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Open Day

August 5, '07

Garland Farm will again be open to the general public for the Garden Conservancy's Open Garden Day, from 10 AM to 4 PM on Sunday, August 5th. Several private MDI gardens will also be open. Garland Farm hosts and helpers are needed.

Beatrix Farrand Society

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From Munstead Wood to the Maine Woods, or How the Jekyll Collection Came to Reef Point by Judith B. Tankard

The story of how Beatrix Farrand acquired Gertrude Jekyll's extensive collection of garden plans is still somewhat shrouded in mystery. As Farrand wrote to Mildred Bliss in May 1948, "Very few people have been told of the good fortune that has come to Reef Point. The story is rather a long one, but will be abbreviated for you. Some short time ago a list of duplicate books of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society was sent me and my eye was caught by the modest item: Gertrude Jekyll, A Collection of Plans, Working Drawings, and Accompanying Letters on Gardens Designed by Gertrude Jekyll. To cut a long story short, the papers which have been bought for Reef Point seem to be the entire output of Gertrude Jekyll's long and distinguished career." Unfortunately the long story is no longer known.

Farrand's lifelong interest in Gertrude Jekyll began with her visit to Munstead Wood in July 1895 on a trip to England with her mother, Mary Cadwalader Jones. The entry in Beatrix's garden notebook is brief—"Godalming trip. Jekyll Munstead Wood"—so it is unclear whether she met the famous gardener herself at that time. Munstead Wood, of course, was Jekyll's home in Surrey, located not far from the market town of Godalming. In 1895 Jekyll's reputation was based purely on her horticultural expertise and not on her famed garden design collaboration with the architect Edwin Lutyens, which began a few years later. Jekyll had been contributing horticultural notes to *The Garden* and other journals, but she had not yet produced the books that would bring her worldwide fame in the early 1900s. In 1895 Jekyll's house at Munstead Wood (designed by Lutyens in 1896) had not even been built and the gardens were only in the early stages of development. What Beatrix and her mother may have seen were acres of woodland gardens filled with plantations of Ghent hybrid azaleas, rhododendrons, and naturalistic groupings of native plants flanking paths that meandered through the woods.

These woodland gardens were inspired by William Robinson's *The Wild Garden* (1870), a book that rocked the horticultural world at a time when bedding-out was the norm. Not surprisingly, Beatrix called at Gravetye Manor, Robinson's home in Sussex, a few weeks after visiting Munstead Wood. Again, it is unclear whether she actually met Robinson on this visit, but she surely would have known about him through his association with Charles Sprague Sargent. On Farrand's final visit to Gravetye in February 1933, just two years before he died, Robinson presented her with an inscribed copy of his book, *The English Flower Garden* (now in the library at Thuya Garden).

In 1955, Farrand described the famous portrait of Jekyll, painted in 1921 when she was 76 years old: "The sensible hands and thoughtful face show this leader of gardeners in her old age when sight was failing, but not intelligence." It is a coincidence that Farrand herself was 76 years old when she acquired the Jekyll papers. At the time of her death in 1932, Gertrude Jekyll had attained legendary status as England's most famous gardener, but Munstead Wood itself had seen better days. The shrubberies had grown up around the house and the famous borders had all but disappeared. It was not until 1947 that Jekyll's former estate was broken up and her papers and collections were scattered. It is unlikely that she made any specific provisions for their safekeeping after her death, but her nephew Francis Jekyll used the material when preparing his affectionate memoir, *Gertrude Jekyll: A Memoir* (1934). In September 1940 he offered the collection to the Royal Horticultural Society's Red Cross Sale of botanical books, but for reasons that are unclear today, it was withdrawn from sale; presumably because he sold them privately. It was not until 1948 that the collection resurfaced cont. p. 2

Jekyll: from p. 1.

in Boston, where Farrand was able to acquire it for a "moderate sum." She noted that it consisted of 300 plans (more likely it was plans for 300 gardens), plant lists, photographs, and other records. It was the acquisition of a lifetime and the jewel in the crown for her landscape study center at Reef Point.

Over the next several years, the Jekyll papers were sorted and repaired, as many of the plans were on fragile tracing paper. Five thousand labels were made for the plans and by 1952 work was complete and several visitors had already seen them. Farrand noted that "any student of Gertrude Jekyll's work will be obliged to come to Reef Point for study." Sadly this was a short lived dream and in 1955, when she decided to disband Reef Point, Farrand made arrangements to donate the collection to the University of California at Berkeley, but not before offering it to Mildred Bliss. There it remained in storage until a graduate student rediscovered the treasure in 1974. Four years later the Jekyll expert Betty Massingham was invited to catalog the collection, and in 1989 I prepared a catalog of Jekyll's six photograph albums that were part of the Reef Point Collection, having been acquired in 1948 with funds provided by Agnes Milliken.

