

U3A Gardening group March 2025 Report

In March our guest speaker was Eddie Harland who came along to tell us about the development of the garden at Littlethorpe Manor Gardens near Ripon. Eddie has been Head Gardener at Littlethorpe since 1998 so has an extensive knowledge of the garden.

The owners the Thackwray family purchased the house and gardens in 1985 and have overseen the development. The gardens consist of 11 acres, 4 acres of formal gardens and lawns around the house and 7 acres of parkland.

Back in 1998 the walled garden was empty except for weeds. Eddie drew up a plan for the walled garden and laid out a mock up so that the owners could envisage how the gardens would look. Local contractors were used and a bespoke arbour and screen partitions were commissioned. The four corners are planted to represent the four seasons and each has a bespoke statue.

In 2000 the sunken garden was created with a large pool and a White Rose of York Parterre. Sadly in 2013 the low box hedges were affected by blight and were all removed and destroyed.

In 2001 the pergola was installed and has a fine display of wisteria and clematis. In 2002 the largest project was started - the Fountain Pool and Terrace. A Georgian balustrade was created and steps down to the new levels. In subsequent years developments included the Holly Walk, Chimney Pot Garden and Cut Flower Garden. After this the parkland with a lime tree avenue, followed by the Winter Garden.

The Physic Garden was developed during the covid lockdown and laid out in what had been the tennis court with herb beds cut into the tarmac. The Thackwray family money had been made through the design and manufacture of specialist surgical instruments for a global market. The focal point of the physic garden is a statue of a hip joint designed by a member of the family.

This was a fascinating talk which was well received by our group. Littlethorpe Manor is a private garden open by invitation only, we may arrange a future coach trip in 2026 to see the garden.

On Friday 4th April we will have a talk from Sarah Hopps "The All Seasons Garden". Sarah Hopps is a regular speaker at the Harrogate Flower Show

We will continue to take bookings for the talks to ensure that we do not exceed the capacity of the hall. We will send out an email the week before the meeting and people can reply to this to book their place. For those not on email a text or phone call to Kate Keen on 07880 741151 will suffice.

On Friday 2nd May we will have a coach trip to Burnby Hall Gardens, Pocklington for the tulip festival.

Julie, Fran and Kate

Photo on next page.



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