Historic Cistern Returns to Garland Farm

By Judith B. Tankard

The Mount Desert Land and Garden Preserve recently presented the antique cistern at Thuya Garden to the Beatrix Farrand Society in exchange for a bureau that belonged to Joseph Curtis at Thuya Lodge. This historic cistern, presumably owned by one of Farrand’s Cadwalader ancestors, was once an integral part of the Terrace Garden. Shortly after Lewis Garland’s death in 1964, Amy Garland sold the cistern to Charles K. Savage, who did so much to promote Farrand’s legacy after the dissolution of Reef Point. This welcome gift represents the star-spangled finale to the restoration of the Terrace Garden. A dedication ceremony is planned for next year, but until then research continues on the provenance of the cistern.

Beatrix Farrand drew from many sources of inspiration in her garden designs. She loved English-inspired perennial borders as well as informal groups of native plants, expansive European formal parterres and small dooryard gardens, classically inspired wall enclosures and quaint wooden fences. She was equally broad-minded in her use of garden ornament, and Garland Farm provides the perfect example. In the Asian-style Entrance Garden she used informal stepping stones and a granite bench. In the Terrace Garden, with its luscious color-themed plantings, she incorporated an intriguing range of garden ornament: an Asian Bodhisattva statue, two concrete birdbaths, rustic millstones, and an antique English lead cistern.

In Farrand’s time, lead cisterns were commonly used in English country house gardens, but were less common in American gardens. As Gertrude Jekyll wrote in Garden Ornament (1927), “They are exceedingly decorative in themselves, with their solid patterns and, often, white patina.” Their original purpose in the 17th and early 18th centuries was to collect rain water, but thanks to Jekyll and other British designers, they found a place as decorative objects in many new gardens. Farrand, who may have picked up the idea from Jekyll, used antique cisterns at Dumbarton Oaks. Although the details are shadowy on when she acquired the one at Garland Farm and where it was displayed at Reef Point, Robert Patterson’s plans for the 1955 addition to Garland Farm provide a space for the cistern under the alcove window on Clementine’s side. On Farrand’s side the window is lower. The prominent position of the cistern in the Terrace Garden can be seen in photographs from the early 1960s, most famously Mary Alice Roche’s color photograph published in 1964.

Cistern in Terrace Garden, 1964
Mary Alice Roche
**Past Events**

*By Lois Stack*

On May 8, the BFS hosted **Dr. David Handley** as the first speaker of its 2012 program series. Dr. Handley, University of Maine’s Cooperative Extension’s small fruit and vegetable specialist, discussed “Raspberries and Blackberries in Maine” on May 8. Based on his years of field research and his own backyard fruit-growing experience, he covered everything a home gardener needs to know in order to be a successful bramble producer: cultivar selection, planting process, fertilizer and pruning practices, trellising options, and disease and insect management. Everyone learned something they could put to use for growing a great crop of berries.

**William Cullina**, Director of the Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens, spoke on June 9 about “Unraveling and Re-raveling the Web of Life.” He discussed plant species, their origin and movement around the world, and the decline and emergence of species. In his easy-going, yet scholarly presentation, Mr. Cullina talked about the complex relationships among organisms, habitats, climate and time. Based on his experience as a plant collector and propagator, he showed examples of geographical and temporal variety within species. Audience members gained critical background information for thinking about native, invasive, and evolving plants.

On July 2, nearly 50 people gathered to hear **Gordon Hayward**, whose book *Stone in the Garden* provided the basis of his presentation. Mr. Hayward thoroughly covered the topic of stone, from the geographical basis of the landscape, use as a surface material for paths and walkways, and the perfect foil to water and plants to the durable and surprisingly varied material of sculptures and artifacts. Along the way, he illustrated the principles of landscape design from the viewpoints of the designer, installer, and user. His presentation garnered such comments as “it was simply delightful” and “I have new eyes to see stone with.”