Farrand's incomparable gift to Berkeley of the Jekyll Collection, in addition to her own plans, a 2,700 volume library, and a herbarium, set a standard among landscape architects. Over the years many scholars have consulted the material, which has aided in the rehabilitation of both Farrand and Jekyll gardens. Today the library at Garland Farm has microfilms of the Jekyll plans and photograph albums as well as copies of plans for Farrand's commissions on Mount Desert Island. For further information about the Jekyll and Farrand collections, visit

www.ced.berkeley.edu/cedarchives.

This article was presented as an illustrated lecture by Judith Tankard at the August BFS 2006 Annual Meeting.



Save the Date: BFS Annual Meeting Saturday, August 4th, 2007

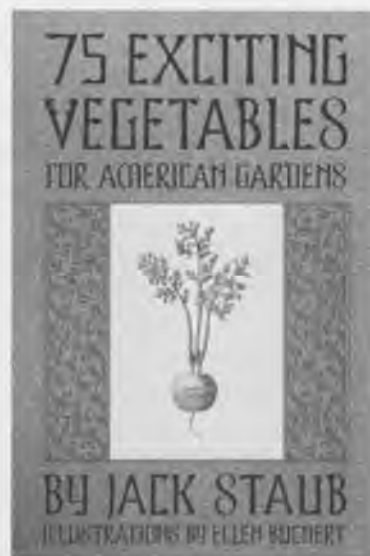
The third Annual Meeting of the Beatrix Farrand Society will be held Saturday, August 6, at 10 AM, at Garland Farm. Members and their guests are welcome.



Howard and Ham sell tickets...



On the "List" since '05.



Exciting Vegetables--All Year from our 2006 speaker Jack Staub

Restoration Progress

2004

- ✓ Electrical Rewiring
- ✓ Greenhouse Foundation
- ✓ Barn Door + interior
- ✓ Insulation of Cape & Addition
- ✓ Chimneys
- ✓ BFS Office Setup
- ✓ Field Parking Improvement
- ✓ Drainage Corrections

2005

- ✓ Critical Tree Support/Pruning
- ✓ Library Shelving Installation
- ✓ Front Garden Fence
- ✓ National Register Listing

2006

- ✓ Painting (original color)
- ✓ Cultural Landscape Report
- ✓ Reglazing
- ✓ Restoration Shrub Pruning
- ✓ Gallery Railings
- ✓ Field Nursery Preparation
- Critical Tree Work--Part II

2007

- Begin Garden Restoration
- Front Path Restoration
- Rear Garden Fence
- BF Bathroom Restoration
- Field Parking Grading
- Glass Porch Restoration

“Wish List”

Resources:

- Documents and photos of Beatrix Farrand designs
- Books with Beatrix Jones or Beatrix Farrand bookplates.
- Personal correspondence, furnishings, and objects from Mrs. Farrand.
- Reference books in art, architecture, horticulture, design, planning, and botany.

Equipment:(new /used)

- Carousel Projectors
- Digital Video Camera
- Fixed-bed Photocopier
- Large-screen Television
- Microfilm Reader
- Digital Camera ✓
- Bookshelves
- Flat Files
- File Cabinets (4-drawer)
- Copy Stand ✓
- Wooden Sawhorses
- Picnic Table ✓
- Greenhouse Oil Heater

Garden Tools:(new/used)

- Leaf Blower
- Crow bars
- Lifting Forks
- Pruning Shears ✓
- Chainsaw
- Wheelbarrow
- Snow Blower
- Lawn Mower

Write Now!

Contribute to the BFS Newsletter and aspire to a Pulitzer Prize. Contact the editor:


Editor@BeatrixFarrand.org

The library at Garland Farm is on its way to fulfilling Beatrix Farrand's goal of a resource center for the study of landscape gardening and design. We have already received donations of over 1,200 books as well as plans, microfilms, and other collections that reflect a broad spectrum of the cultural understanding about plants, ecology, and artistic expression.

From managing forests to properly wiring a pond fountain, from garden biographies to garden poetry, from travel logs to the rules of Feng Shui, from the architecture of the pyramids to a guidebook on mosses, from photomicrographs to Rembrandt's landscape drawings, from country walks to the alpine plants of China, and much more, the subjects are diverse and intellectually expansive. Of particular interest are some of the older books, such as H. Inigo Triggs' rare folio, *The Art of Garden Design in Italy* (1906), M. E. Bottomley's *The Design of Small Properties: A Book for the Home Owner in City and Country* (1926), and Henry B. Ellwanger's classic tome, *The Rose* (1901). One especially attractive book is H. H. Thomas's *The Ideal Garden* (1910), with its unusual embossed green cover showing a garden filled with summer flowers. The book includes sixteen color plates of watercolors, plus dozens of black-and-white illustrations. Dear to any gardener's heart is the title of the first chapter, "The Ogre of Dogmatism."

