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Condolences

Sadly we record the death of Margery Rowe. We send our condolences to her family and friends.

Articles for inclusion in the next Newsletter should be sent to the Editor.

Front cover. One of the courtyards at Plaz Metaxu. **Back cover.** the courtyard at Wildside. Photos © Dianne Long.

From the Editor

The circumstances of the last six months have been both a joy and a sorrow for garden lovers. More time has probably been lavished on our own gardens and there has been more time to sit and enjoy them, albeit in part enforced. On the downside, historic parks and gardens across the country have been without the thousands of gardeners and volunteers who look after them and the visitors who love them, many will be facing challenging months ahead.

The Trust's work has continued, although we have not been able to have physical meetings or undertake recording work. There has been little respite on planning consultations and this Newsletter highlights some of the conservation issues that have been addressed. A sound knowledge of the county's historic designed landscapes underpins the conservation work, so it is wonderful to see the first completed reports by the research and recording volunteers who embarked on the pilot project a couple of years ago and we are looking now to the second phase. We feature an article on Alleron, one of the intriguing landscapes.

We cannot tell you about forthcoming events because for the time being there are none. We will organize events as and when Government regulations allow and we consider that members will be happy to participate. In the meantime, there is a wealth of new books and there are some online talks and courses.

At the AGM in 2019 Lady Arran told members that she would be retiring as Patron, a role she took on in 2007 having previously served as the Trust's fourth President. She has always been a great ambassador for the Trust and for the historic designed landscapes of Devon. She has also been a wise and welcoming support to the various chairmen and to trustees, on behalf of them and all members I wish here to pay tribute to her dedication, to thank her for all she has done for the Trust and wish her and her family well for the future. We are delighted to announce that Charles Courtney, The 19th Earl of Devon, has agreed to succeed Lady Arran as Patron of the Trust (see page 4). When we can meet again, hopefully in 2021, we will come together to celebrate and thank Lady Arran in person for her commitment to the Trust over so many years and to welcome our new Patron.

May you stay safe and well.

Welcome to the Trust's New Patron

We extend a very warm welcome to The Earl of Devon as Patron of the Trust.

Charlie, as he prefers to be known, was elected in 2018 as hereditary peer and is an active Cross Bench member of the House of Lords. He champions the interests of his home county of Devon and the South West, as well as heritage, agriculture and rural affairs. He is a barrister and partner with Michelmores LLP, based in Exeter, specialising in litigation, particularly in intellectual property and technology with both national and international clients.

Having spent some ten years in California, Charlie returned to the UK in 2014, about a year before his father died, with his wife AJ and their children, Joscelyn and Jack. Charlie and AJ manage the Powderham Estate, including the Heritage Enterprises that occupy the ancient heritage landscape at Powderham. They are committed to heritage tourism, sustainable land management and community well-being. They are particularly keen to make Powderham and its history more accessible and relevant, and have welcomed students from the Universities of Plymouth, Exeter, Oxford and Pennsylvania as well as the Devon History Society to research different aspects of the history and fabric of Powderham. Their aim is to understand better the collective heritage and to share it with visitors.

Many members may recall the DGT AGM at Powderham in 2018 when Charlie demonstrated his passion for the historic landscape, the buildings and the estate. He led members through the park, not normally open to the public, and up to the Belvedere which had recently undergone an extensive programme of stabilisation and reroofing to ensure that it remains an iconic landmark for generations to come.

Charlie commented: 'I am thrilled to be able to support the Devon Gardens Trust and the remarkable work that it does to promote and secure our county's unique gardens heritage. Never have our landscaped spaces been more important to our community's education and our wellbeing, and their preservation and promotion is more important now than ever.'



Margery Rowe 1934-2020

Carolyn Keep and Dr Clare Greener

Members of Devon Gardens Trust will be saddened to hear that Margery Rowe died on 10 March at Greentree Court Nursing Home aged 86. Her funeral was held on 3 April but sadly many of her friends were unable to attend because of the current Covid-19 restrictions. However, it is hoped a memorial service for Margery will be held at Clyst St Mary Church at some time in the future.

Margery worked as an Archivist in Devon for forty years between 1956 and 1996 and was the County Archivist from 1977. On her retirement she continued to visit many archives while working on her map books in collaboration with Mary Ravenhill, which were published by the Devon and Cornwall Record Society and Friends of Devon's



Archives (see list below). These included *Devon Maps and Map-Makers* (2002); *The Acland Family: Maps and Surveys 1720-1840* (2006) and *Maps of Georgian Devon* (2003). In all her books on maps, Margery always emphasised gardens and her books are an invaluable resource to all who are interested in landscape and garden history.

Margery was a member of several organisations in Devon including Friends of Devon's Archives, where she served as a committee member and Editor of their Newsletter. She was also a member of Devon Gardens Trust, and Chairman of the Archives and Research Committee from 1995-2000 in order to facilitate the production of *Travels In Georgian Devon* for which she was joint Editor with Todd Gray. This four-volume work was a major production for the Devon Gardens Trust reproducing most of the journals of the Revd John Swete and is one of the go-to sources of contemporary comment about gardens and landscapes in Devon in the eighteenth century. Margery was also the Editor of our Newsletter from 1998-2001.

Margery was a lovely lady; she was always interested in the work of the DGT. Her knowledge about archives not only in the Devon Record Office, now known as the Devon Heritage Centre, but in other archives, helped with many an enquiry or recording venture. She was always willing to answer questions on maps and archive sources and point people to relevant material. As a good friend to the DGT and on a personal level, Margery will be much missed by family, colleagues and her many friends.

(See DHS or FODA newsletter for Todd Gray's eulogy written for her funeral)

Some of Margery's publications (arranged chronologically):

- Margery Rowe, *Tudor Tax Assessments* (Devon and Cornwall Record Society, 1977)
- Todd Gray and Margery Rowe, (eds.), *Travels in Georgian Devon: The Illustrated Journals of The Reverend John Swete, 1789-1800*, four volumes, (Tiverton, 1997-2000)
- Mary R Ravenhill & Margery M Rowe (eds.), *Early Devon Maps: Maps of lands and estates in Devon before 1700* (Exeter, Friends of Devon's Archives, 2000)
- Mary R Ravenhill & Margery M Rowe (eds.), *Maps of Georgian Devon: and their makers* (Exeter, 2002)
- Mary R Ravenhill & Margery M Rowe, (eds.), *Devon Maps and Map-Makers: Manuscript Maps before 1840* two volumes (Exeter, 2002.) A *Supplement* to this work was published in 2010.
- Mary R Ravenhill & Margery M Rowe (eds.), *The Acland Family: Maps and Surveys 1720-1840* (Exeter, 2006).