The BFS collaborated with the Mount Desert Land and Garden Preserve and the Northeast Harbor Library to host an evening with **Ann Rockefeller Roberts** on July 18. The long-awaited second edition of Mrs. Roberts’ book, *Mr. Rockefeller’s Roads*, was the subject of her sold-out presentation. She recounted anecdotes of her family and its connection to Acadia National Park. Her co-presenter, Ed Winterberg, wrote a new chapter for the book about the renovation of the carriage roads, which he witnessed during his years as manager of the Park’s riding stables.

In conjunction with the BFS Annual Meeting on August 4, **Judith B. Tankard** spoke about her recent book, *Gertrude Jekyll and the Country House Garden*. An audience of enthusiastic BFS supporters filled the barn to hear about Jekyll’s partnership with the architect Edwin Lutyens. Based on images from the English magazine *Country Life*, Judith’s talk emphasized the importance of this partnership, which continues to influence gardeners today.

On August 15, **Jane Roy Brown** gave our summer lecture series an entertaining and educational ending. In her presentation based on her recent book, *One Writer’s Garden: Eudora Welty’s Home Place*, Brown told the story of the Pulitzer-prize-winning author’s life and read from some of her writings. Jane’s slides made us feel we were in Eudora’s Jackson, Mississippi, garden. There was a lively discussion and brisk book sales after her lecture.

Beatrix Farrand would have enjoyed **Jenny Rose Carey**’s slide lecture on “Gardens of the Jazz Age” on July 26. Ms. Carey, Director of Temple University’s Ambler Arboretum, used contemporary photographs as well as hand-colored glass lantern slides from the 1920s and 1930s to illustrate her presentation about American Gardens during the years between the two world wars. That era, when Farrand was at the height of her fame, was known for its prosperity, wealth of new ideas gained from overseas travel, and inexpensive labor, all of which combined to produced fantastic gardens, many now lost to time.

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The 9th Annual Meeting of the BFS took place at Garland Farm on August 4, 2012. Michaeleen Ward was elected to the BFS Board of Directors. She is the current president of the Bar Harbor Garden Club and past director of the St. Croix Garden Club District. Two departing board members, Richard Crawford and Arthur Keller, agreed to join the BFS advisory board. Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr., of the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, also agreed to join the advisory board. Earle, who participated in the Robert Patterson Symposium in 2011, wrote a profile of Patterson in the Spring 2011 BFSN. BFS president Scott Koniecko announced that several improvements had been made to the facilities this year, including barn ventilation, a new stone base for the Bodhisattva statue, two custom-built interior exhibition display boxes and panels as well as an outdoor information-donation box, plus a bench and two wooden chairs for the Wild Garden.

The BFS thanks John Collier and his construction company, A. B. & J. R. Hodgkins of Bar Harbor, for the generous donation of his time and materials for the barn ventilation and building the display units. The BFS also acknowledges Jefferson Grant Dobbs of Dobbs Productions for his photographs of the BFS Birthday and Exhibition Opening on July 5, and also providing aerial views of Garland Farm.

Garland Farm in the News

A record number of articles this year have spotlighted Garland Farm and one of the most impressive was Earl Brechlin’s full-page spread on the Satterlee exhibition in The Islander. An AP wire-service travel article on Maine Gardens was picked up by newspapers nationwide, including the San Francisco Chronicle, Washington Post, Atlanta Journal Constitution, Kansas City Star, Hawaii Herald Tribune, The Huffington Post, and many others. Both articles are posted on our website. Be sure to look for an upcoming article in Garden Design about several important Farrand gardens, including Garland Farm. In addition, Garland Farm was illustrated in Elle Décor (July/August 2012) and www.vogue.com used a picture from our archives. The BFS also supplied a picture of Beatrix Farrand for the new edition of Ann Rockefeller Roberts’ book, Mr. Rockefeller’s Roads.

The BFS has just learned that Garland Farm will be included in “Landslide 2012: Landscape and Patronage” sponsored by The Cultural Landscape Foundation. The winners will be announced in New York City on October 4. TCLF’s “What’s Out There” online database of Maine designed landscapes features five projects by Beatrix Farrand, including Garland Farm. For more information, visit www.tclf.org.

