A small late flowering tree is the unusual *Maackia amurensis* with its pale slate-blue flowers maturing in August; our specimen is a particular favourite of mine and is now 5 metres tall (planted 1987) with the vigorous *Prunus padus* 'Watereri' also showing excellent growth. The apical growths of *Platanus orientalis* and *Aesculus indica* have finally got beyond the reach of deer whilst recent plantings of *Sorbus commixta*, *S. hupehensis*, *S. mougeotii*, *S. prattii* and a grafted plant of *S. insignis* are all thriving.

Finally a mention of two 1985 plantings which I am particularly pleased with; Hemsley's Storax *Styrax hemsleyana* and the Snowdrop or Silverbell Tree *Halesia monticola* with a height and spread of 3 metres by 3 metres. Both flower freely each year.

The many new plantings at Sutton Place complement the mature specimens of the ancient Tudor estate and guarantee the future arboreal heritage of this Surrey landscape.

JOHN HUMPHRIS

Little Leckmelm Gardens and Arboretum

The 10 acre arboretum and walled gardens of Leckmelm stand three miles east of the fishing village of Ullapool on the west coast of Ross and Cromarty, and were developed by Mr C Pirie in the 1870's. He owned the property for some 45 years and during this time planted out many of the trees and shrubs which can be seen today in their maturity.

Mr Pirie was a prominent Aberdeen business man and he developed Leckmelm at around the same time as the famous gardens at Inverewe were commenced; however, there is no evidence of any strong connection between the two properties.

Between 1906 and 1930 the property was owned by a Mrs Fraser who planted many of the rhododendrons, azaleas and other shrubs, but from the 1930's the property slipped into half a century of neglect until Sir Charles and Lady Troughton of Little Leckmelm House (which they had owned for 20 years) were able to acquire the property in 1985. For many years they had gazed across the burn at the tangled wilderness of exotic trees and shrubs which grew in this secret "wild wood" of fairytale legend. Lady Troughton, whose family came from the area, had played in the garden as a child before the war.

With great sensitivity the Troughtons, with the assistance of Archie Gibson, set about the task of uncovering the exotic trees and shrubs. This involved the removal of 50 years of natural regeneration in order to reveal some truly huge specimen trees, some of which boast the title of the largest in the British Isles. *Abies amabilis*

thrives here at 40 metres x 77cm diam, whilst *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana* 'Wisselii' boasts 20 metres x 127 cm diam and *Thuja plicata* 'dolabrata' "measures in" at 26m x 40+33cm diam. Amongst numerous other fine specimens are a *Kalopanax pictum* (Prickly Castor-oil Tree) and a magnificent *Fagus sylvatica* 'Pendula' (Weeping Beech) which has a canopy of amazing circumference.

Add to the above a wealth of rhododendrons, azaleas and eucalyptus giving all year round interest with their varied bark textures and leaf shapes, and one has a garden for all seasons. The amount of clearing and new planting that has taken place since the Troughton family (on Sir Charles's death his son Mr P Troughton took over the property) took on the battle to reclaim Little Leckmelm Garden from its Arthur Rackham - like repose, is quite amazing and a credit to those concerned. Choice trees such as *Davidia involucrata*, and *Eucryphia glutinosa* delight the eye at every turn of the path; even the Monkey Puzzle trees have been known to self-sow in this lush and sheltered garden bounded as it is on its south western side by the warming maritime influences of Loch Broom, the shores of which are reached by a pathway meandering through arching shrubs down to the jetty where otters are sometimes seen. A nicer place to "tree watch" I cannot imagine.

Little Leckmelm Arboretum and Gardens are open to the public April to October - donations in the Honesty Box and a free car park (No Coaches).

VICTORIA SCHILLING

WHEN IS A TREE NOT A TREE ?

How often does one see a stupendous plant of mammoth proportions for its height or girth which comes into that shady category of "is it a tree? or is it a shrub". Alan Mitchell I know had his own criteria for this which was 15 feet on a single stem – however *Euonymus* were a "no no" as far as he was concerned and yet in my book are some of the most graceful and beautiful "trees" to be seen. Wherever possible I feel it is important to record these "Monsters" of the shrubbery for future references and I feel that the Tree Register would be very much the poorer if the many exceptionally fine small tree/large shrubs were deleted from our records. So herewith is just one of our more unusual champions: From the Channel Island of Jersey Ansell and Rollo Hawkins write:

"Our *Elaeagnus umbellata*, planted in shallow soil over shale around 25 years ago, has thrived in its frost pocket-cum-hot spot and now at 21ft is our birds', as well as one of our own, favourite Champion 'trees'.

