

Somerset Gardens Trust

A member of The Gardens Trust

Issue 60

Spring 2016



Featuring

Barrow Court - Everyone's favourite garden - p.10

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From the Editors

What a wet and windy winter. Little frost and ice but the ground is saturated and beds muddy. Whoever heard of December daffodils? So this Magazine is to persuade you that life will improve and Summer will come. It contains articles and photographs of some wonderful gardens, plants and trees – evidence of the passion of their creators, and lovely articles on Village Group Openings, the preservation of plant specimens and on WW1 military gardens. A feast of colour and warmth!

Christopher and Lindsay Bond

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From the Chairman

Dear Members,

Rosemary and David Freemantle have now retired from chairing the Events Committee and the Trust thanks them wholeheartedly for their years, eight or nine, of hard work. Both David and Rosemary will not be leaving us as they are to remain on Council. Members have been invited to visit their lovely garden this May.



Diana Hebditch is now in charge of Events and with her team has produced an excellent programme of outings this year. I am sure she has found it challenging, the first time always is! But she has risen magnificently to the challenge, we are fortunate that she has agreed to take over and thank her.

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Last Summer one of our Presidents, Penelope Hobhouse, telephoned to ask if anyone in the Trust was organising a seed exchange group. She had seeds of *Smyrniun perfoliatum* to offer, it needs to be sown fresh. She kindly gave me some and I am hopeful that I might persuade it to grow at last. I have also been offered seeds by Anthony Pugh Thomas. Would anyone care to start a small seed exchange group? I think the Trust might fund some small envelopes for seeds and perhaps the seeds could pay their way in stamps.

It has been an extraordinary winter and my garden is in early spring mode.

Quantities of snowdrops and hellebores are flowering together with *Cornus mas* and *Rhododendron* 'Christmas Cheer'. There are daffodils, yellow crocus, *Crocus tommasinianus*, which are beginning to self-seed well, aconites, primroses, Polyanthus, and an odd *Anemone blanda*. In the warmer areas tassels of Hazel are yellow with pollen. My grandchildren have voted the garden here best for Easter egg hunting; I hope it will be worth looking at in Easter and not all over. Nature has a way of sorting things out so I am positive.

Camilla Carter

You are needed !

The Survey Group is looking for new members to join its on site and documentary research into historic Somerset Gardens and planning applications that may affect them.

No experience necessary – just enthusiasm and some of your time. You work in teams on individual gardens. Appropriate training is available. Contact Camilla Carter on cchoneywick@hotmail.co.uk

The Trust has a distinguished history of surveys – you can contribute to this!

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A Garden in Torminster

Pamela Egan describes the garden that inspired Elizabeth Goudge

“The house faced Jocelyn as he walked up the path. It was old and grey and solid....It would have looked like a farmhouse but for the extraordinary apparition of a tall grey tower that shot up one side of it.” I suspect only readers of a ‘certain age’, probably female, may be able to place the quotation. It comes from *A City of Bells*, written in 1936 by Elizabeth Goudge, a best-selling author from the 1930s through to the 1970s, and still remembered with great

affection, who is here writing about her birthplace, Tower House in Wells, where I have lived since 1972.

“The mulberry tree under which Jocelyn shares The Times with eight-year-old Hugh Anthony in A City of Bells is real”



In the Novel, Wells appears as Torminster and a degree of writers’ licence has been used; the Cathedral becomes a monastic foundation, and some of the interiors of Tower House have moved in from a previous house she lived in. Its garden, however is true to life-and has changed very little.

She describes the gardens of the Torminster clergy, rather dauntingly, as having “*an amazing luxuriance*” of wallflowers, primulas, forget-me-nots, apple trees, flowering cherries, lilacs and laburnums. I could show her all of these today except the laburnums, which we reluctantly grubbed out from the shrubbery that long ago replaced the Precentor’s stables.

The Precentor? Ah, yes. He was (and is) one of the five senior clergy who have charge of the Cathedral; his task

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is to oversee the music and services. The first Precentor recorded as living in Tower House was William de Littleton in 1337 (though part of the House dates from some 30 years earlier). By 1900, the year Elizabeth was born, her father was the tenant, not as Precentor, but as Vice-Principal of Wells Theological College. In 1902 he was appointed Principal, which required the family to move to the Principal's residence, all of 20 yards across the road. Elizabeth was an only child, with an invalid mother and an austere, theologian father; she loved the new family in Tower House, the Hollises, who arrived

with one small boy and left ten years later with four, and spent many hours with them.