Glass in the Garden

Dianne Long

Those members who attended *Garden History in Ten Objects* last December will recall the glass bottle with crooked neck used to conserve grapes for the table out of season. Fragile glass seems an unwise choice of material in the garden, yet its use goes back to at least the seventeenth century when a keen (gardener?) glass blower invented the cloche or bell jar to protect young plants. John Evelyn in *Elysium Britannicum* (written between the 1650s and c.1706, first published 2001) described 'Instruments belonging to the Gardiner and their various uses', and listed 'Bells of Glasse, some Close, other with a tunnel for the admission of aire;' and 'Chasses or frames Glasse to preserve flo: & Plants from the cold winds, yet expose their beauties, especially *Tulips* etc. {& some of these with small casements to intremist & exclude ayre like chymicall registers:}'. The illustrations depict typical cloche with both an open top and with a knob. He also noted, 'Canopies of Glasse, made of Glaziers worke, and put into a frame, capable to cover a *Hott-bed*, {at 1 foote height and one of the sides made to open and shut with Casements.'

Engravings of kitchen gardens in the 1700s and 1800s often show neat rows of cloches, and in the USA archaeological finds have revealed that Thomas Jefferson used them extensively at Monticello, probably imported from Europe as there were no glass blowers in eighteenth-century Virginia. The Victorians with their obsession for controlling nature employed various technological innovations designed purely to meet their aesthetic sensibilities, one was the glass cucumber straightener. This was invented by none other than George Stephenson of railway engine fame, who was also rather keen on fruit growing (the cucumber is actually a fruit), so he had special glass cylinders made at his steam engine factory.

Alleron

Ginnie Parker and Rachel McGavin

The Trust's first site reports on little researched Devon designed landscapes are now completed. These have been prepared by the Trust's volunteer researcher-recorders. Here is an edited version of the report on Alleron in the South Hams. Alleron is a small, Georgian country house which has within its grounds a butterwell (See Newsletter 107, Spring 2019) and circular, stone and cob walled garden with a thatched coping which is thought to be the only one of its kind in England making this site exceptional. The house, butterwell and walled garden were all listed in 1989 by Historic England at Grade II. The house dates back to the seventeenth century, it is therefore possible that the circular garden is of a similar age. It has been suggested that there was some evidence for eighteenth-century pleasure grounds including in a woodland valley with wilderness plantations, ornamental canal, stepped cascade and pavilion.¹ However, the land in question was not included in the Alleron estate at the time of the first tithe map in 1839 and is not in the current ownership.²

Alleron represents a small Devon estate which in the 1500s was owned by the large and active King family living in and around Loddiswell. At this time the house was likely to have been of a typical Devon construction, namely cob and thatch,



Aerial view of house and circular garden from 1950's.

¹ Robert Waterhouse FSA, *Alleron House*, (Devon Rural Archive, 2009).

² National Library of Scotland/maps /OS 6 inch Devonshire CXXXII NW 1818/2019

two or three rooms long and one room wide.³ Evidence of this exists in the construction of some of the internal walls of the present house. It is not known what the extent of the lands attached to the house were at this time, nor if any gardens were developed. A large thatched cruck barn with dovecote was present by the 1700s alongside other farm buildings and a homestead.



Historic O.S. map 1886 - Devon Historic Environment Record.

After Jeffrey King died in 1733, the house passed to the Wise family, and in the 1750s John Wise, who married the heiress Margaret Ayshford of Wonwell, owned both Woolston House and Alleron, the former being the grander establishment. During the late 1700s up until 1872 the two houses were closely connected. In 1804, Rev. George Furlong Wise lived at Alleron with his wife Caroline who died in 1814.⁴ He was granted a release of funds from the estate and it is possible that this money was used to enlarge the house and further develop the gardens, possibly spurred by his second marriage in 1816 to Eliza Ley.⁵ Following his death in 1829 Alleron was left in trust to his wife and daughter and in 1832 Captain William Wise, one of the trustees of the estate, put a notice in the *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette* letting Alleron for 2 years, which described the facilities:

³ Loddiswell History Group, *Book of Loddiswell, Heart of the South Hams*, (Halsgrove Press, 1999).

⁴ Totnes Archives, Anthony J Wise, *History of the Wise Family*.

⁵ Devon Heritage Centre, 5174M (uncatalogued), Osmond of Loddiswell, 1532-1873.

... dining room, sitting room and small book room, 4 bedrooms, 2 dressing rooms and water closet, with rooms for servants, a good kitchen and all domestic offices. A double coach house and stabling for 6 horses, a farmyard containing cow houses, etc.

The walled garden was described as being ‘well-stocked with fruit trees....13 acres of excellent watered meadow and pasture land and about an acre and a half of orchard.’⁶

His daughter, Caroline Jane, inherited Woolston House, then an estate of over 250 acres. from her grandfather in 1838. The following year she married Rev. Charles Foulkes Osmond and went to live at Woolston, whilst her mother Eliza Wise lived at Alleron (possibly until near her death in 1877) occupying the house and a few acres which included the circular walled garden, the rest of the land and buildings being let out and farmed by Nicholas Pepperall who lived in a homestead amongst the farm buildings. The tithe map of 1839, shows that Eliza Wise owned the Alleron estate (60 acres), the Blackwell estate (approx. 100 acres) and jointly with William Wise the Ham estate (over 120 acres). Alleron remained in the Wise family until 1951 since which time it has been the family home of a succession of owners. The 1952 sale particulars (John Maye and Co) described the garden as:

... pleasantly arranged. Well grown trees and large clumps of rhododendrons. On S and W is a lawn separated from the park by a ha ha. 2 orchards. Veg garden and Tennis lawn. A feature is the round garden believed to be the only one of its kind in the country. Circular stone wall with thatched top. A small stream runs through which encloses a flower garden and fruit trees. In the garden is a butterwell. Greenhouse.⁷

During the 1970s the seventeenth century barn was collapsing and had to be taken down although the Victorian kennels nearby remain. Between 1976 and 2010 some significant changes were made.⁸ The house interior was remodelled, two chimneys were removed, seventeen windows replaced and a new front door, porch and steps were added. A barn was converted into a restaurant and bases of bee skip boles from outside the circular walled garden are thought to have been used to form a path.⁹ The grounds too were altered between 1976 and 1987: the fish ponds and

⁶ Plymouth and West Devon Records Office, 1/2/18320, ‘To Let Notice’ *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette*, 1832.

⁷ Plymouth and West Devon Records Office, 1096/691, Sales catalogue 1952, John Maye and Co, South Brent, Devon.

⁸ South Hams Borough Council, planning records.

⁹ Pers. comm. J. Davies.

two lakes were dug; the ha-ha was extended; the goldfish pond was dug out; the butterwell roof and door were repaired and a new pond dug between it and the drive; the lawn and drive were altered. Following storm damage in the 1990s the thatch coping on the walled garden was replaced, a mulberry tree was planted in the centre and a shelter belt of conifers was planted on the raised bank around the outside.

