Entrance Garden

by Judith B. Tankard

Gertrude Jekyll, the oft-quoted doyenne of all good things related to gardening, could have been writing about Garland Farm when she advised that entrance plantings should be “green and quiet in anticipation of a riot of bright blossom in the main garden on the sunny side of the house.” Now that the Terrace Garden has been restored to raves, the Beatrix Farrand Society has begun work on restoring the Entrance Garden. The front entrance is that all-important first impression that visitors have of Garland Farm, but in recent years Farrand’s sun-loving plantings have nearly disappeared due to shade and some of her delicate shade-loving woodland species have been nudged out due to aggressive groundcovers, such as English Ivy. Archival documentation and photographs of the Entrance Garden are not as detailed as those for the Terrace Garden and there are many gaps in information. Photographs from the early 1960s in the Diane Cousins Collection and by Mary Alice Roche show a well-manicured garden enclosed by a low fence, but without large trees and shrubs casting their shadows.

Farrand’s original intent for the Entrance Garden was to provide a soothing visual contrast with the vibrant perennial garden at the rear of the house. Balancing Eastern and Western sensibilities, the quiet and meditative front garden was filled with Asian plants with subtle contrasting foliage, with an informal stepping-stone path and a rustic stone bench brought from Reef Point. The Terrace Garden, by contrast, was an English-inspired formal parterre spilling over with lush perennials, climbers, and roses. In 2012, an overgrown Chamaecyparis, which dominated the Entrance Garden in recent years and did not appear in photographs from the 1960s, was removed and a plant inventory undertaken. More recently, the stepping-stone path, which had been overgrown for years, was fully uncovered. The Buxus hedge lining the entrance path has been regularly pruned, while the Laburnum x watereri (Waterer Laburnum), Viburnum carlesii (Korean Spice Viburnum), Kolkwitzia amabilis (Pink Beauty Bush), and Rhododendrons have been periodically pruned to remove dead wood and reduce their size. The champion Sargent Cherry (Prunus sargentii) has sustained damage over the years and been secured with wire.

It will take more than maintenance and pruning to fully restore this garden, but no replanting can take place until the roof, gutters, and front façade of the building have been rehabilitated. Donations are being sought to match a Belvedere Fund grant so that the necessary repairs can take place soon. Funding is also needed to repair the distinctive verge-board panel and fence that encloses the front garden and is similar to the one in the Terrace Garden. Please help us out with your donations.
Past Programs

By Michaeleen Ward

The 2013 Programs opened on June 3 with a well-received workshop on growing clematis, one of Beatrix Farrand’s favorite plants. The presentation by nursery-owners, Cindy and Brian Tibbetts, was followed by a lively question-and-answer session, indicating a keen interest in the subject. Hummingbird Nursery, which specializes in clematis, arrived at Garland Farm with a truckload of plants. They were quickly bought up by the audience and a raffle was held for plants donated by the nursery.

On July 8, Barbara Paul Robinson gave a delightful talk on her book, Rosemary Verey: The Life and Lessons of a Legendary Gardener (see review in this issue). People from around the world admired Rosemary Verey for her English Country Garden style, but few knew her beyond her books or were aware that her clients included Prince Charles and Elton John. Barbara charmed the audience with her candid comments about working with Rosemary at Barnsley House.

Lynn Karlin offered a specialized workshop on close-up photography on July 22. Lynn, who is a professional photographer, is co-author of Gardens Maine Style. Because of the limited number of participants, Lynn was able to offer one-on-one instruction in the Terrace Garden to an enthusiastic audience, both young and old.

Following the BFS Annual Meeting on August 3, landscape architect CeCe Haydock gave an enlightening talk on Edith Wharton and the villas of Rome. While a visiting scholar at the American Academy in Rome in 2007, CeCe explored Edith Wharton’s study of Roman villas in preparation for her book, Italian Villas and Their Gardens (1904).