BFS board member Diane Kostial McGuire received an Honorary Doctorate of Landscape Architecture from the Boston Architectural College in May. Diane, who has had a distinguished career as a landscape architect, was instrumental in founding the Radcliffe Seminars Landscape Design Program in 1965. This program encouraged women to become career-oriented professionals and under her leadership it endowed landscape design education with the vital liberal arts component. The Radcliffe Seminars Program is now part of Boston Architectural College where courses in design and history are still meaningful. Congratulations to Dr. McGuire!

Congratulations also to landscape architect Sam Coplon FASLA who was elected to the Council of Fellows of the ASLA. He is also the author of “Designing Acadia,” published in Friends of Acadia Journal (Summer 2012).

Gerald Vasisko was curator of “Architectural Drawings and Early Sketches of Fred L. Savage,” an exhibition on view this summer at the Mount Desert Island Historical Society’s Old School House and Museum.

On June 2, 2012, the Beatrix Farrand Garden Association celebrated the centennial of Bellefield, the garden designed by Beatrix Jones for the Thomas Newbold family in 1912. Today Bellefield is part of the FDR National Historic Site in Hyde Park, New York. Scott Koniecko and BFGA Advisory Board Member Judith Tankard were on hand to join the celebration. Their donation of a complimentary membership in the BFS, including a personalized guided tour of Garland Farm and an inscribed copy of Beatrix Farrand: Private Gardens, Public Landscapes, went to high bidder, Cali Cole, for $500.

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www.beatrixfarrandsociety.org
Birthday Celebration and Exhibition Opening

July 5, 2012, was a banner day for the BFS. Not only was it a regularly scheduled Open Day, but it was also the annual Beatrix Farrand Birthday Celebration and the opening of this year’s exhibition, “The Satterlee Garden at Great Head.” The heart of the exhibition is a painting of the garden donated to the BFS by Mrs. V. Leona Salisbury earlier this year (BFSN Spring 2012). Research for the exhibition unearthed new information about the once-grand property on Great Head. Sandra van Heerden, a granddaughter of Herbert and Louisa Morgan Satterlee, generously allowed Scott Koniecko to include photographs of the estate from a family album. The big surprise revealed in the album was that the garden was begun in 1917, not 1921 as formerly thought. The exhibition also included a selection of planting plans and sketches from the Environmental Design Archives at the University of California, Berkeley, as well as hand-colored lantern slide images from the Smithsonian Institution Collection. Although the gardens were partially destroyed in the 1947 fire, the property was gifted to Acadia National Park by the Satterlee family in 1949. It is now an essential part of the legacy of Mount Desert Island.

Open Days and Docent Tours

Open Days at Garland Farm, which ran from Thursday, June 21, until September 13, was by all accounts an overwhelming success, enjoyed by visitors and volunteers alike. Approximately 50 to 130 visitors came weekly, some from as far away as Romania and Hungary and as close as the neighbor next door. In between there were scores of Farrand devotees, garden lovers, landscape architects, history buffs, students, artists, tourists, and park visitors, and all seemed pleased to learn about Beatrix Farrand and Garland Farm. A small ad placed in the “Out and About” section of The Mount Desert Islander brought waves of first-time visitors who were enchanted by the garden and captivated by the current exhibition on the Satterlee garden.

We were fortunate to have special and knowledgeable regular volunteers available on Thursday afternoons. These included Marti Harmon, Carolyn Hollenbeck, Arthur Keller, Val Libby, Howard Monroe, and coordinator, Brenda Les. As George Shakespeare of the Garden Conservancy commented, “We were extremely impressed by the wonderful and knowledgeable docents, by the ambitious renovations of both house and garden, and by the emergence of Garland Farm as a horticultural learning center in the spirit of Beatrix Farrand herself.”