There are other homages to Elizabeth in the garden today besides the flowers. In 1980 I planted a sprig that became "*the rosemary tree*" to recall her Novel of that name. Now about six feet tall (as high as they ever grow) and immensely bushy, it lives next to the herb patch that contains many herbs mentioned in *The White Witch*.

The mulberry tree under which Jocelyn shares *The Times* with eight-year-old Hugh Anthony in *A City of Bells* is real; it's shown on John Carter's 1794 Plan of Wells Canonical Houses. For years children (and, once, an over-eager labrador in hot pursuit of a squirrel) climbed its gentle sloping branches; when you sat under its cool shade the berries glowed crimson. Alas one still August morning in 2014, the greater part of the tree suddenly lay down – and left me bereft. Thanks to expert care, however, new shoots have appeared.....

The 1794 Carter drawing shows that the shape of the garden has scarcely changed: same paths, beds, lawns. I have chosen to leave it like that, only restoring vanished flower borders and making a new garden of old roses. When June is kind the scent of 'Fantin Latour', 'Mme Alfred Carriere', 'Tuscany Superb', and 'Empress Josephine' drifts down the street as you pass. I think Elizabeth would have enjoyed the roses. I do wish we had met.



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A Village Garden Opening

Marian Greswell gives the inside story.

Every other year a selection of gardens in the village of Bicknoller is open to the public in aid of the Somerset Red Cross.

Where – it can be hard to decide which gardens should be open. We have found over the years that overkill is not to be recommended, so we usually chose about six to eight gardens of varying sizes and content. We must be a tactful bunch, those of us who usually organize the event, as so far as I have not heard of any deeply offended gardeners whose gardens have not been open – maybe they are lying low? It is a good idea to have most gardens within walking distance of each other and of the Village Hall, which is the hub of the event.

How – we have our date, so next comes the publicity. The Red Cross produces a good leaflet with brief descriptions of all the gardens, and posters, which are distributed widely, especially to garden centres and holiday establishments; adverts are placed in local newspapers and some are persuaded to include an article written by (usually me!) one of us. Somerset Sound often give us a mention. Importantly hot lunches are on offer in the Hall, which **MUST** be pre-booked! We have found this to be a great draw, sold out each time, and very delicious. It also makes for a ‘captive audience’ as even on a rainy day the pre-booked lunch is there ready! The gardens last year were open from 12 noon-5pm, at £5 per adult with

refreshments available throughout, plus the usual array of plant stalls, raffle and so on.

As all garden openers know, it is gratifying in the extreme to have happy visitors looking round one’s garden; when they ask to take photographs, or ask about unusual plants, it is even more. It is also good to have seats around the garden, plenty of sign-posting approaching the Village and within it; a paper plan.

Whew! – So the day ends and lots of weary folk gather, usually at my House, for a well earned drink of – I wonder what. Much adding up produces a gratifying total announced – £2020 in 2015, much to our delight. It could not succeed without the unstinting help and hard work of many willing people – a community spirit is essential, and photographs of all helpers are important. We usually have a wash-up meeting later in the Summer and thank you letters/emails go out to all concerned.

And then we may start to think about the Summer of 2017.....



Photo courtesy of Paul Scullion

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The Lucy Nelson Horticulture Bursaries

Camilla Carter describes progress on this important initiative

Last October I wrote about Lucy Nelson's High Sheriff's project, to jointly with Cannington College, promote horticulture in Somerset. It has been decided to offer with the money she has raised, for the next 2 years, an International Travel/Research Scholarship of up to £3000 to a student currently studying at Higher Education level. The plan is that this award will be similar to the Young Horticulturist of the Year Prize, for a Somerset student to go to another university perhaps in China or Burma, and research a horticultural project of outstanding value. This will be administered by Tom Cunningham, Course Leader for Horticulture, together with Nigel Cox at Cannington College

In order to drive recruitment from Schools Nigel Cox has arranged a partnership with the RHS (who are supporting horticultural training) to organise a group of Somerset Secondary Schools to build 'pop up' gardens at the Bath and West Show, in the horticulture area. There will be some support given to these Schools, together with a competition and prizes. Our members might care to visit

these 'pop up' gardens - perhaps there will be a teacher or student involved for us to chat to.