The house and grounds currently cover 41 acres (16.7ha), its boundaries following field boundaries to the north and east, the road to the south and the stream to the west. The land rises gently from the road up to the house which sits on a relatively flat area, and slopes again to the north. A narrow valley and woodland area extends to the north east with a stream flowing from the north which is dammed, splitting in two, one branch creating the potwater leat, which continues south-westward to flow across the field, through the walled garden and on toward the house to reach the ponds, whilst the second branch flows in a ditch down the wooded eastern boundary for approximately 115 metres before turning south west to flow 40 metres across the field and reach one of the estate's two small lakes.

The gardens at Alleron lie east and west of the house with the bulk of the garden, including the circular garden, in front of the house to the north east. The 2009 archaeological report noted that the designed landscape consists of, 'a modified agricultural landscape forming nineteenth-century ornamental parkland surrounding the house, with possibly earlier pleasure grounds and wilderness plantation in the valley to the north-east.'¹⁰

The DRA report of 2009 identified the land around the circular garden as eighteenth-century pleasure grounds, however this predates the suggested date for investment in the house and garden and now there is no evidence of such potential previous uses. The gardens now comprise a tennis court built in the mid-twentieth century, a small orchard and a raised pond, all planted with a range of trees, shrubs and hedging.

The potwater leat still traverses the 'pleasure grounds' area after emerging from Proctors Copse however there is no evidence of a path alongside. Where the leat passes through the bank dividing the garden from the field a modern pipe carries the water over the rocky ledge where the stream continues on along the field boundary. This configuration or something very similar must have existed in the early nineteenth century and probably earlier, however the pipe or channel that separates the two flows of water has been replaced.

¹⁰ Robert Waterhouse FSA, *Alleron House*, (Devon Rural Archive, 2009).



The circular walled garden with potwater leat 2019.

In the woodland valley identified in the DRA report as ‘C18/C19 Wilderness’ there are a number of tracks which traverse the area and the trees, largely sweet chestnut on the western side of the path, were clearly coppiced some time ago. Land beyond the ha-ha west of the house identified in the DRA report as nineteenth-century ‘Ornamental Parkland’ containing ‘water meadow leats’ is now grazing land with some individual large beech and oak trees. There is no evidence that deer were kept in this area, however at Hatch Arundell (Manor) south of Loddiswell a licence was granted in the fifteenth century for ‘emparkment’, ie to create a small deer park. In the title apportionments most of this land was farmed by Nicholas Pepperell and is described as ‘pasture’.

The highly unusual if not unique circular garden is situated east north east of the house with its only entrance approximately 65 metres from the front door. Its listing notes:

Wall enclosing circular garden. Probably early C19. Rubble, with cob to top, thatched covering. A circle of c.18m diameter contained by wall c.2.25m high; on side towards Alleron House (q.v.) an opening to flush voussoirs with key-stone. The interior is now laid to grass, but formerly presumed for cultivation of fruit or delicate planting.¹¹

There are no existing paths within the garden although a clear track around the outside with two small converging branches back towards the house is clearly shown on the 1886 OS map. This path is no longer evident on the 1904 OS Map. There is a bank around the circular garden about one metre high and ten metres distant from the wall; it is approximately concentric to the north and east, but largely missing on the western side and to the south it follows a straight line. A gap on the western side originally contained a wooden gate for which there is still one gatepost. A previous owner discovered six flat circular stones of about 80 cm diameter under the gate which were described by Audrey Le Lievre as the type of stones originally used under bee skeps.¹² There are larches planted on the south western bank and leylandii cypress on the eastern bank, the latter were planted by an owner in the 1970s/80s.¹³ The garden is known locally as a ‘cup and saucer’ garden due to this arrangement of the circular wall and outlying bank, however no local history or folklore gives any clue as to why this configuration exists. The ‘cup and saucer’ are planted with a range of flowering shrubs, small trees, fruit and vegetables. The walled enclosure is very small at only 0.06 acre, has walls only 2.25 metres high, not the more typical 3.5 metres, and exhibits very few of the characteristics of a classic kitchen garden, such as glass houses, cold frames, storage, paths, and more than one opening. Nevertheless, there are features that point to it being a productive garden. The interior wall has been lime rendered in the past and small patches remain. It is also peppered with large numbers of square cut nails, evidence of wall trained planting. The garden is on a gentle south facing slope and the low bund encircling the wall could be evidence of a slip garden. There is a water supply in the form of the leat which crosses the highest part of the garden.

Without a full geophysical survey it is not possible to date the walled garden but its shape and simplicity indicate that it may well have been constructed in the 1700s as an animal enclosure and subsequently been altered and used as a sheltered and protected area in which to grow tender fruit and other plants. It is certainly a unique walled garden, although questions remain about it and other aspects of the landscape.

¹¹ Historic England, List Entry Number 1108151, (www.historicengland.org.uk).

¹² Audrey le Lievre, ‘Garden Without a History’, *Hortus*, 18 (1991).

¹³ Pers. comm. J. Davies, 2019.

Research and Recording – Would you like to join us?

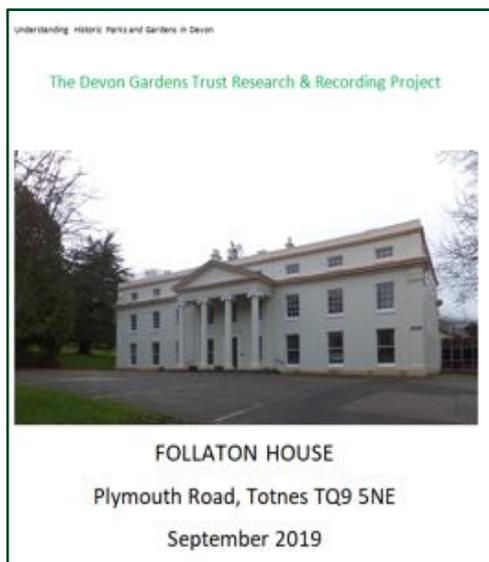
Barbie Moul

The DGT Research and Recording Group has been together now for two years and the pilot project to assess the best way of recording Devon's historic designed landscapes is nearing completion. The aim of the project was to produce structured, well referenced reports for inclusion on both the DGT website, and for the Historic Environment Records (HERs), which hold details of historic landscapes and buildings as well as archaeological finds and sites; they are a primary source of information for local planning authorities and for those managing the landscapes. DGT Reports have been produced for Allerton, Eggesford, Follaton, Tracey, Widworthy Court and Widworthy Barton, with research still underway for Ashley Court, the Tavistock Cemeteries and Blackpool Sands.

