

Somerset Gardens Trust Events Programme 2020

In light of the official government advice in relation to Covid 19 (Coronavirus) we have postponed our lecture on Thursday 2 April and will suspend the events planned in April May and June. We remain committed to the wellbeing of our members, visitors and garden owners. Ticket costs will be refunded or cheques will remain uncashed. (Diana Hebditch SGT Chairman – March 2020)

Thursday 2 April 2020 6.30pm for lecture at 7.00pm
Harold Peto Designer and Plantsman
Given by Iford Head Gardener, Troy Scott Smith
Stoke St Gregory Village Hall, Dark Lane, Stoke St Gregory TA3 6HA

Iford Manor is the famous historic Italianate Grade-1 Listed Garden created by Edwardian designer Harold Peto and who lived there from 1899 until his death in 1933.

Troy Scott Smith was appointed Head Gardener there in 2019. His new challenge is to work with the owners on their ambitious programme of garden enhancement. The restoration is being started on the walled garden and Georgian hanging woodland. Troy will reference his previous work at Sissinghurst and Bodnant and his love of the landscape of his native Yorkshire. He has a wide experience in the UK and overseas and has worked with some of the renowned modern landscape gardeners.

Wednesday 29 April 2.30pm
Burrow Farm Gardens, East Devon EX13 7ET
By kind permission of Mary Benger

Burrow Farm Gardens have been created over the last 55 years by the determination and vision of our host, Mary Benger. The 13 acres of beautifully landscaped garden with unusual shrubs and trees are designed to provide year-round interest starting with the first bulbs in the spring. There are extensive views over the rolling Devon hills. We will hear how the garden was created as we are given a guided walk around the gardens with Mary and her grandson, Michael.

There is a tea garden where we can purchase refreshments for lunch or tea and there are plants for sale in the nursery.

Thursday 21 May 2.30pm Plant Sale at
Belmont Farm, Hatch Beauchamp TA3 6AA
By kind permission of John Townson

A new venue for this well-established SGT Event this year, though a change of format: drive in, open your boot, sell your plants and take unsold plants home. 50% of your proceeds to SGT. There will be tea and cakes on sale and an opportunity to meet and chat with other SGT members. Take a walk around John's garden and grounds, or visit St John's Church next door.

Thursday 26 May 6pm
Hillcrest, Curload, Stoke St Gregory, Taunton, TA3 6JA
By kind permission of Charles and Charlotte Sundquist

The garden boasts stunning views of the Somerset levels, Burrow Mump and Glastonbury Tor, but even on a hazy day this 5 acre garden offers plenty of interest. There are woodland walks, varied borders, flowering meadow and several ponds, kitchen garden, orchards and a unique standing stone. Drinks and nibbles.

Late April/May Date to be confirmed 2:30pm
Rob Wilson-North Head of Conservation & Access for the Exmoor National Park
Authority

Following the lecture last year, we are invited to see the progress made at the Knight family grounds at Simonsbath. We will see the work done to restore and recreate this garden. A welcome coffee/tea, an update talk and a walk as weather permits.

The garden laid out in the 1820s was never completed. Its creator was the cousin of Richard Payne Knight and a leading proponent of the "picturesque" movement. The Exmoor garden seems to have followed the same principles. Knight's activities had a significant impact on the Exmoor landscape. On an estate once comprising some 20,000 acres, he built farms, an estate wall 29 miles long, roads and canals, as well as developing gardens at Ashcombe.

Wednesday 10 June 6pm
Bowdens Farm, Hambridge, Langport TA10 0BP
By kind permission of Richard and Mary Lang

Join us for a glass of wine in this delightful and beautifully maintained garden. Lovely roses and great architectural use of plants. Wonderful wildflower meadows. We may be lucky and catch the wild orchids.

Thursday 25 June 2020 1030am
Gants Mill Bruton, BA10 0DB
By kind permission of Elaine Beedle, and
2.30pm Holland Farm, South Brewham, BA10 0JZ
By kind permission of Nickie Gething

Coffee on arrival then the group will be split into two for a tour of the historic watermill and another of the garden. It is $\frac{3}{4}$ acre and is filled with roses, clematis, arches and pergolas as well as delphiniums, hemerocallis, vegetables and soft fruit. There is a flower cutting garden and riverside walk to the top of the weir.