Regularly laden, with the fruit remaining untouched for a long period, until suddenly shaking with exertion, it becomes host to 20 or more birds at a time, of six or so different species absolutely stuffing themselves.

With a trunk of 3ft in circumference at 2ft and with bark texture worthy of Arthur Rackham, it is a graceful trouble-free plant which gives us constant pleasure."



Elaeagnus umbellata
at Cap Verde House,
Jersey
Channel Islands



Castle Howard Arboretum Trust

Already well known to many tree enthusiasts, the new arboretum at Castle Howard seems destined to take a special place amongst the major woody plant collections of the British Isles. The vision of one man, its development has been remarkable. That this vast collection of authentic and well provenanced woody plants, with an emphasis on natural source material, was acquired and raised in less than 30 years, through the intense energy of James Russell (1920-1996), is impressive enough. But then combine this with Russell's great flair for garden design given free rein by his friend, the late George Howard, who encouraged these plantings on 150 acres of the romantic and historic grounds of Castle Howard, and you have a powerful consequence. The new emerging beauty of a breath-takingly extensive, beautifully landscaped, yet scientifically price-

less, living collection.

Ryedale in North Yorkshire might not seem the first choice of site for a new arboretum, but it has its advantages. Set on the elevated edge of the low Howardian Hills, it makes good use of gentle hollows and well conceived screen plantings. It is in two parts, Ray Wood, some 30 acres of woodland lying to the east of the house, on the north and east slopes of a sandstone ridge, and what is now the main arboretum, some 120 acres set well to the west of the house.

Ray Wood has been open to the public since 1989, although the first plantings were not made until 1968. Truckloads of plants from the demise of James Russell's family's nursery in Sunningdale sat, for some years, on the rides of Ray Wood waiting for their allotted sites. His Surrey nursery had a long history of producing

rare and garden-worthy plants. Originally founded in 1847 as Standish and Noble it successfully raised and hybridised many new rhododendrons, including those collected in Sikkim by Sir Joseph Hooker and, through Russell's association with the Nursery from 1939 as its nursery manager and, later, garden designer, it accumulated a wonderful range of plants. These historic specimens, including for example Hooker's *Rhododendron thomsonii* and a vast array of other great garden trees and shrubs, formed the nucleus of the Ray Wood plantings.

Though of ancient origin, and famous in the 18th century as an ornate woodland garden, Ray Wood had been neglected and clear felled – the present tree cover dating only from 1948. With the paths re-established and the plantings now well grown, it is once again a maze, but formed now by such a spectacular collection of plants, that it takes many visits to comprehend fully the range; of rhododendrons alone there are nearly 800 taxa.

Plants from all the great collectors are represented. Wilson, Kingdon-Ward and Forrest plants mix with the results of most of the British hardy woody plant collecting activities of the last twenty five years.

At the edge of Ray Wood, running eastwards, is a small grassed avenue of cherries and magnolias. Amongst these, whilst *P. sargentii* dominates, there are Wilson's *P. dielsiana* and the related *P. cyclamina*, Collingwood Ingram's hybrid *P. 'Umineko'* (*P. incisa* x *P. speciosa*) and *Prunus himalaica* – Schilling 1136 from 13000 ft. in the Langtang with, I noted, an attractive shaggy bark! Tony Schilling's Nepalese collections are well represented at Castle Howard and, as I write this in August, further down the slope is his *Sorbus khumbuensis* (McAllister ined.) Schilling 2341, with its plum red fruits in full array.

Along the ride that drops northwards Russell gathered together as many of the snake bark maples as he could find. They make a wonderful comparative study, the smaller, tailed, leaves of a form of *Acer laxiflorum* from the extreme west of Sichuan, compared to a longer petioled Omei form. *A. davidii* from the Cangshan (SBEC 466), and a tree with shorter green petioles, but excellent bark striation selected at Wageningen – and so on.

In the centre of the wood two species of the unusual spiny aciphyllas (curious New Zealand umbellifers) show the climatic advantages of the wood's shaded, frost-drained and humid aspect. Near them stands a very healthy (8m) *Fitzroya cupressoides* with its dark cascading growth and needles flecked above and below by two thin white lines, and two of the related, and rare, Tasmanian endemic, *Diselma archeri*, with its pendant-tipped, thin shoots.