Lucy Nelson is also interested in the power of gardens to help patients with mental health problems in particular the "Healing Garden" at 'Heads Up' in Wells. Lee Anne Bone is doing excellent work there and Lucy would like some of the money raised to support one of the patients/clients to travel to Cannington and hopefully achieve a qualification.

Lucy believes that the money she has raised during her Shrieval Year could help in so many ways. *"Firstly by making Cannington a beacon of excellence in the field of Horticulture Training with a significant prize to attract excellent applicants, secondly by improving access by providing travel and training bursaries to HND students and thirdly by addressing the fabulous work done by mental health charities in Somerset through the healing power of gardening"*.





Some future garden visits 2016



Broughton Castle



Buscot Park – Peto water garden



Arundel Castle



Heale House

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Still in his twenties, Thomas in collaboration with Sir Reginald Blomfield, published the seminal 1892 book *The Formal Garden in England*, which championed a revival of the Elizabethan garden as a high point of English garden design.

“I cannot picture to myself a garden, in its true sense, divorced from the buildings to

Barrow Court Gardens – Everyone’s favourite garden

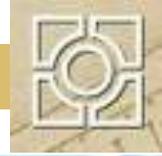
Gareth Edwards explains why

Six miles south of Bristol, overlooking the North Somerset village of Flax Bourton lies Barrow Court, a Grade II registered park & garden. With a medieval pedigree the gardens seen today are the creation of the enigmatic late Victorian architect, garden designer, artist, government official and author, Francis Inigo Thomas (1866-1950).

Thomas, whose work includes Athelhampton and Chantmarle, trained in London the 1880’s, alongside an emerging group of artists and architects who were to become influential figures in the developing Arts & Crafts movement.

which it belongs”. This encapsulates the heart of Thomas’s style, re-asserting the Renaissance principles of symmetry and geometry where the garden is part of the overall architectural concept of the house, placed sympathetically within the wider landscape, its several enclosures being the open air apartments with *“all aesthetic considerations put to the simple test of picture composition”*.

“I cannot picture to myself a garden, in its true sense, divorced from the buildings to which it belongs”



The 15 acres of formal garden at Barrow Court feature a series of terraces including a relatively simple parterre of cut-work (*parterre de pièces de coupé des fleurs*) featuring a central Yew maze and formal lily pond. The parterre terrace's viewing platform looks across an open expanse of lawn and the garden's various Yew enclosures, courts and monumental boundary features. The picturesque scene across the valley overlooks the 150 acre historic parkland, itself part of the designed landscape, connected by avenues of trees and designed views. The garden's motif of the passage of time is expressed exceptionally by Alfred Drury's 'Daughters of the Year' herms, a clairvoie featuring 12 boundary statues depicting a woman ageing as the seasons pass. A main lawn leads to a formal grove and hidden courts, with Lime avenues enclosing a fascinating collection of trees and shrubs.

The garden boundaries continue to be unmistakably defined by an expressive array of gazebos, classical garden temples, exedras and balustrades. The extensive kitchen garden, wilderness and glasshouses complete the layout of Thomas's masterpiece, an undervalued but nationally significant design and designer.

Tremenheere Sculpture Park

Camilla Carter describes some of the delights to come on the SGT Cornish tour

Known to artists for generations, it is the light in Cornwall that is so powerful. Arriving in Spring from Somerset where our gardens are awash with the yellow of daffodils and forsythia, Cornwall is coloured with every shade of white, pink and red, huge camellias covered in blooms, rhododendrons, magnolias and large ancient Dicksonias. This year the Trust's Cornish visit will be too late for the giant magnolias. I used to wonder why people

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has recently opened to great acclaim.

Dr Neil Armstrong acquired the land in 1997; he had to clear bracken, brambles and fallen trees but was fortunate that in 1890 the last Tremenheere to own this land, Seymour Tremenheere, planted beech, oak, holly and sweet chestnut which now affords the site such protection that Dr Armstrong was able to plant exotic and sub-

tropical trees and plants. Seymour Tremenheere was a prominent national figure being the First Inspector of Schools and Inspector of Mines; whilst living in London he used to travel to Cornwall in a yellow chariot.

bothered until one year, at Caerhays, they were at their peak, huge plumes of pink candy floss towering above the Castle like a mass of huge exotic butterflies gorging on nectar. It was Charles Williams, from Caerhays, who suggested that we should visit Tremenheere Sculpture Park, which



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The land here used to be the vineyard for St Michael's Mount in the 15th Century. Since then, in the 1800s, strawberries were grown on the south-facing slopes and it is said that they were exported to Newfoundland - sounds extraordinary. The PH varies from 7.2 on the cultivated slopes to 4.6 in the woodland and the total area amounts to about 20 acres.

