

Lord of all it surveys

*Harewood House,
near Leeds,
West Yorkshire*

The host property of this year's CLA Game Fair makes the most of its dramatic setting and has remarkable gardens to be explored, finds Kathryn Bradley-Hole

Photographs by
Marianne Majerus

WHARFEDALE is one of the loveliest of Yorkshire's magnificent western Pennine valleys and, in its mid section between Leeds and Harrogate, lies the 5,000-acre Harewood estate.

Down near the lake at Harewood, vestiges of the footprint of old Gawthorpe Hall can clearly be seen: the last traces of a modest manor house first noted in records in 1260. The property passed through several hands in succeeding centuries, undergoing various alterations and additions; by 1738, it had been acquired by one Henry Lascelles, a wealthy trader whose income had flourished, like many at the time, from plantation investment in the West Indies, with all that that entailed, supplying the world's voracious new taste for sugar.

In 1753, Gawthorpe passed to one of his sons, Edwin Lascelles (1713-95), who later also inherited the plantation investments. As they continued to grow exponentially, the old-fashioned hall's

Orpheus and part of the long border, seen from the Victorian terrace





days were certainly numbered. Edwin looked to the rising ground north of the hall on which to build Harewood, his splendid new house commissioned to the fashionable architects John Carr and Robert Adam in 1759; concurrently, he engaged Capability Brown to lay out the grounds *à la mode*, taking advantage of the splendid topography of the dale.

View it now, from the terrace adjoining the house, and the vista laid out before you is vintage Brown. Grassy lagoons flow around a hillside archipelago of dark little woods and greater forests. There is water, of course, at the lowest point, for the demolished hall's old-fashioned fish pond and formal

Top: A new, replica bridge crosses the cascade that drains the Capability Brown lake. Above: The Harewood Stupa was built in 2004 under the supervision of Lama Sonam Chopel from Bhutan. It symbolises enlightenment



canal, fed by the Gawthorpe Beck draining the valley, were reworked into a splendid 32-acre lake of characteristically amoebic outline.

Turner's watercolours of Harewood in 1798 show a bare, grassy hill steeply rising right up to the south elevation of Lascelles's house, but that view had only some 40 years left in it. A later generation engaged Sir Charles Barry to create the ornate, balustraded terrace that we see today, gaily decorated by its elaborate *parterre de broderie* according to Victorian taste.

That the parterre itself has survived through many periods of change is quite surprising, for many of its contemporaries have not done so. During the

two World Wars of the 20th century, the numerous little beds margined with stone were turned into vegetable plots to help the war effort. By 1959, there was little enthusiasm to return to the patterns of yore and the beds were grassed over, except for the central section, which was routinely bedded-out. A grant-aided restoration was carried out in the early 1990s, reinstating the curlicues of dwarf box, their designs being retraced with the aid of photographs in the archive.

Stand anywhere on the terrace and you can't help but notice there is something else, too: a magnificent figure at the parterre's heart, which is quietly powerful enough to command

the terrace and all its fripperies: bronze *Orpheus*, by Astrid Zydower (1930–2005), installed in 1984. He stands reflected in a sheet of water and appears triumphantly the master of all he surveys. Installed by the present Lord Harewood's father, the 7th Earl, it celebrates his and his wife's involvement in music generally and Opera North in particular (the 7th Earl was its founder and vice chairman).

Orpheus permanently stares out at the lovely park, but his back is turned to one of the most charming features of the gardens in summer: a 300ft-long border, divided into five sections and planted in a romantic English-country-garden style, considerably

