



## The Old Catton Society Ornamental Pond

Just out of sight from Church Street in Parkside Drive, our small garden, with its pond and clamshell fountain, is a surviving remnant of the formal gardens of Catton Hall designed by Humphry Repton for Jeremiah Ives as part of the grand landscape design for Catton Park.

This was thought to be Repton's first landscape commission, undertaken in 1788. On a plan dated 1800 the pond is shown as a centre feature of Humphry Repton's formal parterre garden. The garden is now cut off from the remainder of Catton Hall and Park, but is within the village Conservation Area.

After the Second World War the County Council acquired Catton Hall for use as a home for the elderly. The garden and pond became surplus to County Council requirements and in 1994 this area was sold to the Old Catton Society for the nominal sum of £5.00. It was to be a conservation project in order to save this historic part of the village. The Society's action has ensured that this small but important part of the village's heritage has been preserved for future generations, and provides an attractive and quiet corner for public rest and contemplation.

A group of Old Catton Society members worked to restore the pond and fountain. The pond was dredged, the flower beds were re-planted and trees replaced. From a natural history point of view the pond, although small, is of interest. It contains frogs, common newts and at least three species of damselfly.



The pond in 1995 with the old style railings



The pond circa 1990 with the old railings



The ornamental fountain

A small group of Society members now meets on a monthly basis to carry out maintenance on the garden. The fountain is still operational, but it is switched on only when necessary to maintain water level or on special occasions.

At the time of acquisition the frontage of the site was unfenced; although the pond was enclosed by functional but unattractive tubular steel rails on wooden posts. The Society was concerned that the posts were unsound and, to mark the Millennium, resolved to erect replacement iron railings, more in keeping with the character of the central part of the village. In addition to the incorporation of the '2000' date the gates contain cat and barrel motifs as found on other features in the village.

Installation was undertaken by a contractor in October 1999 but final painting, together with the renovation and the installation of an additional wooden seat, was carried out by members of the Society on a voluntary basis in March 2000. That project results in a long term enhancement to the appearance of this part of the village which was formally recognised in October 2000 with a Broadland Green Award and an award from the Norfolk Society.



The Old Catton Society gratefully acknowledges financial assistance from the Norfolk Rural Community Council, Old Catton Parish Council, Anglian Water, Broadland District Council and Millennium Festival Awards For All.



The garden with the new style railings



Decorating the new style railings



The completed garden – Catton Hall behind

We are extremely grateful to the Old Catton Society for providing this article for publication on this website.

Larger versions of these photographs can be viewed in the photo archive at [www.oldcatton.com](http://www.oldcatton.com).