In addition to a flurry of visitors on Open Days, docent tours have been very popular this summer. Visitors came from as far away as Australia and Quebec and as near as Surry, Maine. The prestigious Horticultural Alliance of the Hamptons visited on July 18 with a group of 25 people. Despite the record heat on the day of their visit, all seemed happy to learn about Beatrix Farrand and her many interests. Emily and Jim Fuchs were on hand to give an orientation program on Farrand’s life and career to all groups. One visitor commented, “a thorough, delightful presentation, even about her dog.”
Fall Reading

By Judith B. Tankard

Ann Rockefeller Roberts’ seminal book, Mr. Rockefeller’s Roads: The Story Behind Acadia’s Carriage Roads has long been out of print and difficult to find. It was recently reissued by Down East (2012) in a revised and expanded edition with new color photographs by Mary Louise Pierson and a chapter on restoring the carriage roads by Ed Winterberg. In the words of John D. Rockefeller Jr., “The carriage roads were built so that more ordinary people would be able to experience the beauty and majesty of Acadia as a part of remembering their essential, fundamental relationship to the natural world.” His son, David Rockefeller (who still enjoys carriage driving), recently recalled: “The carriage roads are so beautiful and the park is so lovely, I think it is a pleasure to see others who come to the island . . . have a chance to enjoy the landscape in the park, because these roads open it up to them, as he intended.”

The book tells the story of the background, inspirations, conception, and eventual building of the carriage roads. Like any major undertaking, it was fraught by problems, but when finished it was a glorious achievement. Whatever project JDR Jr. had in mind, he always sought out the best consultants, and Beatrix Farrand was tapped for advice on the roadside plantings. In a note to her in 1931, he exclaimed, “You cannot know what a relief it is to me to have you giving attention to these matters.” Farrand and JDR Jr. were often seen riding together through the park discussing ideas. A new chapter on restoring the roads tells of the ups and downs latter-day administration and condition issues, and the eventual restoration. This book is highly recommended for everyone who loves and admires Acadia National Park.

Pulitzer-prize-winning author Edith Wharton has been much in the news this year since it is the 150th anniversary of her birth. A number of books and exhibitions have helped celebrate the occasion and one of the best new books is Edith Wharton at Home: Life at The Mount (Monacelli Press, 2012) by Richard Guy Wilson and John Arthur. It was at The Mount that Wharton wrote some of her best-known novels, including The House of Mirth. Built in 1902, the house represents many of the ideas Wharton expressed five years earlier in The Decoration of Houses. Like Garland Farm, The Mount reveals the personality of its owner. Wharton and Farrand lived only briefly in their respective houses — Wharton during the blossoming of her career and Farrand at the end of her life — but their sensibilities about architecture, furnishings, and gardens couldn’t have been more different. Wilson’s descriptive narrative leads us through Wharton’s life, loves, and passions while John Arthur’s specially commissioned photographs poetically capture the house (both inside and out) as well as the famous grounds. Of special interest is the development of the grounds and gardens for which Wharton’s niece Beatrix Jones lent a hand between 1901 and 1902. This is mainly a picture book, but one to be enjoyed. For more information on The Mount, visit www.edithwharton.org.

For plant lovers, Carolyn Hollenbeck highly recommends The Kew Plant Glossary: An Illustrated Dictionary of Plant Identification Terms (Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, 2010) by Henk J. Beentie. It is an accessible, comprehensive glossary that covers a range of descriptive terms for plants that one is likely to encounter in botanical writing and research. It includes 3,600 botanical terms accompanied by easy-to-understand definitions and detailed information to help with identification. As Dominique Browning wrote in her New York Times review, the book is “catnip for the garden geek . . . [a] fascinating, authoritative volume [that] may seduce even the most casual browser into rolling around in Malpighian hairs, mamillated forms, petioloid tendencies, and xeric habitats.” Now if that’s not interesting, what is?

The Quotable Gardener

“If you have a garden and a library, you have everything you need.”
- Marcus Tullius Cicero
Charles Kenneth Savage (1903-1979) was an innkeeper, amateur woodcarver, and preservationist, but he is best known as the landscape designer associated with Asticou Azalea Garden and Thuya Garden in Northeast Harbor. A fervent supporter of Beatrix Farrand, he served as a director of Reef Point Gardens Corporation for many years and was instrumental in relocating her renowned plant collection when she discontinued Reef Point and made plans to move to Garland Farm in 1955.