Amongst the rhododendrons the presence of two young plants of *R. sinogrande* (SBEC 334) catch the eye. The plants came as seedlings from

Kew in 1983 and at c. 1.5 & 2.5m respectively, they can now boast leaves reaching towards half a metre. And though all the rhododendrons are breath-taking in flower, the healthy and beautiful foliage of many can enchant in any season. Some of the originals, like Kingdon-Ward's Manipur *R. macabeanum* now 5m high x 7m across, are splendid specimens, and I especially like *Rhododendron fulvum* 'Windlesham White' a selection by Harry White, of the Windlesham Nursery, with its felted buds and leaves cinnamon below and shining dark green above, and the glaucous green drifts of Forrest's *R. lepidostylum*.

Throughout the woodland Russell planted great drifts of ground cover which, despite the fierce competition of wintering pheasants, in quantity, give an almost magical effect. Magnolias grow well, and on the thinner soil to the south-east Russell established an interesting collection of species roses, but his gems are everywhere for just beyond the roses are some of his Mexican collections including two very unusual honeysuckles.

I always leave Ray Wood with reluctance, and doubtless future visitors will have the same problem with the arboretum, as it develops. Not yet open to the public, the arboretum expresses all of Russell's years of design experience. It is structured with broad vistas (up to 60 paces wide) and glades, moisture lovers have the low ground, sun lovers the dry, the site used to its maximum landscape and environmental effect, and yet again brimming with treasures. The total collection for both sites as recorded in 1993 was 6,649 accessions consisting of about 11,600 plants. Russell planted in quantity too, usually in drifts of dozens, or sometimes even two dozen, and this has had some excellent consequences. It has to be explained that Russell was a horticultural radical and with few resources available, a minimalist, tiny plants straight into grass or behind the plough (he could hardly wait for the harrow) a wire netting tube against rabbits and deer, no staking and an annual herbicide ring treatment to control competitive weeds. The plantings were only begun in earnest in 1975 and, with little initial shelter, it was survival of the fittest. Had only three or less plants of a rare accession been planted, then all might have been lost but, with large numbers, individual plants have prospered whilst other siblings have perished. Because also these are mostly seed raised natural source plants their scientific value is heightened, each being genetically different. And who would have expected the north-west Mexican, *Abies durangensis*, to grow here, and also the probably more tender southern Mexican *A. hickelii*, or to be able to walk through a healthy mixed stand of zelkovas and the endangered *Abies pinsapo*, on what was until recently a Yorkshire mead?

I invariably go first to Bracken Hill for this is where Russell planted many of the Guizhou plants that we collected together with Hans Fleigner (from Kew) in 1985. No one from the

West had collected and grown plants from the remote Fanjing Shan mountain in the north-east of this then closed Chinese Province, and so the success of the plants, many from quite low altitudes, is especially pleasing. I look for *Betula austro-sinensis*, *Sorbus keissleri* and *S. caloneura* and the rhododendrons from the peak of this mystic mountain. The young seedlings struggled at Kew but here they look better each year. The best of the *R. argyrophyllum* (GUILZ 120) are now some 3ft x 4ft. Sadly though, while Fanjing Shan met Russell's lifetime ambition, and he collected avidly, this steep mountain damaged his knees, and he was constrained from such extreme adventure thereafter.

The bottom land soil of the arboretum is good and so now is the growth of many of the early plantings. Spruce and birch grow well as do many of the silver firs. There are some spectacularly beautiful glaucous *Abies concolor* 'Violacea' now at 5 to 6m and slightly smaller but equally intriguing is the pale glaucous green *Abies concolor* 'Wattezii'. Of oaks there are more than 90 including a good *Q. glabrescens* from Mexico. Amongst the beech whilst an *F.*

grandifolia ('82 planting) remains (as might be expected) a bit bonsai'd at 2m, and *F. orientalis* ('87 planting) has its first fruit at 4m, the Japanese *F. crenata* ('79 planting) are now 10m. plus healthy trees.

Fortunately for the collection, the Howard family have come to appreciate its great value, and, with Kew, have formed a Trust to ensure its future. Resources are still scarce, but its two arborists (Neil Batty and Ken Cherry) and a part time records officer, (Mavis Jarvis) were all trained by Jim Russell, and its Trustees, chaired by Robin Compton, are keen to see it progress to its full potential.

Russell was not inhibited by those who might have said - "that it is not suitable for North Yorkshire", and the result still staggers me.

John Simmons, Hon. Curator, Castle Howard Arboretum.

Note: Ray Wood is open daily (10am.-4.30pm.) from March to October, and it is hoped to open part of the arboretum for Castle Howard's centenary in 1999. Guided tours can be arranged through the Administrator's Office, Castle Howard, York, YO6 7DA. (01653 648 444).