New BFS Advisory Council member, Jill Weber, gave an informative talk on August 12 on the flora of Mount Desert Island then and now, comparing early botanical explorations of the Champlain Society in 1880 and onwards. Jill is co-author of The Plants of Acadia National Park. The final program of the season was held on September 16, when Wanda Garland gave an inspirational talk on native wildflowers, including their traditional uses for medicinal purposes as well as for making and dyeing fabrics. Wanda grew up on a farm in Maine, where she learned about plants, and later became a biology teacher. Her love of nature was infectious.

Other Events

There were a number of special events celebrating the tenth anniversary of the founding of the BFS. These include the July seminar “Preserving Beatrix Farrand’s Gardens” (see review in this issue) and a special anniversary party organized by Emily Fuchs and held at Garland Farm on July 4. On June 29, there was a grand opening at Garland Farm of this year’s exhibition on the Reef Point Gardens Herbarium. Thanks to a digitization project undertaken by the University of California at Berkeley with assistance from the BFS, curator Scott Koniecko mounted an exhibition consisting of a selection of these new images. The vouchers were prepared by Marion Ida Spaulding and Ken Beckett with plants collected at Reef Point (see BFSN Spring 2015). Additional vouchers will be on display next year.

In conjunction with the exhibition, there was a workshop on creating a garden herbarium on August 26. Marti Harmon introduced the history of herbaria and the tradition of botanical illustration, then Tom McIntyre (a former biology teacher) talked about plant presses and collecting practices. Participants had a chance to create some sample pages using dried plants.
Preserving Beatrix Farrand’s Gardens

“Allow the gardens to grow and change without losing Farrand’s original vision” – Gail Griffin

By all accounts, the BFS seminar “Preserving Beatrix Farrand’s Gardens” was an overwhelming success. More than 130 people from seventeen states gathered at the College of the Atlantic in Bar Harbor on Saturday, July 27, to hear presentations by pre-eminent speakers, enjoy lunch on the terrace, and attend an afternoon reception at Garland Farm. Bill Noble, Director of Preservation at the Garden Conservancy, opened the program with lessons learned at Greenwood Gardens, Hollister House, The Fells and other properties that were once private and are now managed by non-profit groups. Paula Deitz discussed the colloquium on Beatrix Farrand held at Dumbarton Oaks in May, 1980, and the effect that it had on her own career as a cultural critic. As she pointed out, the colloquium was a significant turning point in Farrand scholarship and brought about a wider appreciation of American gardens and their history.

After the introductory talks, Elizabeth (Betsy) Mills spoke about the Farm House in Bar Harbor. Over the years she researched the garden that was originally designed by Farrand for Mildred McCormick in the 1920s. With the advice of several experts, Betsy modified the plantings for modern living, but kept the original design and the Farrand-designed architectural features, such as gates and benches. Katherine (Kate) Kerin explained her approach as a landscape architect to the research and restoration of Bellefield, the Newbold garden in Hyde Park, New York. Working without any original plans (now lost) and scant information, Kate devised a plan for replanting the garden so that it matches archival pictures. Bellefield is now the home of the Beatrix Farrand Garden Association (BFGA) which maintains it. Melanie Anderson Bourbeau, curator of Hill-Stead Museum, in Farmington, Connecticut, provided a timeline for their small sunken garden. In 1985, as work was beginning on a garden restoration, the discovery of a garden plan by Beatrix Farrand changed their strategy. The garden was re-opened in 1988 and work continues.

After a leisurely break for lunch, when speakers and participants had an opportunity to exchange ideas, Carole Plenty, Executive Director, Land & Garden Preserve, gave the first afternoon talk. She explored the question as to whether a garden should remain virtually unchanged or continue to evolve, a dilemma that occurs in the management of the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Garden. She gave examples of design priorities, plant selection, and maintenance through several generations of the Rockefeller family. Gail Griffin, Director of Gardens at Dumbarton Oaks, talked about how to manage a garden that has been in existence for almost 100 years. She discussed change and regeneration, from day-to-day maintenance and restoration of earlier parts of the plan to the exploration of new possibilities (such as art installations) for creativity and expression. The final presentation was given jointly by Rebecca Trafton and Ann Aldrich of the Dumbarton Oaks Park Conservancy. Their illuminating discussion on Dumbarton Oaks Park covered the challenges of maintaining an extensive naturalistic garden, from eradication of invasive weeds to stormwater management issues.