As with all pilot projects a great deal has been learnt along the way and it is now clear that while some sites warrant an extensive investigation, others require less analysis. The main outcome has been the development of a report template that incorporates photographs and maps to show important features, and that can be scaled up or down as required for our varied Devon sites.

We would like to increase our volunteer team to help with the next stage of research and recording. Would you like to join us? No previous research and recording experience is necessary. Once current COVID-19 restrictions have eased we intend to run a few small-group sessions starting from basic principles, with site visits to enrich our work. Training and group meetings include visits to landscapes large and small, meeting owners, head gardeners, archivists and other specialists.

If you would like to know more about the project please contact Barbie Moul via research@devongardenstrust.org.uk



Penrose Allotments

John Clark



Penrose Allotments, adjacent to Penrose Almshouses are contemporary with the main building and have been in continuous horticultural use since 1627. The gardens were not laid out for ornament but for productive purposes for the occupants of the Almshouses.

Penrose Almshouses are a remarkably attractive and ambitious early seventeenth century complex, considered to be the finest of a notable group of almshouses in Barnstaple. There were originally twenty dwellings. Each one housed two people of the same sex. The building was completed in 1627, three years after the death of the founder, John Penrose. Above the doorway a plaque records, 'this howse was founded by Mr John Penrose, marchant, sometime maior of this towne. Ano Do 1627'. John Penrose lived from 1575-1624 and was a dealer in woollen goods and mayor of Barnstaple.

The almshouses were built in Litchdon Street, which was then the main road south out of Barnstaple. Behind the imposing frontage is an attractively spacious courtyard with a seventeenth century pump in the centre, surrounded by dwellings.

At the rear of Penrose Almshouses is a large garden enclosed by high cob walls with a slate coping. The gardens within the historic garden walls have been gardened since the foundation of the almshouses and it is believed that the layout of the gardens has changed very little in almost four centuries. The majority of the plots are on their original footprint, and are of the same size and shape. The access to the garden from the almshouse court is via a passageway, suggesting that the garden is contemporary with the almshouses. The philosophy of the original benefactor was to create fair, orderly living for poor people with each of the twenty dwellings having an allotment of the same size.

Penrose Almshouses are included in the Historic England List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest at Grade I and are of exceptional interest, the Pump in the courtyard at Penrose Almshouses and the Garden walls to the allotment at the rear of Penrose Almshouses are listed Grade II and are of special interest.

Creedy Park Update

The Trust submitted an application in January 2019 to Historic England to add Creedy Park to the *Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England*. (See *DGT Newsletter 107*, Spring 2019, pp. 4-5) In January 2020 we were informed that Historic England had decided not to add the landscape to the *Register*, but it had added Creedy Park mansion to the *List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historical Interest*. The Trust requested Historic England to review its decision on the landscape and submitted further evidence, however this was not considered sufficient by Historic England to justify adding Creedy Park to the *Register*.

The significance of Creedy Park was recognised by the planning inspector who recently rejected the appeal regarding the decision by Mid-Devon District Council to refuse permission to build up to sixty five houses at Higher Road, Crediton, on land immediately adjacent to an area of walks which originally were part of the Creedy designed landscape and were once connected to the landscape inside the park wall by a bridge over the Crediton to Sandford road. The inspector noted that the significance of Creedy Park stemmed, ‘from its social and historic interest as a high status, carefully planned estate landscape in a rural landscape setting; as well as a visual association with the Grade II estate at Shobrooke.’

We are pleased to note that a planning application for up to sixty five dwelling to the south west of Creedy Park was refused by Mid-Devon District Council and a planning appeal has been rejected by the inspector.

Devonport Park Fruiting Arboretum

After several years of planning the Friends of Devonport Park wielded their shovels to plant a new fruiting arboretum on Ferry Field. Volunteers dug holes, firmed, drove in hefty stakes, and tied in some one hundred trees. Celia Stevens and Luke Pollard MP performed the honours at a ceremony at the end of February to plant two special trees to mark the Mayflower 400 celebrations; 'Pilgrim' and 'Mayflower' are both varieties of apple, which were grown and donated by Celia Stevens, great grand-daughter of Henry Merryweather, the man who cultivated the first Bramley apple trees. Ferry Field is the westernmost area of the Park nearest to the River Tamar and separated from the main part by Park Avenue. DGT gave a grant towards the arboretum, which consists of apple, pear, quince walnut, mulberry, medlar, as well as evergreen oak and Monterey pine to give year-round structure. An avenue of *Liriodendron tulipifera fastigiata* form an avenue along the road. The trees were supplied by Endsleigh Gardens Nursery, Barcham Trees and Plymouth Tree Partnership.



Above: Luke Pollard MP, James Brown, chairman and Mike Gallagher of Friends of Devonport Park, Celia Stevens, Friends and volunteers at the tree planting ceremony. Below: Some of the fruit trees planted on Ferry Field.



Stover Park awarded NLHF Grant

Dianne Long and John Clark

Stover Country Park and Local Nature Reserve has been awarded a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant of £341,000 to help restore the historic landscape and enhance facilities for visitors. The 'Restoring Stover Park' project has brought together Devon County Council, the owners of the country park, together with other land owners and organizations. The grant is for the first two-year development phase that will include:

- finalising options to remove silt from Stover Lake to help restore it as a healthy fresh-water and improve the SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest)
- ecological and archaeological surveys
- technical surveys to help plan the restoration of three Grade II listed buildings, two of which are on the Historic England Heritage at Risk Register
- feasibility studies on the restoration of the designed ornamental lake and improved water management
- investigate the expansion and creation of new walking and access routes
- develop educational opportunities and initiatives to engage with disadvantaged groups and individuals
- develop plans for expanding interpretation and an extension to the visitor centre and café.

These projects were described in the *Stover Parkland Plan*, a ten-year vision published in 2014. Key objectives are to overcome the fragmentation of the historic designed landscape, to restore historic designed views, the conservation of listed structures, some of which are in very poor condition and some are dangerous. Other objectives include improving the setting of Stover Lake (a Site of Special Scientific Interest) and its water quality and to reverse the decline of some of Stover's wildlife species. A second delivery phase is expected in 2022-2025.

DGT was one of the supporters of the NLHF application and will be discussing the role it might take, including financial support, as the project proceeds.

This is an exciting project affecting an historic designed landscape that is in divided ownership, which is considered to be one of the major threats to safeguarding the future of such historic landscapes, because separate management tends to affect detrimentally their character and appearance.



A print from 1773 of Stover Lodge showing the mansion, pagoda, Indian style gateway, bastion and serpentine lake.