BALMORAL POLICIES

"At this latitude and altitude day length during the growing season is very long but the season itself is very short. Summers are for the most part cool, and autumn frosts early. The long days and cool, moist summers suit very well the conifers from the Pacific slopes of North America and, despite their growth being somewhat slower than it is in the longer seasons at lower altitudes, the four main species at Balmoral, Douglas Fir, Western Hemlock, Grand Fir and Noble Fir, evidently flower and fruit often and well. The amount of natural regeneration of these is remarkable and that of the last two is more prolific and thriving than is found anywhere else.

Entering by the main gates the visitor is immediately confronted by a Golden Nootka Cypress which is a very fine, shapely and scarce specimen. The Drive is an evergreen, coniferous feature, but far from a dull or uniform one. The silvery boles and good, varied blue-grey foliage of the Noble Firs and the soft, fresh green of the young Western Hemlocks against the dark green of Douglas Firs, give a restrained variation in a calm manner befitting the scale. The plain mown grass margins of varying width add greatly to the serenity of the prospect, especially with the sun on the Northern one and the other in shade. The Autumn colour of the few beeches and self-sown birches, shining out among the dark greens justify retaining the best of these specimens."

These are not my words. They are the late Alan Mitchell's, who knew our policies well. He might also have mentioned the wonderful smell of the Douglas Firs, the bright yellow of the prolific pollen in the puddles after Spring rain and the red squirrels (the Scottish ones with the pale tails, of course!) darting here and there. For those lucky enough to be here in winter the sight of the

curving drive with the snow lying on the spreading branches of the trees could be straight from a Christmas Card, and on a clear night with a full moon - I leave the rest to your imagination.

To the West of the Castle we have a small Pinetum planted mostly between 1929 and 1933 with a number of well-grown specimens, the more unusual of which include *Tsuga mertensiana*, *Abies concolor*, *A. lowiana*, *A. homolepis*, *Picea orientalis*, *Pinus cembra*, *P. tabulaeformis*, and an *Abies veitchii* which is a champion tree. Unfortunately we lost another champion tree, *A. nephrolepis*, about ten years ago. We have in the past few years added *Pinus banksiana*, *P. jeffreyi*, *Abies sachalinensis*, *A. lasiocarpa*, *A. lasiocarpa arizonica*, *A. koreana*, *A. forrestii*, *A. spectabilis*, *Picea orientalis*, and *Thuja koraiensis* which with varying degrees of success are, as they say in these parts, doin' awa'.

We have lost a few old friends such as the *Picea glauca* on the main drive which was planted by Queen Mary after the first World War and which was also a champion tree. It died very suddenly in 1993 and there was a clear fungus infection in the sapwood. Then in the last few years we have lost a number of *Pinus cembra*, one of which was probably a *P. koraiensis*, if you see what I mean! We also lost the enormous Red Fir, *Abies magnifica*, at the end of the drive next to the Castle and the large Noble Fir, *Abies procera*, at the entrance to the drive which you can see in the centre of the photograph on the first page of our current guide book. The large *Abies* show rapid crown deterioration and then start to die and have to be removed for safety reasons. They show all the signs of suffering from the drought of the last three years, bearing

in mind that they are growing on very freely draining river gravels. Sadly, we have to accept there will be more, gradually breaking the direct link with the vision of Prince Albert.

About a quarter of a million people visit Balmoral Estate every year and many of those that come when the Gardens and Policies are open in May, June and July will park in the public car and coach parks at Crathie and cross over the River Dee by the iron bridge designed by Brunel and built by Prince Albert in 1857. Then through the wrought iron entrance gates made by the local blacksmith in 1925, pausing only to buy a guide book in which are listed the names of the more easily found specimen trees, they can experience something which is undoubtedly Scottish – or is it Austrian, or perhaps Canadian – – – ?

However this is only a small part of the tree cover of Balmoral. Altogether we have about 3000 hectares of forests. To the south of the Castle there are marked walks through the Pine plantations of Craigowan, now starting to be thinned to encourage the future seed trees to develop good healthy crowns. These woods will be regenerated naturally and will become more irregular and diverse as time goes by. Westwards we travel through the Garmaddie Woods where

the shelterwood of ancient semi-natural pines can still be seen with young trees beneath and then on to the ancient Caledonian Pinewood of Ballochbuie which is the sixth largest and one of the finest remaining natural Pine Forests in Scotland. Queen Victoria purchased this area in 1878 to prevent the forest being felled and so preserve it for the future. Recently deer were excluded from over 300 hectares and now tree seedlings of pine, juniper and broadleaves can be found in profusion, if you are prepared to go on your hands and knees to look for them!