In the afternoon we visit Holland Farm which was created from a derelict farmyard 14 years ago. It was designed by Libby Russell who, at the time, was working for Lennox Boyd. A French-style courtyard with fountain and Italian pots leads to a series of "rooms" surrounded by hornbeam and yew, filled with roses and summer flowers. There is a swimming lake and stunning views of Alfred's tower. Teas.

Tuesday 30 June
Thenford, Oxfordshire by Coach
By kind permission of Lord and Lady Heseltine

This is a private opening just for us, Lord Heseltine will try to be there but it is too early to promise. This garden, transformed and expanded by them has extensive herbaceous borders, water gardens, an alpine trough garden, sculpture garden, rose garden and rill. The medieval fish ponds, their interconnecting canal and existing lake have been restored and new ones added. The arboretum is extensive, featuring a collection of more than 3000 different trees and shrubs. The church will be open. We can take our picnics to the Barn, and there will be afternoon tea before we leave.

We will leave Cartgate at 8.30am and will have a comfort stop on the way.

Thursday 27 August 2.30pm
Hazlebury Manor, Wadswick, Box, SN13 8HX
Hosted by Head Gardener Phylip Statnor

Head Gardener, Phylip Statnor, will show us around the 8 acres of Grade II organic garden in the grounds of a C15 fortified manor. There are huge yew hedges and topiary, stilt hedges of beech, wild flowers and a circle of megaliths. The vegetable garden and orchards should be in full production at the time of our visit. Tea/Coffee and cakes.

If you wish, the morning could be spent at Great Chalfield Manor or the Courts, Bradford on Avon both National Trust properties, but not organised with this visit.

Wednesday 23rd September 2.30pm
Little Yarford Farmhouse, Yarford, Kingston St Mary, Taunton TA2 8AN.
By kind permission of Brian and Dilly Bradley

Brian and Dilly Bradley, members of SGT, have invited us to see their unusual 5 acre garden embracing C17 house overgrown with climbing plants, with its 3 ponds, waterlilies and trees. Its special interest is its 300 rare and unusual trees: "the best collection of broad leaf and conifer cultivars in Somerset West". Tea and cakes to conclude our visit.

There is an Autumn Lecture to be arranged and, of course, the AGM. Details will be circulated in due course.

And you may be interested in these two gardens which are opening to the public this year.

Old Fonthill Abbey, Fonthill Gifford, Wiltshire 3 and 17 May

Old Fonthill Abbey: the grounds around are open on Sunday 3 May when the bluebells should be in full flower and on Sunday 17 May for rhododendrons and for extensive walks. Dogs are welcome on leads. Funds raised are for Parkinson's UK and local charities. Hot drinks/soup/cakes/bangers from BBQ. Sensible footwear essential. Use the post code SP3 6SP for entrance to the gardens.

Ferne Park Gardens, Berwick St John, Wiltshire 13 June

Members are invited to join the village for an opening of the gardens at Ferne Park, Berwick St John on Sat. June 13th 10-4pm. Entry is via North Lodge. £ 5.00 at the gate, funds for St John's Church and SANE. Sandwiches and cream teas available. Could members inform Camilla by the 7th June if they intend to go so that she can inform Viscountess Rothermere. Tel 01963 351106 or camilla.carter@btinternet.com

And finally for 2021

A garden tour to North Wales is being planned and the provisional dates are late May 2021.

Booking Tickets

Should an event be oversubscribed we will endeavour to allocate tickets fairly and let you know if you are on a waiting list. If numbers permit, you may be able to bring a guest. We charge a £2 supplement over the event price and £3 for members of the public (refundable on joining the Trust at that event). There will be no refund of ticket costs unless a replacement participant can be found and the amount exceeds £10. The sole exception will be for serious illness if the organiser is notified before the visit. Do advise us if you are unable to attend so we can reallocate your ticket to someone on the waiting list.

Members are expected to take reasonable care during visits. Neither Somerset Gardens Trust nor its officers accept liability for accidents.

Please also note that as a rule garden owners do not allow dogs.

The Events Committee

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We would love to hear your feedback and, of course, help with events is always welcome.