

The Yorkshire Journal, Volume 1, 2018

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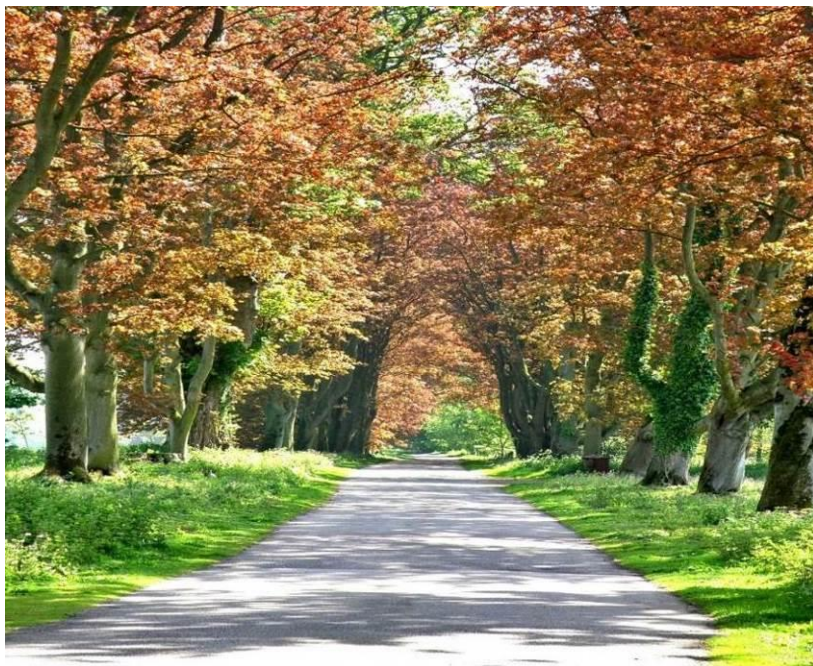
Wassand Hall and Gardens, East Yorkshire

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Wassand Hall is situated in beautiful tranquil surroundings between Seaton and Hornsea approximately 12 miles east of Beverley, 18 miles north of Hull in East Yorkshire.

A long drive under an avenue of Norway Maples (*Acer platanoides*) brings you to Wassand Hall. In the Winter their bare limbs stretch upward to make an arch like the inside of a cathedral. In the Spring new growth appears in a soft pinkish brown only to be replaced by a green shady canopy in the Summer and then after casting their leaves in the Autumn it is back to the bare branches.

These spectacular trees are the first treat for many on making a visit to this little gem hidden away near Hornsea in East Yorkshire.



The Hall, which has been in the same family for 400 plus years, was rebuilt in 1815 during the Regency period, the original house having been demolished around the same time. The last absolute owner was Lady Strickland-Constable who died in 1995. The present owner and Resident Trustee, Rupert Russell, is charged with upholding Lady Strickland-Constable's Will which states 'My estate at Wassand and the adjoining land shall be managed so as to protect and preserve the wild birds, animals and plants.' Whilst always having this in mind there has nevertheless, since 1995, been an ongoing programme of restoration and redevelopment of the grounds and the Walled Garden. This has been spearheaded by Mrs Catherine Russell, Rupert's wife, assisted by the Estate staff and more recently a group of volunteers.



Above: Wassand Hall with the statue of a 'Gladiator' by John Cheere date 1715 in the foreground.

The grounds have two walks, the Half-Mile walk and the Woodland Walk, the latter takes visitors through the recently extended arboretum. Wassand has a mix of indigenous and specimen trees such as Holm Oak (*Quercus ilex*), Bhutan Pine (*Pinus wallachiana*), English Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) and Giant Redwood (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*) In addition three other trees have been confirmed as Champion Trees of Yorkshire by the Woodland Trust.

Right: The Woodland Walk in early Summer.



They are a Purple leaved plum (*Prunus cerasifera* "Pissardii"), a Red Chestnut (*Aesculus x carnea*) and a Chinese Thuja (*Platycladus orientalis*). Many of the trees are very old probably dating to when the Hall was first built. The trees in the recently extended arboretum

are young and have been planted with Wassand's future in mind. They have all been selected with the theme of English trees of an International origin such as the Washington Hawthorn (*Crataegus phaenopyrum*), Antarctic Beech (*Nothofagus antarctica*) and Mongolian Lime (*Tilia mongolia*). A natural pond, originally part of Hornsea Mere millions of years ago, is now an integral part of a greater Wetland area. Here a Stumpery has been created and as well as the wild flowers in the area, ferns - wetland and woodland species - have been added creating habitats for wildlife and insects.

The Half-Mile walk stretches out into the Parkland ending up at the Hydrangea border. The border is a long stretch of mixed species of Hydrangeas such as *H. quercifolia*, *H. paniculata* and *H. arborescens*. This is edged with a broad band of *Geranium magnificum* to give some early colour. In addition this area holds a collection of *Buddleia* to encourage butterflies and a very new collection of *Species Paeonia*.



Left: The Hydrangea Border at the end of the Half Mile Walk.

At the front of the Hall are three beds, one circular and two crescents known as ‘the eyebrows’. The circular bed is planted formally with Yew (*Taxus baccata*), Box (*Buxus sempervirens*) and Cotton Lavender (*Santolina chamaecyparissus*).



Left: The front aspect of Wassand Hall.

