

# Hills Trip 19th October 2018

## Paech's Farm Wistow



## Highcroft Garden Harrogate



A family farm with 110 years history and an even older collection of farm and household artefacts.

Steve Paech has meticulously arranged, with explanatory labels, a vast array of old farm machinery, tools and shed stuff and has it displayed in the outbuildings on the property.

Thirty years of collecting allows for a great deal of irreplaceable and historically important items and it was delightful to watch our club members as they recognised items and reminisced about their own farming experiences.

Back in the day farm work was hard labour with little regard for worker safety with no 'two-man lifts' for the 70lb bags of chaff or safety guards on the two man chainsaw used for cutting railway sleepers.

Morning tea and lunch served in the shed were both very much enjoyed.

Out in the garden the smell of burning grass cuttings from the large, beautifully cut lawn, added to the rural atmosphere as we moved around the garden, bright with cottage garden plants and arbours decked with banksia roses.

Wisteria covered a shady pergola and standard white icebergs lined the front of the house.

In keeping with the style of the home, the garden featured geranium, polygala, perennial wallflowers, osteospermum and pansies.

Bev Paech cares for the homestead and original stone and slab hut plus other buildings around the house which all contain a treasure trove of household items, samples of handiwork and fashions from the past.

In the early days there were no labour-saving devices to free up time for more leisurely pursuits.

Beautiful knitting and needlework probably done in poor light at the end of a busy day were examined and exclaimed over.

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In just eight short years since retiring, Maureen has arranged about 50 tonne of quite hefty rocks to define the borders of her extensive 1.5 acre garden.

On a sloping site carved from a rocky paddock the garden has been created with wide gravel paths which meander alongside the large beds filled with mass plantings of iris, roses, lavenders, a small stand of silver birch and drought hardy Mediterranean plants, including white oleanders, many varieties of salvia and white valerian.

Conifers provide height and native hibiscus and red abutilon add colour, as does the expanse of velvety red pigface.

Huge rocks have been propped up to provide visual interest while others have been laid flat as seats.

A very substantial rock wall - 'The great wall of Harrogate' supports a level lawned area with views across the Bremer Valley to Mount Beavor.

A huge metal sculpture takes centre stage on the lawn.

In between the rocks the soil is good with a pH of 6.5 so most plants will grow happily.

Water from the farm dam delivered at the rate of 250,000 litres every two to three weeks across the garden during summer, combined with heavy mulching with pea straw keeps the garden alive.

Afternoon tea in the shearing shed was welcome after the time spent marvelling at the amount of effort expended by Maureen and Chris in the creation of their garden.