Stover House is a fine example of a Georgian mansion set on an eminence in an extensive designed landscape, with carriageways, plantations, a lake and ornamental canals, fashioned out of a previously barren and boggy heathland. The whole design concept is a classic example of the ingenuity and skill of an informed landowner of the late eighteenth century. After WWI, like many other country estates, Stover Park was progressively broken up. Today, the site is in divided ownership, its setting is threatened and it is on the Historic England Heritage at Risk Register. Stover Country Park and Local Nature reserve is administered by Devon County Council and occupies a large part of the Registered site, another part is an actively worked ball clay quarry, in addition there is a golf club, a farm, a caravan park, with the remainder, including the mansion, being Stover School. It is situated just off, and bounded by the A38 Devon Expressway to the north-west, with the A382 to Newton Abbot running along the south-west boundary. The setting of Stover is under threat from the planned expansion of Newton Abbot, pressure for an hotel, retail, residential and industrial development associated with the A38 Devon Expressway and the proposed widening of the A382.

In recent years the Trust has therefore dealt with a number of planning issues impacting on Stover, for example, the road widening scheme, with the associated footpaths and cycle ways, would double the width of the existing A382, completely changing the character of the road as it passes by Stover Park. Devon County Council recognises the significance of the Stover landscape and their engineers designed a sensitive road scheme which would include the restoration of the listed eighteenth-century bridges and ice house.

In 2020 there have been three matters dealt with by the Trust's conservation officer. An application was submitted under the Environment Act 1995 which enables the County Council as Mineral Planning Authority to carry out a periodic review of the conditions to which the mineral permissions shall be subject. This relates to the extraction and working ball clays at Stover Quarry at Stover Ball Clay Works, Teigngrace. This was not a new planning application but relates to the submission of a scheme of new planning conditions for the operation and restoration of the quarry site for the next 15 year period. The Stover Park Parkland Plan by Askew Nelson Ltd, June 2014, was commissioned by Devon County Council, Stover School, Sibelco and Natural England to achieve the restoration and proper management of the historic designed landscape. The Landscape Plan proposes, amongst other things, to restore the main carriage drive to its original width, remove any encroaching vegetation and resurface in the same material along its length. The Proposed Restoration Scheme offers enhanced habitats due to a combination of a mosaic of mixed woodland, thickets, wildflower meadows, ponds and wetland areas. The Trust considers that the planning conditions should, as far as is possible, secure the restoration of the ball clay quarry as an exemplar of good modern landscape design within the context of the historic designed landscape of Stover Park. This new landscape of lake, mound, and planting should, hopefully, reduce the pressure on the existing nature reserve of Stover Park and provide exciting new leisure opportunities for the expanding population of Newton Abbott. The Trust was pleased that a track is included in the proposals which will be maintained and improved to provide permissive access for the general public in future. This offers the opportunity to connect to the potential reinstatement of the carriage drive along the western boundary. This would restore the eighteenth century circular carriage drive which was designed to provide a picturesque approach to the house; the house being glimpsed as one enters the parkland, then lost to view for some distance behind trees, until it is revealed again on the final approach to the house.

The Trust has urged the local council to refuse an application for the replacement of a residential mobile home with a dwelling at Middle Park Yard, Lane Past Park Corner, Teigngrace. The proposed development, if allowed, would result in further compromising the integrity of the park. The caravans can be seen from Templar Way and from the land owned by Stover School.

A further application was made by Stover School for a multi-sport artificial grass pitch and associated access and parking for up to 100 vehicles, and 10 mini-buses in support of providing hockey facilities including floodlighting & fencing. The Trust considered that this development would intrude into the very heart of the designed landscape, to its detriment. It would detract from the views from the carriage drive to Stover House and from the key views south and west from the house identified in the Parkland Plan for restoration.

These applications indicate the development pressures on a landscape like Stover. The NLHF grant and the restoration of the designed landscape will help to ensure its significance is more widely recognised and valued.

Very timely will be a new book by DGT member, Stuart Drabble, whose book *Haytor Granite, A Celebration* was published in 2018 by Stover Historic Landscape Trust. Stuart is putting the finishing touches to *Stover Park, History and Connections*, which is to be published later this year. It traces the history of the families who have owned Stover Park and the impact they have made on the landscape.

A Step Back in Time in Connaught Gardens

Ed Dolphin

Things are happening in Sidmouth's Connaught Gardens (Grade II on the Historic England *Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England*) with community organisations, councils and local companies joining together to take you back to the time of the dinosaurs.



Sidmouth Arboretum has teamed up with East Devon District Council, the Sid Vale Association, and Devon Wildlife Trust's Seaton Jurassic to develop a fossil plant theme in areas of the garden that have become tired in recent years. Over the next three years, it is hoped the work will provide an enhanced educational experience

Above: Carolyn Trussell from Natural Habitat Design discusses the plan with Alan Fowler from EDDC Parks and Gardens, and Penny Ball from Sidmouth Arboretum. Right opposite: Some of the new planting. Photographs © Ed Dolphin.

for visiting families, as well as complementing Sidmouth in Bloom's excellent displays in the garden. The scheme is linked to a similar one to be planted outside Seaton Jurassic further along the World Heritage Site of The Jurassic Coast.

Arboretum Chairman Jon Ball said, "It's really exciting to be working on an innovative project in partnership with local organisations that will deliver a first-class asset for the town. We would like to thank Sharon Scott for all her support when she was with EDDC."

Three separate areas of the garden will be planted with trees and shrubs that link to the Cretaceous, Jurassic, and Triassic fossil records. Local garden designers Natural Habitat Design have donated their time to research plants and draw up a professional planting scheme. The plants will be paid for with a grant from the Sid Vale Association's Keith Owen Fund. Each area will feature an interpretation board with information about the plants and their links to the fossil record.

The first phase, the Cretaceous area at the eastern end of the garden, was planted just before the gardens were closed for lockdown. Thankfully, the excellent