The eyebrows are a nod to the renowned garden designer Piet Oudolf being planted with grasses - *Stipa tenuissima*, *Calamagrostis x acutiflora* Overdam - and a variety of perennials such as *Phlomis* (*Phlomis russelliana*), *Veronica* (*Veronicastrum virginicum*) and *Coneflower* (*Echinacea purpurea*) - these chosen to create a natural shift from the formal to the parkland.

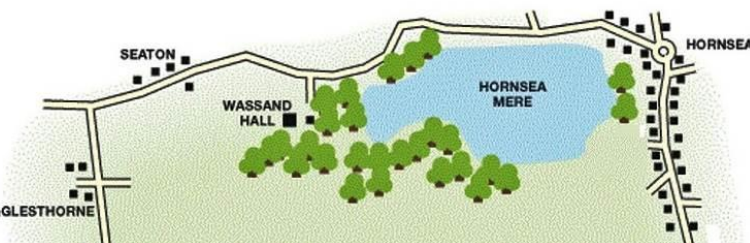


From the lawns on the Eastern side of the Hall you have extensive views of Hornsea Mere which is part of Wassand Estate.

Left: The Hall in relation to the Mere

Right: Hornsea Mere looking west from Wassand Hall.

Below: Map showing Wassand Hall and Hornsea Mere.



Just outside the entrance to the Walled Garden is a small Spring Woodland Garden planted with a variety of early flowers such as snowdrops (*Galanthus*), *Dicentra*, Hellebores and Primulas.

The Walled Garden has seen some serious changes during its existence. Initially, around 1700, it was, like most gardens of its type - for keeping the house supplied with fruit, vegetables and cut flowers. There were 14 gardeners employed to look after it along with the walks and the parkland. During the Second World War the family moved out only to find on their return that the garden was largely grassed over. It then became a paddock for animal grazing. In 1997 Mrs Russell embarked on a restoration project with the present design being drawn up by Charles Mitchell.



Left: The formal Parterre Section of the Walled Garden

Divided into 3 key areas, the garden comprises a formal parterre, an area for vegetable and soft fruit and an area for ornamentals. The formal area is a parterre planted up with grass (*Stipa tenuissima*) various shrubby salvias and Hostas such as H.Catherine and H. Anne. This area is partitioned off from the vegetable and soft fruit growing area by rows of espaliered crab apples (*Malus huphensis*) giving a profusion of flowers followed by scarlet fruits.



*Espaliered Crab Apples - (*Malus huphensis*).*

The vegetable and fruit patch are largely raised beds growing annual crops of Potatoes, Cabbage, Onions, Marrow, salad crops and various soft fruits. The ornamental section is rather like a Walled Garden within a Walled Garden in that it is completely partitioned off from the other two areas. Borders run either side of a pathway that circuits the garden. The inner border has pleached Limes (*Tilia cordata*) under-planted with highly scented old fashioned roses such as R. President de Seze, R. Ispahan and R. Madam Hardy, these are in turn are under-planted with such as Pineapple Lily (*Eucomis bicolor*), *Chiastophyllum oppositifolium*, *Geranium traversii* var *Elegans* and *Geranium psilostemon*. The outer borders are planted with more unusual plants. The white border has a large *Hydrangea arborescens* Annabelle and *Romneya coulterii* both of which draw gasps of admiration when in full bloom. The hot border has *Echium candicans*, *Tetrapanax papyrifer*, *Crambe cordifolia*, *Canna Tropicana* intermingled with a variety of bright annuals such as *Ricinus carmencita*, *Cosmos rubenza* and *Zinnias*. The opposite end of the garden, north facing, is much quieter with ferns and other shade lovers. Lastly in the Walled Garden is the west facing side which is primarily made up of yellow and blue flowering plants.



Left: The Ornamental Garden

The most recent additions to the garden have been the raised alpine beds which are at their best in the Spring and a Cactus House containing a selection of cacti and succulents.



Right: Raised Alpine Bed.

When you have visited the gardens and grounds you can then visit the Hall, rebuilt in 1815. The Estate was purchased circa 1520 by Dame Jane Constable and has remained in the Family till the present day, Rupert Russell being the great nephew of the late Lady Strickland-Constable. The Hall contains a fine collection of 18/19th Century paintings, English and Continental Silver, furniture and a fine collection of porcelain all set in very comfortable surroundings. Wassand is very much a family home and retains a very friendly atmosphere.



Left: The Drawing Room.

Right: The Hall from the balcony.

In 2016 Wassand was awarded a grant from The National Lottery, this enabled the development of the Wetland and Stumpery Area and also the extension of the Arboretum. In addition it has allowed for a Resource Centre to be created. The idea behind this is to enable the best use of the outdoor area at Wassand - mainly for school children throughout the area to have the opportunity to be involved in Environmental Educational Programmes. In addition it will be used by other groups such as for horticultural lectures.



Above: Gentiana Aucaulis.

Below: Romneya Coulteri.





Above: The Spring Woodland Garden



Narcissus Bulbocodium



Rosa Mundi



Above: Location map showing Wassand Hall and grounds at the west end of Hornsea Mere.

Below: Fountain in the walled garden.





Above: Corner View of Wassand Hall, Hornsea Mere can be seen on the right.

Below: Wassand Hall East Front.



Open Days & Events

If you would like to visit Wassand Hall and the gardens please see the website for details of opening times and further information at www.wassand.co.uk.

The photographs in this article were taken by Henrietta & Lester Barnes, Michael Jebson, Marc Webster, Rob Barnard and J Thomas.