Gentle steps take the visitor from the excellent restaurant, through woodland and up to an open area where there are notable collections of palm trees, succulents and bamboos. The space is enlivened by a 'Camera Obscura' designed by Billy Wynter, and James Turrell has created a 'Skyspace' which is fun. There are art works by Kishio Suga and David Nash but they are discreet, you could miss them. There are plenty of seats and benches where one can sit to admire the stunning views of the Mount, but it is a contemplative garden which needs time and peace. I went in September and can't wait to return this April.

What and where is the Somerset Herbarium?

Dennis Parsons of the Somerset Museums Service and Liz McDonnell of the Somerset Rare Plants Group describe a fascinating collection that should be better known

The Somerset Museums Service cares for a large herbarium of over 20,000 botanical specimens owned by the Somerset Archaeological & Natural History Society.

A herbarium is commonly a collection of preserved vascular plants (seed bearing

plants, ferns etc) but often includes, fungi and seaweeds (algae). Flowering plants are usually pressed, dried and mounted on a

“The Museum’s ‘digital herbarium’ will soon be available for all to see and study from anywhere in the World”

sheet of paper. The following information may be found written on each sheet: botanical name, collector, collection location, date and sometimes information on associated species and ecological details. A herbarium sheet is a preserved sample of a plant species with a record of its context and is an important repository of historical genetic material.

Herbaria enable scientists to identify and classify plants (taxonomy) and the use of material for comparison is vital to this process - herbaria provide the essential historical reference tool. Knowledge of plant diversity and its maintenance is essential to human existence. Identifying plants and understanding their ecology, distribution and uses is key to this work.

The Herbarium is stored at the Somerset Heritage Centre, Taunton and consists of pressed flowering plants, ferns, mosses, lichens and seaweeds. It contains specimens from many different collectors who were active from the late 18th century to the present day. Many of the specimens



are from Somerset and the West Country; some from other parts of the UK and a few collected from abroad or obtained by swapping material with other collectors.

The Herbarium is used by individual researchers and groups and has been an essential reference tool for the publication of various floras of the County, e.g. Murray (1893-1896), Marshall (1914) and Roe (1981).

Currently, a small team of botanists from the SRPG is photographing the collection for a 'citizen science' project called *Herbaria@home*. To date, over 165,000 specimens have been digitised, documented and placed online, so that the wealth of information about historical

distribution and ecological preferences is made freely available for research and conservation. In Taunton, SRPG working on a regular weekly basis, have so far digitised over 5,000 herbarium sheets.

Future research potential includes: mapping of the ranges of species, DNA and chemical analysis, archaeological studies of seeds and further taxonomic studies. Historical collections contain a wealth of information - their true value is just waiting to be unlocked. The Museum's 'digital herbarium' will soon be available for all to see and study from anywhere in the World.

The Schools' Gardening Year

Sheila Rabson explains how the Schools' year gives pupils many opportunities

The academic year starts each September and this is a good time to commence the gardening year as well. Pupils move up academically and the curriculum requirements will offer them new things to do in their garden areas. It might be helpful, therefore, to offer some pointers of things to do under each term.

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Autumn Term

The first thing to do is to harvest any produce left from the Summer. The ground will then need clearing of old vegetation. Compost heaps will still be warm and working and so will break the material down into good humus. It is a good time to weed and dig over the beds. The soil will need topping up, particularly if you are using raised beds. Some planting of



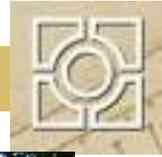
“This is the time to build bug hotels, hedgehog hibernaculum and bee boxes”

broad beans, garlic etc. can be made now and stakes should be put in if growing other brassicas. Wild areas need management and some pruning, particularly of blackberries and wild honeysuckle. This is the time to build bug hotels, hedgehog hibernaculum and bee boxes. School ponds need management so that they maintain a good ecosystem and do not get overgrown or filled with rotting leaves. As the weather deteriorates, indoor ideas are to plan what you are to grow in

the following terms. If you are a school with plenty of shrub areas, you may be able to preserve leaves or dry some grasses and flowers. These can be used to make artistic pictures or Christmas decorations. You may even be able to make swags and garlands to be used to decorate the School. Some Schools use their Christmas Fayre to sell the decorations to raise the money to purchase their seeds.