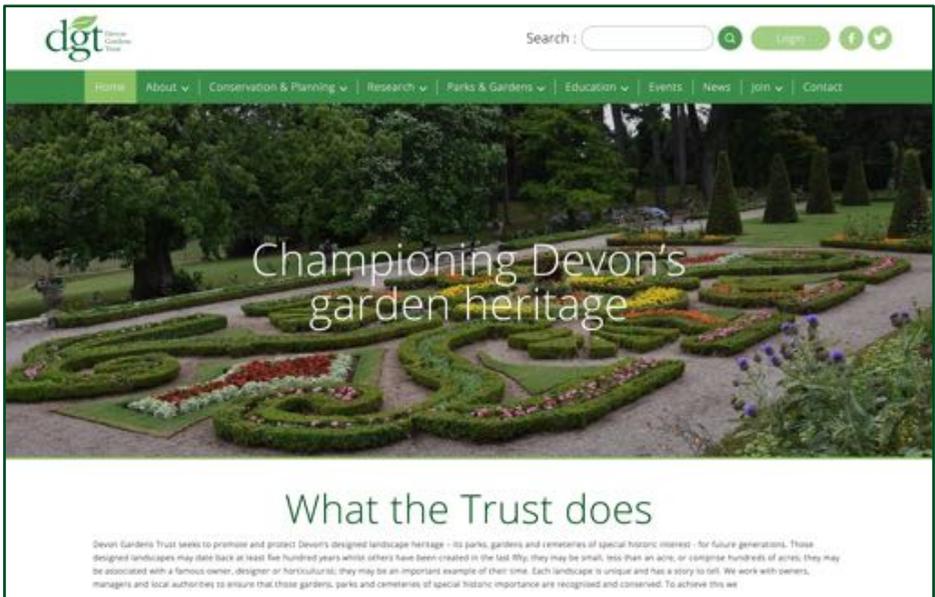
EDDC parks team watered regularly during the hot dry period that followed. The Cretaceous period, from 145 to 64 million years ago, was dominated by the large dinosaurs, but it was the time when flowering plants began to develop. Among the first flowering plants to evolve were Magnolias and Palms and these will be a main thread through this part of the garden. The Jurassic and Triassic areas will be planted over the next two planting seasons.



Digital DGT – New Website and Social Media

Shane Cormie

The Trust's new website went live at the end of July. It has taken longer than we would have liked to set up and upload all the information and images and there is still a long way to go for it to be as full as we would like. The COVID-19 lockdown lengthened the final technical amendments. The new website should be more adaptive to modern web browsing including on mobiles and tablets, and there is more in the background that will allow us to do things in the future like have a members only area. So take a look www.devongardenstrust.org.uk



Towards the end of 2019 we relaunched our social media activity.

We currently have 220 Followers on FaceBook and the most successful posts recently have been:

- 251 people reacted to our post on the new NGS Devon booklet. It was illustrated by an image of the booklet and our advertisement on the inside.
- 220 people reacted to our post congratulating Keith Wiley of Wildside on being awarded the RHS Associate of Honour. There was no image.
- 177 people reacted to our post on our funding the work at Devonport Gardens. This was illustrated with photos from the planting of commemorative trees.

- 167 people reacted to our post thanking our volunteers during Volunteers' Week. There was no image.

Other posts have included Belvederes of the Exe (113), our latest journal (133), and April Marjoram's book on W. J. Godfrey (69.) Our posts reminding people of forthcoming DGT events with a link to our bookings page regularly attract around 70 people.



We currently have 646 Followers on Twitter with the most popular recent tweets being on our Journal, April Marjoram's book and Keith Wiley of 'Wildside'.

The numbers retweeting and/or liking our posts are small, being in the region of 6 retweets and 6 likes. However, the number of people reading our posts will be significantly more. We aim to post at least once a week, perhaps twice but not too many.

If you use FaceBook or Twitter take a look, follow and retweet.

Book Reviews

April Marjoram, *W. J. Godfrey (1858-1927), Exmouth Horticulturalist*

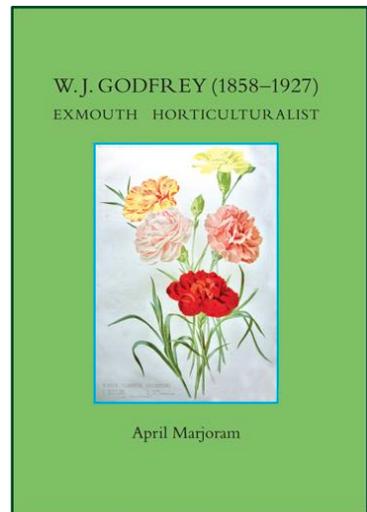
Sadly the launch of April's book had to be cancelled because of the COVID-19 restrictions. We hope to rearrange an event to mark its publication as soon as we can. Historian and DGT member, **Dr Julia Neville** reviews the book.

I first 'met' W.J. Godfrey (so to speak) during researches on the Home Front in the First World War. His name featured on a list of 'Expert Gardener Advisers' published by the Royal Horticultural Society in 1918, in connection with the need to increase food production. W.J. Godfrey of Exmouth, it appeared, was willing to assist by serving on the local Food Production Committee; giving expert advice to allotment holders, cottagers etc.; or lecturing on vegetable cultivation. Many on the list with him were head gardeners at Devon's country houses, but W.J. Godfrey, like P.C.M. Veitch of Exeter, also on the list, were professional nurserymen, 'doing their bit' for the war effort. I was therefore delighted to see on pp.70-1 about this appointment in the context of Godfrey's other contributions to the war effort in Exmouth and the factors in his own life, such as his business, his council connections and his work with local allotment holders which helped maximise his contribution.

The setting of carefully-developed contexts is one of Marjoram's strengths. The biography progresses chronologically from Godfrey's birth in Victorian Ottery St Mary to his death in 1927, aged almost 70, in his adopted home of Exmouth. There is space, however, along the way to learn about the wider context: the advantages of Exmouth; the nurseries he developed; and above all the particulars of the flowers that he bred. His business was founded on seed potatoes, but his passion (perhaps linked to his wife's talent for floristry) seems to have been the propagation of new varieties of flowers. He won numerous local and national medals and awards for his show-piece chrysanthemums, dianthus, pelargoniums, oriental poppies, and many more.

The context for the biography is extremely well-illustrated. There are pictures of the premises associated with Godfrey and his family; views of Exmouth; the local houses whose head gardeners were his clients; and advertisements and brochures.

Sadly this is not a story of total triumph. Marjoram describes how in the 1920s Godfrey's interest in plant breeding and his community commitments, including his role as Mayor, may have distracted him from giving sufficient attention to the profitability of his business. He found it difficult to succeed in the new post-war world, with the vagaries of changing fashion and unseasonable weather exacerbated by economic recession. In 1926 he went bankrupt, forcing him to give up his role as an elected councillor. In 1927 he died suddenly of a heart attack. This led to numerous tributes, including both national acknowledgment by *The Gardener's Chronicle* of his attainment of the 'foremost position in the horticultural world' and the local recognition of his 'close connection' with 'all phases of the commercial and social life of the town'.



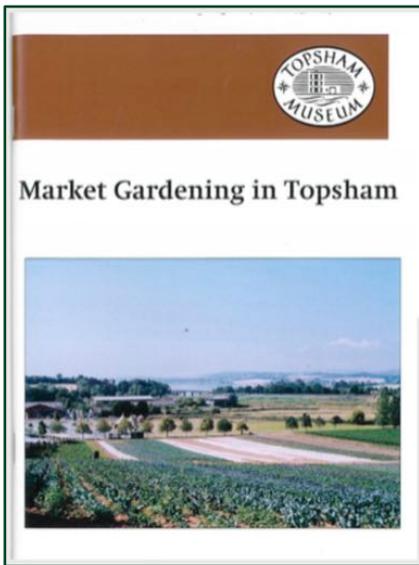
There probably were a substantial number of 'Godfreys' in the horticultural world of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but we hear little about them unless we browse local newspapers and specialist journals. It is a treat to have one of them brought to life and to be able to recognise, in Marjoram's portrait, the spirit of a true innovator who achieved national recognition whilst remaining devoted to his local roots.