The Savage family ran the popular Asticou Inn in Northeast Harbor, but when his father died unexpectedly in 1922, Charles abandoned his plans for studying architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and returned to Maine to help manage the inn. He became deeply involved with preservation issues on Mount Desert Island and in particular Northeast Harbor. When he first learned of Farrand's plans to dismantle Reef Point, he said in a later interview that he was “horrified” and asked her to reconsider, but to no avail. After Robert Patterson subsequently bought Reef Point, he gave Savage the opportunity to buy Farrand's plant collection that might otherwise have been destroyed. With financial assistance from John D. Rockefeller, Jr. and other summer residents, Savage obtained the plants and began looking into several possible sites for them.

Savage had long been involved with Thuya Lodge, summer resident Joseph Henry Curtis’s rustic cottage on Asticou Hill. Curtis had also designed Asticou Terraces, a steep walkway with granite steps leading from the boat landing in the harbor up to the cottage. When Curtis died in 1928, Savage became a trustee of the Asticou Terraces Trust and looked after the grounds. In 1956 he transformed Curtis’s hillside orchard and fields into an English-style garden with perennial borders and an informal woodland garden featuring specimen trees. Many of Farrand’s choice plants found a new home at Thuya, among them a magnificent dawn redwood (Metasequoia glyptostroboides) originally from the Arnold Arboretum. The garden also includes some of Farrand’s garden ornament from Reef Point, including several Soderholtz vessels and lead basins. Around the same time Savage began collecting horticultural books for a research library known as Thuya Library to which Farrand donated several volumes. Savage retired from his responsibilities at Thuya in 1962 and a number of years later, Patrick Chassé ASLA revitalized the languishing borders.

Many of Farrand’s plants, including an outstanding collection of azaleas, still needed a new home, so Savage designed Asticou Azalea Garden in the swampy land across from the Asticou Inn. This delightful two-acre Japanese-style stroll garden has meandering paths, ponds, and a mixture of azaleas, rhododendrons, conifers, and other hardy native plants. This garden was also revitalized in recent years by Patrick Chassé. In 1966 Savage donated the garden to the town of Mount Desert and it is open to the public as is Thuya Garden and Lodge. Today Thuya Garden, Asticou Azalea Garden, and Asticou Terraces are owned and managed by the Mount Desert Land and Garden Preserve. Charles Savage died in 1979 and is buried in Forest Hill Cemetery. The Northeast Harbor Library has oral histories, memorabilia, and drawings of plants by Savage in their archives. For more information on Savage and these gardens, consult Letitia S. Baldwin’s books, Asticou Azalea Garden and Asticou Terraces e3 Thuya Lodge, published by the Preserve in 2008.

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The Beatrix Farrand Society

Annual Membership Dues

- New Membership          $ 35
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Plant Profile: Lavandula angustifolia

By Carolyn Hollenbeck

In her design for the Terrace Garden, Beatrix Farrand edged the two center heather beds with Lavandula angustifolia. This ensured the visibility of these attractive plants from both the Farrand and Walter suites as well as from their study. L. angustifolia (previously classified as Lavandula officinalis) was the perfect choice for a Maine garden as it is the hardiest of the lavender species.

Native to the Mediterranean, Lavandula has been used since Greek and Roman times for cleansing, fragrances, and medicinal purposes. Although not native to England, monks documented its presence in monastery gardens during the Middle Ages. Called “true lavender,” the genus Lavandula belongs to the Lamiaceae family along with mint, thyme, and sage. Herbaceous to semi-woody, and maturing to 18 inches in height and width, it is often classified as a sub-shrub. Lanciolate to linear leaves are opposite to whirled. Tiny hairs covering new foliage give a gray-green color in summer, but the color changes to gray as leaves mature. Depending on the cultivar, flower spikes range from bluish purple to pinkish white.