Two recently donated volumes originally came from the library of Mary Cadwalader Jones: *The Elizabethan Home: 2 Dialogues*, a limited-edition facsimile of two sixteenth-century works by Claudius Hollyband and Peter Erondell; and *Earlham*, the history of Percy Lubbock's country estate in England. Two other donations have original Beatrix Farrand bookplates: *Donatello*, by Lord Balcarres (1903), and *Gertrude Jekyll: A Memoir*, by Francis Jekyll (1934).

As the collection grows, we hope to keep in mind our policy. "The Beatrix Farrand Society exists to maintain and further the legacy of Beatrix Farrand and the history of landscape gardening and design. To this end the Society seeks to collect and replicate the Farrand library collection at Reef Point; to collect all available Farrand published material as well as any original documents, plans and maps; to collect published and unpublished material concerning Mrs. Farrand's life, family and her circle of friends; and to build and maintain a horticultural reference library in keeping with the broad scope of Mrs. Farrand's education." We welcome books to our collection, in particular books with original Farrand or Reef Point bookplates as well as any titles that were in Farrand's Reef Point Gardens collection.

Please contact us if you would like to donate any material to our library e-mail us at info@BeatrixFarrand.org, or write  BFS Library, Box 111, Mt. Desert, ME. 04660.

New Membership Forms (Reflecting updated member categories) are available for renewals and new members on the BFS website: www.BeatrixFarrand.org Bring a friend.

The Quotable Gardener....

"The size of a garden has very little to do with its merit. It is merely an accident relating to the circumstances of the owner." Gertrude Jekyll

Memorial Tribute to William Fenton (1912–2006),

Legal Counsel for the Beatrix Farrand Society

By Emily Fuchs

William Fenton was extremely gracious several years ago when my husband and I arrived at his Bar Harbor office one day without an appointment. We were looking for help in founding a not-for-profit organization to save Garland Farm and use it as a resource for landscape design education as envisioned by Beatrix Farrand. Since Mr. Fenton had been a friend and legal advisor to the Goff family when they lived at Garland Farm, he seemed the obvious choice. During our subsequent meetings and telephone calls, we always found him thoughtful, pleasant, and resourceful and as our relationship deepened, we came to admire his intellect, judgment, and humor as well as his detailed knowledge of the buildings and grounds at Garland Farm. Even after setting up the Beatrix Farrand Society for us, Mr. Fenton attended our annual meetings and generously shared his expertise.

William Fenton was a graduate of St. Mark's School in Southborough, Massachusetts, and received his undergraduate degree from Yale University in 1934. He subsequently earned a law degree from Yale as well as a degree from the Harvard Business School. After serving in the Pacific Theatre during World War II, he was awarded the Bronze Star and the French Croix de Guerre. After practicing law in New York City, Mr. Fenton moved to Bar Harbor in 1947, where he formed the firm of Smith and Fenton. When the firm was dissolved in 1964, he became a senior partner in several other law firms. He was committed to the Bar Harbor community, serving organizations such as the Bar Harbor Town Council, the Hancock County Red Cross, the Hancock County Bar Association, and the Kebo Valley Golf Club, among others. He was fluent in several languages and enjoyed traveling abroad until he was 91. William Fenton died on July 24, 2006.

(Abbreviated from the memorial tribute at the 2006 BFS Annual Meeting).

Beatrix Farrand Memorial Courtyard in Chicago

Nicole Williams, a BFS member from Chicago, reports that Farrand's courtyard garden for the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago has just been refurbished. The garden boasts four original crabapples and sweeps of Mount Hood daffodils bloom once again in the Baltic Ivy groundcover. This garden joins a small, but select group of projects that have been restored in recent years, including the Beatrix Farrand Garden at Bellefield, and Promisek, the Beatrix Farrand Garden at Three Rivers Farm. When the University of Chicago hired Farrand as a landscape consultant in October 1929, she had served for many years as a consultant at Princeton and Yale universities. Her charge in Chicago was to provide a general landscape plan for the Gothic-style campus, but some of her recommendations, such as the system of walks in the main quadrangle, had to be scaled back due to the Depression. In addition to the Oriental Institute garden, which was designed and built in 1931, Farrand provided recommendations for some of the residential halls at the university as well as other buildings. Her other claim to fame on the Chicago campus is the courtyard of International House, which is soon to be restored. For the latter, a full set of plans survive as well as sketches and period photographs of benches that Farrand designed for the campus.



For directions to the Oriental Institute, visit www.oi.uchicago.edu



2007



Dates-to-Save

May.....

• 23rd, 9 to 4

Spring Fix-it Day

June.....

• 16 or 23: Lecture

July.....

• 21st: Lecture

August.....

• 4th, 10 AM BFS

Annual Meeting

• 5th, 10 to 4

Open Garden Day
at Garland Farm and
more MDI Gardens

• 15th, 9 to 3

Summer Fix-it Day

• 25th: Lecture



An Autumn Assortment