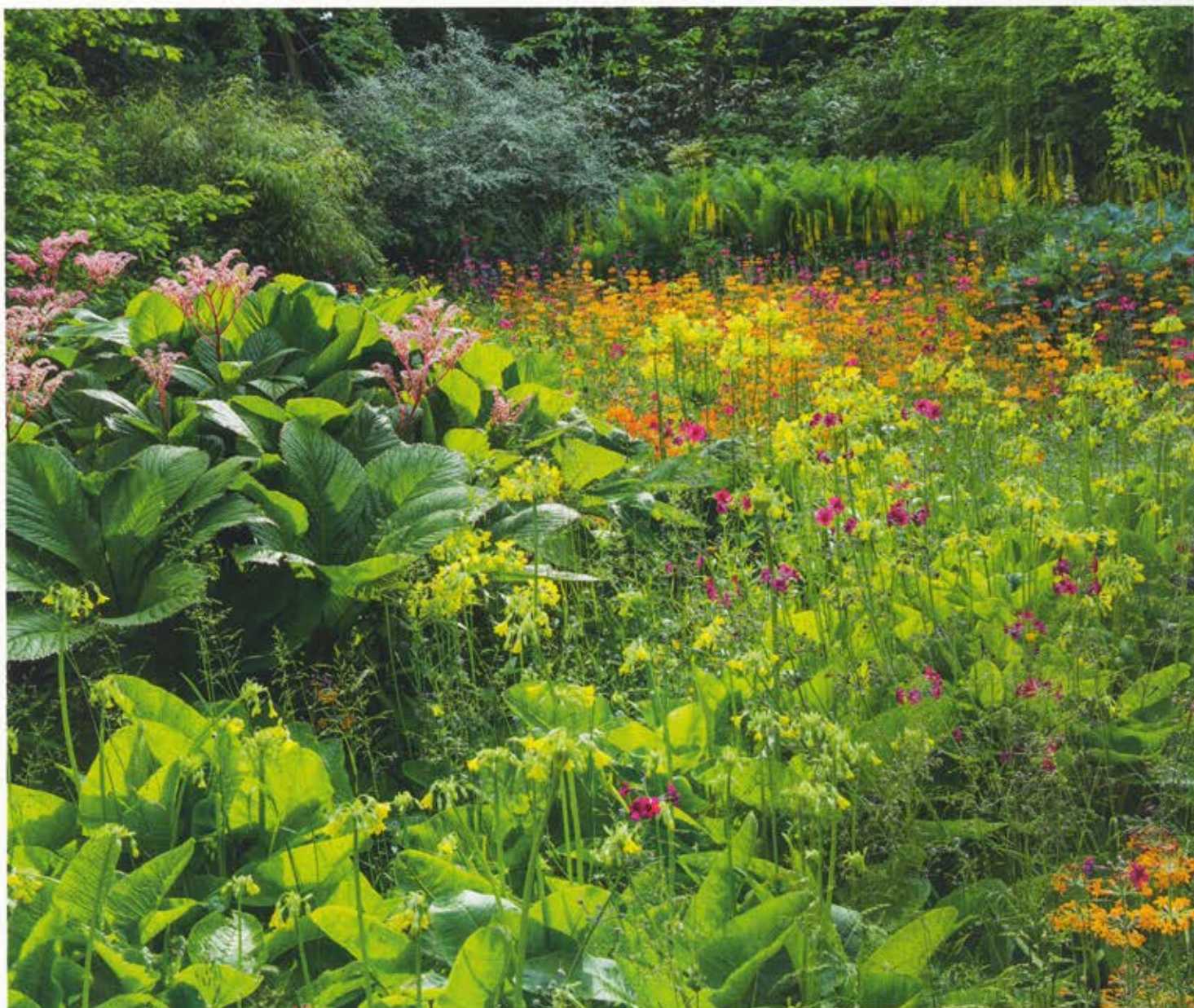
Orpheus is quietly powerful enough to command the terrace and all its fripperies

enhanced over the last dozen or so years. Its contents, which are repeated along its length, include various delphiniums, *Crambe cordifolia*, stachys, *sibirica* irises, burning bush, *Acanthus spinosus* and much else, with dahlias and cosmos carrying the blaze into autumn.

The central section of the Victorian parterre, showing the ornate box hedging. Orpheus gazes out at the park, where 'grassy lagoons flow around a hillside archipelago of dark little woods and greater forests'

The balustrade behind it is garlanded with good roses, including Madame Alfred Carrière and Blairii No.2, and their displays are followed by varieties of *Clematis viticella*.

Excellent lunches and teas are served on the terrace immediately behind this balustrade and it wouldn't be unreasonable to come to enjoy just the terrace and the views of Brown's landscape beyond it. But that would be to miss one of the most important and dynamic areas of the Harewood gardens, down in the woods below the lake. From the terrace's western end, walk down the sloping lawns of a mini arboretum begun in the 19th century to reach a lakeside path, with directions to the Himalayan Garden. ➤



Lord Harewood is very involved in this area, having a particular interest in Far Eastern flora. It was laid out as a rock garden in the 1930s by his grandmother, Princess Mary (the Princess Royal, daughter of George V) and her husband, the 6th Earl of Harewood. Inevitable neglect during the Second World War years saw it become overgrown and virtually abandoned for a while, until it began being planted with rhododendrons in the 1950s followed by national plant collections—of *Astilbe* and *Hosta*—established in the 1980s.

In the years concluding the 20th century and opening the 21st, the Himalayan Garden was created, reflecting the planting interests of both Lord Harewood and his head gardener, Trevor Nicholson. Between the two of them, trips to Bhutan, China and Nepal have established firm understanding of how plants from


‘The Himalayan Garden was laid out as a rock garden in the 1930s by Princess Mary’

those countries can best be grown here, in a variety of different habitats. The Himalayan Garden's winding walks, therefore, take you through a planted 'gorge', humid woodland, a subtropical glade with large-leaved rhododendrons, bamboos and bananas and a wet meadow full of Asiatic primulas, all to the accompaniment of birdsong and the sounds of rushing water.

For the connoisseur, it has numerous rarities and things that are tricky to grow unless you've mastered the

Part of the wet meadow known as The Glades, in the Himalayan Garden. It's primarily a primula meadow featuring Far Eastern species; as summer progresses, crimson *Primula pulverulenta* is succeeded by orange-flowered *P. bulleyana*, which, in turn, is followed by *P. florindae* (pale yellow), *P. poissonii* (pink) and deep-yellow *P. prolifera*

right balance of soil type and humidity, such as its bank of flourishing orchids, *Calanthe tricarinata*, from the mountains of south-west China.

Perhaps even more remarkable, however, is a structure chanced upon as you take leave of the Himalayan Garden at the far side. The Harewood Stupa is a religious monument commissioned by Lord Harewood, who has a particular interest in such things, and was built in 2004 by local stonemasons under the direction of Buddhist monks from Bhutan. From there, a short stroll uphill comes out at a wooden bridge set over the 18th-century cascade, giving an extensive view of Brown's lake and the fine trees that surround it.  Harewood House, Harewood, Leeds, West Yorkshire (0113-218 1010; www.harewood.org). The house, grounds and gardens are open this year until November 1