Spring Term

This is a very busy term and can engage many of the class in every lesson. There is much fun to be had in getting dirty and splashing water! Seed potatoes need to be purchased and chitted ready for planting out later; some seeds need to be started off in beds or trays whilst others will go



directly into the soil and will need thinning later; planting plans need to be drawn up to ensure crop rotation. There is much to be gained for the curriculum in the science field re the growth of plants and what requirements are necessary to produce such growth. Greenhouses can be a real boost this term as work can continue undercover even when the weather is bad. School ponds offer much to observe as frogspawn and tadpoles emerge.

Summer Term

Where to start! There is so much to do this term with planting out and sowing but the rewards are huge as many vegetables and flowers are quick to grow, produce and harvest. Children always seem happy to do the watering if it does not rain. Weeding is essential and this can be a good time to observe the different plants that appear. New insects appear, especially over ponds,

and this may bring in different birds. Weighing the produce, measuring the height of plants, counting the number and shape of leaves produced etc. can easily be worked into the academic curriculum along with art, poetry, geography, history and music. Many children dislike vegetables but they nearly always will try them if they have grown them. This can then be turned into discussion on healthy eating etc. The term also offers the chance

“Many children dislike vegetables but they nearly always will try them if they have grown them”

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to produce a good compost heap and talk about food waste. Some Schools have a high percentage of children living in flats and gardening offers them a chance to be outdoors and get messy whilst learning where their food comes from. Many children are only given pre-prepared meals so growing vegetables lets them see what is involved in food production, preparation and cooking methods and produce can be eaten by the children or, if enough is grown, it can be taken home or sold to the parents.

Round the World in 81 Conifers

Reflections on the Nynehead Pinetum by Dilly Bradley

Nynehead is a small village lying to the North of Wellington, referred to by Edmund Rack in his C18th Survey of Somerset as Ninehead Flory. This reflects the fact that the land there was acquired by the de Fleury family in 1068 as part of William the Conqueror's totally ruthless policy in establishing his colleagues as the ruling class. The antagonism engendered has reverberated down the centuries to the present day. Further place names such as Withiel Flory and Combe Flory testify to their success. In 1318 they were succeeded by the de Wyke who probably built the C14th century part of the Court. The later additions of 1675 and the C18th were the work of the Sanford family who bought the Estate in 1599.

Edward Ayshford Sanford (1794-1871), MP for Somerset West, supported the abolition of slavery and planted a fine

avenue of turkey oaks to commemorate the Reform Bill of 1832. In the company of his fellow gentry he carried out the various duties of civil administration prior to the institution of County and local Councils. His son, William Ayshford Sanford 1818-1902, after serving as Colonial Secretary in Australia from 1851-1855, returned home to marry and raise a family. He is described as an architect, artist, interior architect, landscape architect, sculptor, draughtsman and chairman. It seems that the gardens in their present form date from 1870-1880.

“The result is a fascinating well-labelled range of many rare and interesting trees”

Among the Sanford papers exist invoices from Robert Veitch & Son. The original Veitch had come down from Scotland as a gardener and through his work at Killerton became established as a nurseryman. His Nursery was the first to send out its own plant hunters; William and Thomas Lobb. Peter, his son, travelled widely, gaining experience of French and German nurseries. He had a keen interest in trees and shrubs which became a speciality of the Exeter Nursery. By WW1 they had introduced 49 varieties of conifers. Unfortunately only 10 or so specimens survive from what was

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probably the original planting at Nynehead. The Arboretum was dug up and replaced by apple trees in the 'Dig for Victory' campaign during WW2. They do include the *Sequoiadendron giganteum*

(Wellingtonia) and *Pseudotsuga menziesii* (Douglas fir) brought back by David Douglas from North America. (The lot of a plant collector was not a happy one: he was killed by a raging bull when he fell into an animal trap in Hawaii).



Sciadopitys verticillata

From maps it would appear that by 1888 the earlier vegetable garden had been planted up as a pinetum with conifers among which *Cedrus libani* and *Cedrus deodara* have survived. The remainder were replaced by apples trees which in turn gave way, from the 1980s onwards, to further specimens including *Sequoia sempervirens*, the coastal redwood, *Calocedrus decurrens*, the neat not overly large Incense cedar which merits greater popularity, and *Metasquoia glyptostroboides* or Dawn Redwood, which was not discovered until 1945 in central China.