L. angustifolia can be grown successfully in zones 5 to 7. They should be planted in full sun in well-drained light soil (pH 6.0 to 8.0). Shape small plants by pinching back the foliage, then prune older lavenders annually after flowering. Provide new plants with adequate moisture, but avoid overhead sprinklers that may cause the older shrubs to split open in the center. Be sure to test the soil before adding fertilizers. As lavenders do not come true from seed, propagate lavandula angustifolia by semi-hardwood cuttings in spring or fall. In cold climates, transplant in early spring. Note that late frosts can cause browning of stems and leaves, but plants should recover by early summer.

The Wild Garden at Garland Farm

By Peggy Bowditch

The Wild Garden at Garland Farm, located near the entrance to the parking area and under the shade of the Black Locust tree, is currently being documented and researched by members of the Landscape and Garden Committee. Even though The Cultural Landscape Report did not document this area, Kenneth Beckett’s articles in the Reef Point Bulletins on native Maine woodland plants at Reef Point have proved useful. It remains unclear whether the plantings were done by Beatrix Farrand or Amy Garland, Farrand’s longtime horticulturist at Reef Point, or even the work of subsequent owners of Garland Farm.

Despite the excess shade from the overhead tree canopy, bittersweet encroaching at a gallop, and many weeds and grasses, some of the area’s treasures could not be obscured. Brenda Les began the task of clearing out the weeds and identifying the plants. Some of her finds include bloodroot, wild orchids, lilies, and trillium. A selection of native plants that Farrand used at Reef Point will be added to the garden at a future date, but for now bittersweet eradication, the removal of shrub seedlings, and other pressing issues need to be resolved.
Thanks to Peggy Bowditch and Judith Tankard, this summer we have added almost 100 books to the library. Many of the volumes concern New England gardens, and especially those in Maine. A requirement for all Maine visitors should be Gardens Maine Style by Rebecca Sawyer-Fay and Lynn Karlin. With glorious images of select gardens, it captures the whimsy and realities of our ever-changing climate. The book makes you want to jump in the car and seek out these wonderful gardens. Other titles for the garden visitor include At the Shore: A Maine Coastal Garden by Richard Grand and Mick Hales, Gardening at the Shore by Frances Tenenbaum, Gardens by the Sea by Barbara Segall and Jerry Harpur, and the all-time classic, An Island Garden by Celia Thaxter. Other books include Two Gardeners: A Friendship in Letters by Katharine White and Elizabeth Lawrence, Onward and Upward in the Garden by Katharine White, The 3,000 Mile Garden by Leslie Land and Roger Phillips, and Maine Beautiful by Wallace Nutting. For the more adventuresome visitor, there’s Nine Mile Bridge: Three Years in the Maine Woods by Helen Hamlin. And for a very sensitive and compelling view of Maine coastal life, Susan Shetterly’s Settled in the Wild is a small, but beautiful book. And last, but not least, is Theresa Mattor’s and Lucie Teegarden’s Designing the Maine Landscape, a “must-read” for all people interested in landscape architecture (see Fall 2009 BFSN).

Other new books include Julie Moir Messervy’s The Inward Garden: Creating a Place of Beauty and Meaning. The photographs by the National Geographic Society’s photographer, Sam Abell, are exceptional, and the text is thoughtful, without being ponderous. Messervy’s gardens, whether formal or wild, celebrate nature as comforting and appealing, full of life and places to be. Several Maine gardens, such as Thuya Garden, are included in the books.

We have also received a copy of William Robinson’s The English Flower Garden and Edith Wharton’s Fighting for France from Thuya Library. Both have Reef Point book plates and the Robinson book is inscribed to Beatrix Farrand on the occasion of her visit to Gravetye Manor in February 1933. Farrand gave the book to Charles K. Savage, who then donated it to Thuya Library. We are extremely grateful for this donation.

And last, but not least, the BFS recently received a collection of landscape plans and drawings related to Beatrix Farrand’s early project for Keewaydin, the Dr. Edward K. Dunham estate in Seal Harbor, Maine. The generous donation was made by Mrs. Edith Dunham Crowley and her sisters. The documents include landscape plans by the Olmsted Brothers and planting lists and notes by Beatrix Jones. Since the garden is no longer extant, these documents provide valuable information. The drawings are currently being cataloged and evaluated. Please contact library@beatrixfarrandsociety.org to see them.