At the end of the seminar, Bill Noble led a discussion with the speakers in which they elucidated the commonality and individuality among various organizations and properties. Since the words volunteers, fundraising, partnership and education kept coming up, it was decided that everyone needed to stay in touch with one another to share advice. The discussion continues. Speakers and participants adjourned to Garland Farm for a reception and a chance to learn about the restoration of the Terrace Garden from Carolyn Hol lenbeck.

Guests also had an opportunity to view current exhibitions as well as compare notes on the seminar.

On Sunday, July 28, the Garden Conservancy hosted a Bar Harbor Open Day featuring several Farrand gardens. In addition to Garland Farm, the Farm House and Kenarden were open. Despite the foggy and drizzly weather, hundreds of intrepid garden visitors unfurled their umbrellas and explored the three gardens. In addition, seminar participants were invited to private visits to the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Garden and Landfall, an enchanting woodland garden originally designed by Thomas Hall with more recent work by Patrick Chassé, Ken Miller, Dennis Bracale and others.

The seminar weekend could not have taken place without the help and generosity of many volunteers, including seminar coordinator, Betsy Hewlett, and webmistress, Shirley Becque; Betsy Mills, Howard Monroe, Victor Stanley, Carolyn and Dave Hollenbeck, and Scott Koniecko who kept our speakers and sponsors well fed, housed, and entertained. Peggy Bowditch, who provided her incomparable floral arrangements; Carol and Dick Habermann and Margot Woolley, who oversaw registration and lunch; Marti Harmon and Barbara Campbell, who coordinated the reception at Garland Farm; and Neil and Mimi Houghton, who generously opened Landfall to visitors. We also extend thanks to our co-sponsor, the Garden Conservancy, with additional support from the Beatrix Farrand Garden Association, Dumbarton Oaks Park Conservancy, Hill-Stead Museum, and the Land & Garden Preserve.

For additional photos, visit www.facebook.com/groups/beatrixfarrandsociety/
BFS Annual Meeting

The 10th Annual Meeting of the BFS took place at Garland Farm on Saturday, August 3, 2013. President Scott Koniecko thanked departing vice-presidents Carolyn Hollenbeck and Judith Tankard and announced the election of Dave Hollenbeck as the new vice-president. Dave is a graduate of Michigan State University with an MBA in marketing. He retired in 2012 after a career of more than 41 years at AT&T and is currently a year-round resident of Mount Desert, where he relocated in 2002 with his wife Carolyn and their two sons. It was, in fact, Carolyn’s work in leading the restoration of the Terrace Garden that kindled Dave’s interest in the BFS.

Scott also announced the appointment of new board members. Carol Habermann is a graduate of Randolph Macon Women’s College where she majored in French. Carol taught for many years before moving to England with her husband, Dick Habermann, where she started visiting gardens. Carol is an active member of the Sherborn Garden Club and a board member of the Mount Desert Festival of Chamber Music. The Habermanns have visited Mount Desert for 35 years and have lived in Northeast Harbor for nine years. They have four children and six grandchildren.

Moorhead (Mike) Kennedy is a graduate of Princeton University and Harvard Law School. He worked for the Department of State for many years and was held hostage in Iran from 1979-81. Upon his retirement from the Foreign Service, he has devoted his time to writing and lecturing. He is past chairman of the Northeast Harbor Library and past president of Acadia Senior College. He is a year-round resident of Mount Desert, where his family first came in 1877. He has four sons and eight grandchildren.

In addition to outgoing officers Carolyn Hollenbeck and Judith Tankard, the BFS Council of Advisors welcomes four new members. Carl Kelley recently retired as property manager at Thuya Gardens and now devotes his time to woodcarving and building ship models. He grew up in Southwest Harbor and now lives in his grandfather’s house in Northeast Harbor. Nancy MacKnight, a resident of Orono, Maine, recently retired from the University of Maine, where she was a faculty member and administrator for 28 years. She serves on the board of the University of Maine Press and teaches literature at Penobscot Valley Senior College and Downeast Senior College. Elizabeth (Betsy) Mills spends summers at The Farm House in Bar Harbor, where she restored the garden designed by Beatrix Farrand. She generously opens it for garden tours, most recently this summer for The Bar Harbor Garden Club and the Garden Conservancy. Jill Weber is a consulting biologist and ecologist who has worked in Maine for over twenty years. She holds degrees from the University of Northern Colorado and the University of Maine and is now a private consultant specializing in rare plant populations.