South of Ballater on the West side of the River Muick are our commercial forests which produce most of the timber income for the estate. These extend to about 900 hectares and form a very visible backdrop to the village with the Coyles of Muick and the peak of Lochnagar emerging above them. There is a good mixture of Scot Pine, Norway Spruce, Sitka Spruce, Larch, Douglas Fir and Lodgepole Pine. There are still remnants of birch and the proportion of native broadleaves is being increased when replanting the deliberately small scattered felling coupes. In time these woods will be converted to more "continuous cover" silvicultural systems.

JOHN DOBSON

THE GOODWOOD HURRICANE TABLE

The 1987 Hurricane caused massive devastation across the Southern Counties of the British Isles and many stately homes and beautiful gardens lost most of their specimen trees in just one night. Goodwood Estate in West Sussex was just one of the badly hit gardens losing not only many trees in the Park and Gardens themselves but extensive damage to 2,000 acres of prime woodland as well. Some of the rare specimens here were planted as long ago as 1731.

It was decided to turn disaster into good effect and to make a piece of furniture to commemorate the fine trees of Goodwood. The landscape at Goodwood was renowned for its early planting of Cedar of Lebanon, many planted by Peter Collinson in 1761, and they formed a magnificent feature in the parkland.

Titchmarsh and Goodwin the celebrated cabinet makers of Ipswich were commissioned to design and make a 'Hurricane Table' to a traditional 18th century style with Cedar of Lebanon as the dominant timber used.



After cutting the boards in April 1989, followed by careful air drying to 18% moisture content, they were further reduced to 10% in 90 hrs in a vacuum kiln. Veneers were



cut from seventeen species by Philip Cheshire in London. He steamed the logs for 48 hrs to prevent splitting in the warm air, then sliced them to 0.80mm thickness with a 10% moisture content.

The Table took a total of 235 man hours to complete and used a variety of rare woods including:

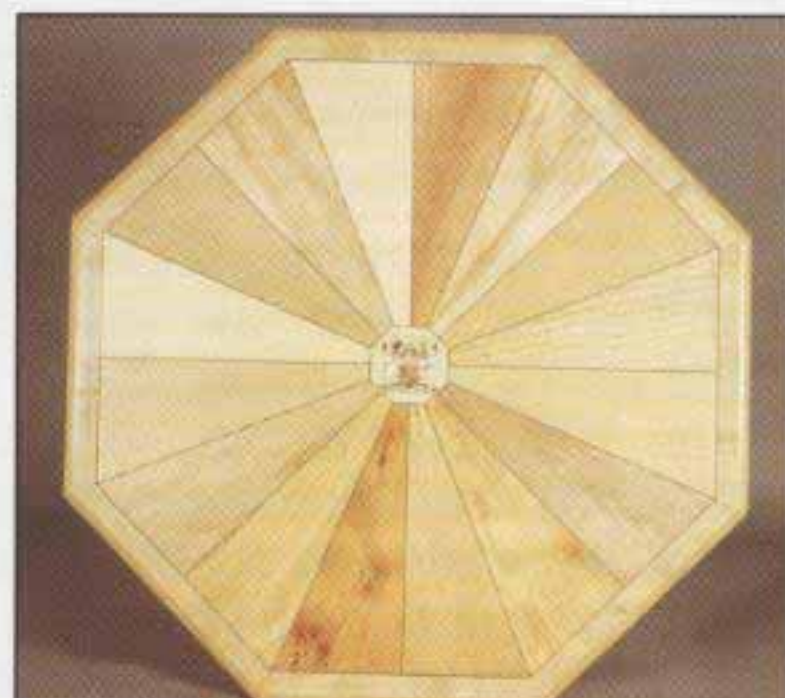
Yew, Wild Cherry, Acacia, Walnut, Beech, Foxglove Tree (Paulownia), Tulip Tree, Holm Oak, Hornbeam, Davidia, Oak, Sycamore, Lime, Sweet Chestnut, Zelkova, Cork Oak, Cedar, Ash, Holly, and Birch.

In all "The Table" contains woods from 20 different species of the trees (just some from the 250,000 trees that came down in the storm) from the Estate Park and Gardens.

It now resides proudly in the gracious surroundings of Goodwood House and is much admired by thousands of visitors – As they say, 'It's an ill wind that blows no one any good; after all, a thing of beauty is a joy for ever'.

My thanks go to Peter Goodwin of Titchmarsh and Goodwin for providing the information for the text and photographs which accompany this article.

VICTORIA SCHILLING



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