Copies of **W. J. Godfrey (1858-1927), Exmouth Horticulturalist** are available from the Trust priced £6.99 + P&P and at DGT events.

Dr Clare Greener reviews two books that have recently been published by Topsham Museum to celebrate what was a very important industry in the town. Both booklets will be in the DGT Library as soon as lock-down allows us to return to the office.

Anna Adcock, *Market Gardening in Topsham* 36 pp illustrated (Topsham, 2020)

Mike Patrick and Geoff Lawrence, *A Home Grown Business: Pynes of Topsham* 36 pp illustrated (Topsham, 2020)



Anna Adcock's booklet introduces the reader to the history of the market gardening industry in Topsham, the heyday of which was from the 1840s to the 1950s. The principal groups involved in the business are discussed, particularly the Downey, Coles, May and Pyne families. They formed a tight-knit community with many of them intermarrying. Although there must have been competition between the different families, there was obviously sufficient business to support them all. Their crops included fruit, vegetables and cut flowers as well as production of orchard trees. Once the railway arrived in Topsham, produce, including violets and strawberries, was sent to West Country towns and Covent Garden in London, as well as the local markets of Exeter, Exmouth and Topsham itself.

Using sources which include the diaries of George May Snr, photographs, maps, the census returns and local directories, Adcock manages to draw out the difficulties of identifying the actual numbers of workers involved in working on the land, picking and packing. Women were often not mentioned at all in the records, nor children or family members, yet it was obvious from the numbers of widowed women who ran businesses, often for many years, that they had been working in the family business.

Ancillary trades are also mentioned such as basket makers, blacksmiths who made tools, and carpenters who made barrows and ladders. This research hints at the numbers of people who relied on market gardening to enhance their business.

Mike Patrick and Geoff Lawrence focus on one of the largest of these market gardening families, the Pynes. Various branches of the family were involved in the trade taking advantage of the many small fields in and around the town. This work falls naturally into three sections. The first details the Pyne's family history. It also includes information about individual specialities of different family growers such as George Pyne of the Denver Nurseries. He raised and sold fruit trees, shrubs and plants introducing some medal-winning specimens that he had bred himself.

The second section is a transcription of the sale catalogues of 1953 and 1956. The information contained in the catalogues is a good source of information. The individual plots of land, amounting to about 145 acres divided into twenty-three lots over the two sales, are detailed, together with their associated buildings. These include glasshouses, packing sheds, offices and garages. For each lot number the plants growing on the site are listed by both variety and quantity. These include locally developed varieties such as 670 yards of Pynes Perfection Raspberries and 9000 Crowns of Rhubarb which included Pyne's Forcing Variety.

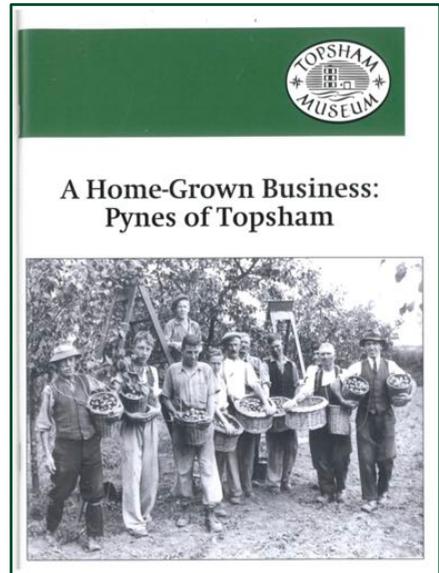
The third part of the booklet contains oral histories of people who remember working in the gardens as children, before and after school, and at school holidays; and of those who remember working in the nurseries as employees. Some of the tasks they undertook are mentioned and demonstrate that it was a hard life and not always comfortable being out in the weather all year round.

Many of the fields once used for the market gardens are now under housing, the former use of the land remembered in street names. Photographs used to illustrate these booklets give a hint of some of the material collected by the museum and these booklets give a good starting point for more in-depth research.

Available from: Topsham Museum, 25 Strand, Topsham, Exeter EX3 0AX; Tel: 01392 873244

Email: info@topshammuseum.org.uk

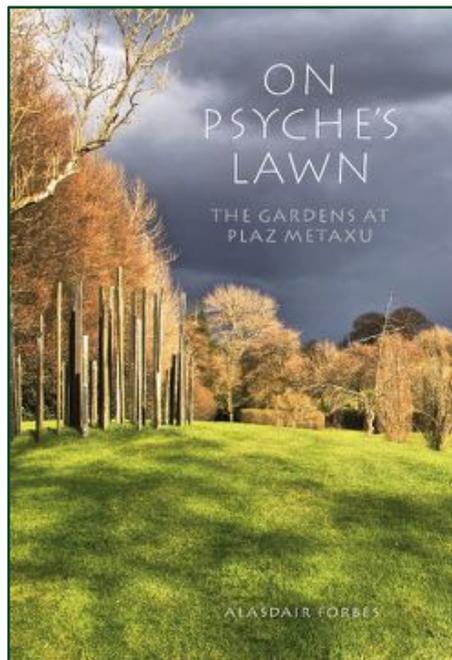
Website: www.topshammuseum.org.uk



Just Published

Alasdair Forbes, *On Psyche's Lawn, The Gardens at Plaz Metaxu* (Pimpernel Press, 2020)

Books about the creation and development of gardens are not uncommon, but that by DGT member Alasdair Forbes promises to be like none you have read before, but thought-provoking and inspirational, drawing on Alasdair's experience as an art historian. Many members will have enjoyed DGT visits to the internationally acclaimed Plaz Metaxu near Witheridge, described by Tim Richardson as, 'probably the most significant new garden to have been made in Britain in recent decades.' Alasdair has been developing his innovative and beautiful garden for the past thirty years. He always wanted his garden to be open to the worlds of myth, literature and the other arts, while remaining keenly aware of the strengths, vulnerabilities and delights a



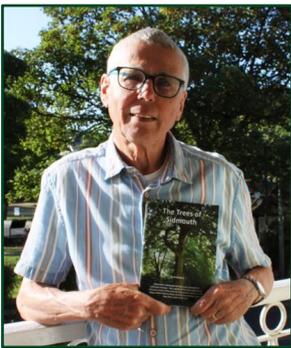
garden has to offer in its own right. *On Psyche's Lawn* is Alasdair's own account of how and why the garden was made. He writes of its many inspirations, from Psyche herself to poets, painters and the mysterious *paredros* . . . not forgetting the valley landscape, with its noble precedent at Studley Royal, and its wise mentors from the Far East.