In the News

This year, Open Days at Garland Farm were held on Thursday and Saturday afternoons from July 4 to September 14. Thursdays proved to be very popular, according to BFS Open Days Coordinator, Anne Welles, because many visitors made a garden circuit including the Rockefeller Garden, Thuya Garden, and Asticou Azalea Garden. A display of books on Beatrix Farrand at Thuya Lodge piqued people’s interest in seeing Garland Farm, while more seasoned visitors were curious to see the cistern (formerly at Thuya) installed in the Terrace Garden. Anne had over 25 volunteers this summer who acted as docents, including Betsy Hewlett and Carl Kelley, who put in the most hours.

Docent tours led by Jim and Emily Fuchs were also very popular. Garland Farm welcomed approximately 180 people (both individuals and groups) on 25 personalized tours. Several garden clubs also held meetings at Garland Farm.

On April 18, Judith Tankard gave the annual Olmsted Lecture for the Maine Historical Society in Portland (co-sponsored by the BFS). Her talk on Beatrix Farrand drew an overflow audience, including several BFS members. Patrick Chassé gave a sold-out lecture on July 17 for the Land & Garden Preserve on Mount Desert gardens associated with Farrand: Asticou, Thuya, Rockefeller, Reef Point, and Garland Farm.

Peggy Bowditch’s article, “My Love Affair with Meconopsis,” was published in the Spring 2013 issue of the Rock Garden Quarterly (the national publication of the North American Rock Garden Society). Congratulations!
Gardens for a Beautiful America, 1895-1935 (Acanthus Press, 2012) is a large and unusually attractive book based on a collection of glass lantern slides held at the Library of Congress. Sam Waterters, an architectural historian, sifted through over a thousand hand-colored slides by the renowned photographer, Frances Benjamin Johnston (1864-1952), to present in this engaging book. Thanks to his diligence in identifying these slides, we can enjoy an incomparable record of American gardens in their heyday (and approximately the years in which Beatrix Farrand worked). Johnston began work as a photojournalist in the 1890s and later took up garden photography. One of her first assignments was the White House, where Farrand had designed the East Garden in 1913 for Mrs. Woodrow Wilson. The book, which includes 250 full-page photographs, is organized around five areas, from East Coast to West Coast, the South, the city, and the Old World (Italy, France, and England). Her images show extravagant estate gardens stretching from Newport and Long Island to California, and in most cases formality wins over informality from a photographic point of view. Maine is well represented with several images of Kenarden and Reef Point. The detailed notes for each picture are packed with interesting information. For any garden historian or armchair traveler, this is a must-have book.

Mariana Griswold Van Rensselaer: A Landscape Critic in the Gilded Age (University of Virginia Press, 2013) by Judith K. Major is a very readable account of the life and writings of America’s first female architecture and landscape critic. Van Rensselaer (1851-1934) lived in New York City not far from where Beatrix Farrand grew up and, like Farrand, traveled extensively in Europe and counted many artists and architects among her friends. She also traveled in the same circle as the Jones family, from Long Island to Tuxedo Park, and her elevated social status gave her access to homes and gardens of the upper classes. It goes without saying that her book, Art Out-of-Doors (1893), was essential reading for Beatrix as she was preparing for her career as a landscape gardener. Of even more importance are the hundreds of articles and shorter pieces that Van Rensselaer wrote for Sargent’s Garden and Forest between 1888 and 1897. She wrote 50 or more articles every year ranging in topics from the practical to aesthetics. A sampling includes “Artistic Aspects of Trees,” “The Garden of Levens Hall,” “Topiary Gardening in Japan,” “The Treatment of Road-sides,” and “How to Mask the Foundations of a Country House.” A copy of this book is available in the BFS Library as well as earlier book, Accents as Well as Broad Effects (1996), edited by David Gebhard, and Van Rensselaer’s own book, Art Out-of-Doors (all recent gifts).

One of the most enjoyable books for sheer reading pleasure is Barbara Paul Robinson’s Rosemary Verey: The Life Lessons of a Legendary Gardener (David R. Godine, 2012). Barbara was a featured speaker for the BFS on July 8, but in case you missed her illustrated talk, you will want to seek out a copy of this book. During a sabbatical year from a New York law firm, Barbara decided to work as a gardener for Rosemary Verey in England. In the 1980s and 1990s, Verey was one of England’s pre-eminent garden designers, whose clients included the Prince of Wales at Highgrove (which I visited in September!) and wealthy Americans. Most people remember Verey’s incomparable garden at Barnsley House and her displays at the Chelsea Flower Show. In some ways she was a disciple of Gertrude Jekyll because of her prowess with perennial borders, but she also was an excellent designer and a serious garden scholar (she gave her archives and books to the New York Botanical Garden, where she was a consultant). As Robinson points out in her book, Verey attracted many American friends and clients, and her lecture tours were legendary. Verey also had her dark side and problems, but you will have to read the book to find out the details.

**The Quotable Gardener**

“Make it gorgeous, and they will come; keep it that way, and they will help you.”

- Lynden B. Miller, Gardens Illustrated, August 2013
Who Was William Robinson?
By Judith B. Tankard

William Robinson (1838-1935) is a name familiar to most gardeners, but few will know the extent of his horticultural expertise and influence, especially on American gardeners. He lived a long and productive life, primarily at Gravetye Manor, a sprawling Elizabethan manor house in West Sussex (and now a country house hotel). Many books have been written about Robinson, most recently *The Wild Garden Expanded Edition* by Rick Darke (see Spring 2013 BFSN) and Richard Bisgrove’s *William Robinson: The Wild Gardener* (Frances Lincoln, 2008). Earlier books, while useful, are sometimes inaccurate since many details of Robinson’s life remain elusive. Robinson has been overshadowed by his well-known colleague, Gertrude Jekyll, who had the gift of writing that he lacked and a renown for garden design, which Robinson for the most part did not do. Even though they were both highly opinionated, they remained friends and correspondents for life. They first met in 1875, when she started writing articles for his publications; he attended her funeral in 1932. In between, they kept in touch about plants and gardens.

Robinson is often dubbed ‘Father of the English Flower Garden’ for his advocacy of hardy English plants. His best-known books are *The Wild Garden* (1870) and *The English Flower Garden* (1883), but he also wrote on various other topics, such as French gardens and parks, alpine plants, mushroom culture, and clematis (*The Virgin’s Bower*), among others. He was an influential editor of popular gardening magazines, including *The Garden*, *Gardener’s Chronicle*, *Gardening Illustrated*, and others, each with a different focus and market. In 1870 he traveled to America—from Boston to San Francisco—where he was fascinated by the range of plants as well as exquisite landscapes from coast to coast. Among his colleagues were the botanist Asa Gray and Charles Sprague Sargent, with whom he had a long correspondence. From 1885 on, when Robinson was actively developing the extensive grounds at Gravetye Manor, he exchanged plants with Frederick Law Olmsted, which he recorded in his book, *Gravetye Manor, or Twenty Years’ Work round an Old Manor House* (1911).

It may have been Sargent who arranged an introduction for Beatrix Farrand to visit Gravetye Manor in July 1895. Unfortunately she left no comments about the visit in her garden diary, nor did she write about her first visit to Munstead Wood the same year. She returned to Gravetye several times. In 1908 she photographed the garden and in February 1933, when Robinson inscribed a copy of the last edition of *The English Flower Garden*, Farrand later gave the book to Amy Garland, who then gave it to Charles Savage for the Thuya Garden Library. This book, plus copies of most of Robinson’s other books, are in the BFS library.
Plant Profile: Clematis

By Carolyn Hollenbeck

Early in April, evidence of the return of spring can be found in the Terrace Garden, not only with the blooming of early heaths, but by the swelling of buds on two *Clematis* ‘Jackmanii’. Other clematis in the garden—*C. viticella*, *C. montana*, *C. texensis*, and the herbaceous *C. integrifolia*—also show signs that a new season is beginning.