He has been the only full-time gardener of the thirty-two acre garden from its beginning until the present day, though invaluable part-time assistance has been provided by Cyril Harris (who is not a professional gardener either). The whole garden, with its lawns and fritillary meadows and hedges, its bowers, groves and woods, its lake and its courtyards, its 'carousel beds', and its landscaped walks to far horizons, is entirely the creation of these two men.

The book is lavishly illustrated and is published by Pimpernel. We are planning for Alasdair to give a talk to Trust members at which copies of the book will be available and we hope to visit Plaz Metaxu in 2021.

Ed Dolphin, *The Trees Of Sidmouth (The Sid Vale Association, 2020)*

The Sid valley in Devon has a marvellous treescape. The happy combination of a sheltered valley climate, wealthy Victorian, Edwardian and later gardeners, and the Veitch nursery once only a few miles away, mean there are trees and shrubs from all round the world in Sidmouth parks and gardens. In the grounds of Knowle, home to kangaroos, buffalo and zebras when owned by wealthy Victorian eccentric Thomas Leversidge Fish, there are nearly eighty species from *Aesculus indica* to *Tsuga heterophylla*, and in The Byes riverside park *Zelkova carpinifolia* completes the alphabet.



This book describes the significant trees in the Sid Valley, including their distant origins, and something of the intrepid plant hunters who introduced them to the UK. It has been a collaboration between Ed Dolphin, Treasurer of Sidmouth Arboretum, Britain's first Civic Arboretum, and The Sid Vale Association, Britain's oldest Civic Society. Ed, who is a DGT member, compiles the Arboretum's online tree database and interactive map, leads guided tree walks around the town, and writes regular articles for the Sidmouth Herald and East Devon Resident magazine.

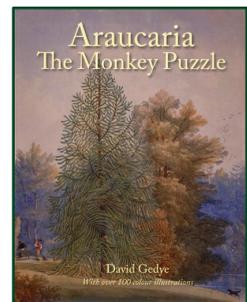
The book (48 pp with over 120 colour photographs) is £4.50 available from The Sid Vale Association <http://www.sidvaleassociation.org.uk/online-shop> with all proceeds going to the conservation work.

David Gedye, *Araucaria – The Monkey Puzzle*

This book is the result of a quest to relate the story of the Araucaria's introduction to Europe after the author inherited a collection of photographs and tracked down his Devon-born head gardener forebears. One photograph was of the first Araucaria to be grown outside Kew.

The hardback book (216 pp hardback) costs £25 plus £5 postage (UK only) and can be purchased directly from the author on 01487 840963 or by emailing your details to orakariapress@gmail.com

Proceeds from the sale of the book go to the International Conifer Conservation Programme.



News from the Gardens Trust

‘Unforgettable Gardens’ is the Gardens Trust’s theme for increasing public awareness of historic designed landscapes over the next few years. The aim is to highlight that the threats faced by historic parks and gardens, but that measures can be taken to protect them and that everyone can be involved. COVID-19 has thrown this theme into stark relief. A social media campaign, with funding from NHLF, is underway to promote ‘Unforgettable Gardens,’ specifically to raise awareness amongst new audiences of the value of historic open space, its heritage value, the threats it faces, particularly due to Covid-19, and the kind of things that can be done to help. Devonport Park, Plymouth, was one of the sites featured early in the campaign.

The Gardens Trust (GT), the national organization of which DGT is a member, has begun doing online lectures via Zoom. A five-part series on *Great 20th Century Gardeners* began on 1 September covering the lives and work of Percy Thrower, John Brookes, Rosemary Verey, Beth Chatto and Percy Cane. Details are available via <http://thegardenstrust.org/events-archive/page/2/?events=gardenstrustwith> Tickets at £5 for each lecture are available via Eventbrite.

There is new twelve-week course on the *Evolution and Origins of Plants* by Dr Mark Spencer, beginning on Wednesday 9th September, with a slant towards where plants in the garden came from and why they look the way they do. Further details can be found via the events section of the Gardens Trust website www.gardenstrust.org.uk or on Eventbrite <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-evolution-origins-of-plants-tickets-112818037788>

Details of the GT’s Winter Lecture series, all twelve will be available online, tickets at £40 for the series or £4 per lecture for GT/DGT members, can be found at <http://thegardenstrust.org/event/winter-lecture-series-season-tickets/>

The Gardens Trust has a new chair, Peter Hughes, a former barrister and judge who is a GT board member and member of Cumbria Gardens Trust, He was elected at the GT AGM on Saturday 5th September, but like many organizations, due to COVID-19 restrictions, it was a closed meeting. The AGM was to have been held as part of the GT’s annual conference in Yorkshire on the weekend of 4th to 6th September which has been postponed to the same weekend in 2021.

The Historic Landscape Project, the GT’s capacity building programme to support volunteers in county gardens trusts in the research and conservation of historic parks and gardens, is running a series of free webinars. These cover all aspects of planning – understanding threats, designation, setting and significance, writing a planning letter, legislation and policy – as well as research and recording.

For Vintage Lawnmower Enthusiasts

Andrew Grout, Head Gardener at Woburn Abbey in Bedfordshire, is currently researching the history of a Vintage Ransome's Lawnmower dating from 1910 which has connections to Devon and its gardens.

The mower is an early motor mower, one of the first 200 made by Ransomes, and would have originally been supplied to a big estate, sports club or school. Research in the Ransomes Archive at MERL in Reading has identified that this model was only offered for sale between 1909 and 1911 and has a larger 6hp engine especially for undulating or large grounds, whereas as standard this machine had a 4hp engine.

The machine was formerly in the James Collection at Bicton Botanical Gardens and was sold at a reduction auction in 1984, ending up with a collector in Hertfordshire. This is where knowledge of the history of the machine ends. Bicton Park Museum as the James Collection is now known have no records of the auction.



An identical machine to this worked at Woburn Abbey Gardens during the same period and the Gardener William Williamson received a 'Rise of 1/- on a/c of Motor Lawn Mower.'

Andrew is keen to know if any readers would have access to:-

- 1) A copy of the Auction catalogue from 1984.
- 2) Any photographs of the machine at the Auction.
- 3) If anyone is aware of any records relating to the James collection that may indicate where the machine came from initially.
- 4) Whether anyone is aware where the machine spent its working life.

Andrew can be contacted via email gardens@woburnabbey.co.uk or we will forward a letter sent to the DGT office.

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