The name Clematis comes from the Greek (*klemata*), meaning vine branch or vine-like. Although early plant collectors brought back specimens of *C. viticella* to England from Spain (1569), little interest in the plants existed until the 19th century when large-flowered specimens were introduced from China and Japan. Many cultivars that were hybridized then remain popular today. Clematis varies greatly in form, color, and bloom season. Although mostly woody, deciduous climbers, a few are herbaceous. Flowers have 4 to 8 colorful sepals, but no true petals, which may be small, white flowers in panicles, bell- or urn-shaded, and flat or open. Fruits are ball-shaped or feathery. Leaves are opposite with 3 to 5 leaflets. Full sun and well-drained soil provide the best growing conditions.

Pruning clematis is a concern for many gardeners. Early-flowering clematis bloom on old wood and should be pruned after flowering. For large-flowering cultivars blooming on old or new wood, an annual grooming without severe pruning is recommended. Late large-flowering varieties bloom only on new wood and should be cut back in early spring to two strong sets of buds on each stem. Although Clematis Wilt remains an issue, the sight of clematis in a pot, winding through a tree, or growing up a trellis may provide enough inspiration for any gardener to include one or more in their own plant collection.
With recent gifts from Emily Fuchs, Hill-Stead Museum, Darwina Neal, and Judith Tankard, the library has grown to almost 2,800 volumes, not including journals and pamphlets. The shelves are full, but not overcrowded, so please consider donating books.

This summer’s seminar on Beatrix Farrand brought many distinguished visitors to the library, including several people from Dumbarton Oaks, Dumbarton Oaks Park Conservancy, and Hill-Stead Museum. A number of other visitors came for research purposes, including landscape architect Susannah Drake, principal of Dlandstudio in New York, who is writing about the campus landscapes of Beatrix Farrand. Elif Armbruster, Associate Professor of English at Suffolk University, sought information on the lives of the three Jones women: Edith Wharton, Mary Cadwalader Jones, and Beatrix Farrand. Beatrice Szekely, an historian from Ithaca, New York, and a distant relation to Max Farrand, is writing about Margaret K. (Daisy) Farrand. Daisy was the wife of Max Farrand’s brother, Livingston Farrand, who was president of Cornell University. She created extensive gardens on the grounds of Cornell’s official residence and was also a founder of the Ithaca Garden Club. Other visitors included BFS member: Darwina Neal, past president of the ASLA and a long-time employee of the National Park Service Capitol Region. Farrand scholar Diana Balmori visited Garland Farm as well as Lynden B. Miller, New York’s pre-eminent public garden designer, who was profiled by Paula Deitz in the August 2013 issue of Gardens Illustrated.

We recently received inquiries about our image collection, specifically about clothing for women working in gardens. How I wish we could have assisted this scholar, but our collection focuses on Garland Farm and Reef Point.

Betsy Barlow Rogers, founder of the Foundation for Landscape Studies and the Central Park Conservancy, is the editor of a delightful book, Writing the Garden (David R. Godine, 2011), that is essential reading for anyone interested in literature and gardens. Each chapter is filled with background details of names familiar to all of us, with evocative quotations and beautiful illustrations. Writings by Lynden Miller and Paula Deitz are included. To whet your appetite, Paula writes: “In the history of garden design, the influence of Reef Point Gardens as a personal expression of horticultural taste and design may be compared with such other pivotal gardens as Gertrude Jekyll’s Munstead Wood and William Robinson’s Gravetye Manor, both of which Farrand visited in England. . .”

Tom Hayward, a retired librarian at Bates College, was invaluable in volunteering in the library this summer and assisting in our shelf inventory. Next year the library will be looking for new volunteers to spend a few hours a week monitoring the collection and assisting visitors. Please contact Dave Hollenbeck (dave.hollenbeck@gmail.com) if you are interested.