Following on from Taunton Deane's Garden Research

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Project in 1993, James Harris advised on the refreshing of the Pinetum in 2004, to create a collection that reflects the geographical span of conifers across the world. The result is a fascinating well-labelled range of many rare and interesting trees such as the *Athrotaxus cupressoides* (labelled as *laxifolia*) and the endangered *Fitzroya cupressoides* now to be found at Birr Castle in Ireland as part of the Edinburgh Conifer Conservation programme. All these now constitute an important collection which deserves to be well known not only in the West Country but much further afield.

My Garden

Cicely Taylor describes what you can do with green fields if you persevere

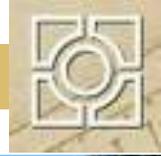
The Temple of Pan is a folly in Halswell Park. Sir Charles Tynte must have thought that if the village was called Goathurst it would need the god Pan to complement it. It was built as the Bailiff's house, but when the Estate was broken up after WW2, it more or less fell down and farm buildings were built on part of the site. The statue of Pan that stood at the end of the ride was sold, and now enhances the grounds of Castle Hill near South Molton. In the 1990s a developer brought the remains of the House, restored and built on to it, and it is now a grade 2 listed building. We bought it from the developer in 1998.

We had to decide what to do with our four acre sloping natural landscape site. Anne Scott-James said that "*a variety of levels is the cardinal principle of garden design*", so we were off to a good start. I favoured

the Capability Brown approach, leaving the valley as it was - leading down into the fields beyond, but my husband Max was more ambitious and went on a garden design course at Cannington. He asked the tutor, who owned a nursery garden, for advice, and every week pots of whips and shrubs appeared with markers on where to put them. First he had to clear the area of docks and nettles, using a pick to dig them out. He planted everything himself (we have never had a gardener), and he built little waterfalls along the stream. He bought a robot mowing machine for the large lawns, which is quiet, saves time and entertains visiting dogs.

“two small bits of oxygenating weed I threw in when we first came, have taken over and would block up the whole pond if we didn't spend hours in the boat, getting soaking wet, dragging it out.”

I think gardens should be full of surprises, so you don't see everything at once. For instance you only come upon the House when you have parked the car, squeezed through a green tunnel, and it is suddenly



in front of you. (“You should cut all this back”, say tidy-minded visitors). The way into the valley is through another tunnel, down a slippery slope, and there are twists and turns through the shrubs and trees, and backwards and forwards over the stream. Wild daffodils have spread from the neighbouring fields



New Members

The Trust is delighted to welcome the following new members who have joined since November 2015:

Mrs Victoria Baillon, Hornblotton,
Shepton Mallet

Mr & Mrs N W H Begg, Castle Cary

Mrs Susan Custance-Baker, Dipford,
Trull

Ms Clare Gascoigne, Mudford, Yeovil

Mrs Josephine Schoenfeld, Kilmersden

Mrs Rosemary Taylor, Bath

Dr & Mrs K Wilson, West Bradley,
Glastonbury

and naturalised everywhere, and so have primroses. In fact there is a primrose path to the everlasting bonfire.

The pond is a mixed blessing. I made some huge mistakes. I took bits of *Symphytum* from the bank outside Aisholt church and they have spread everywhere, rampaging through the day lilies, irises and dogwood. The ‘delicate, graceful’ meadowsweet is an absolute menace, cropping up all over the place and difficult to pull out, and the two small bits of oxygenating weed I threw in when we first came, have taken over and would block up the whole pond if we didn’t spend hours in the boat, getting soaking wet, dragging it out.

Nobody gardens for an easy life and we have had plenty of set-backs, with deer and squirrels stripping bark, heavy snowfalls

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crushing evergreens, and shrubs, like *Virburnum plicatum mariesii* dying for no apparent reason. Sometimes we feel overwhelmed by the pruning, weeding and continual cutting back, and then somebody will come to the House and say what a beautiful place, and we feel we owe it to the garden to keep going.

James Harris visited British Columbia last Summer

What an amazing place. Coast and mountain combine to produce views and climates which vary from high rainfall to desert-like conditions. The flora and fauna reflect this diversity from gigantic Douglas firs to cactuses. Vancouver itself is a large

international city with many new buildings, including by Sir Norman Foster, and art galleries. It has a mild climate with little frost in winter, and ski-ing (such as at nearby Whistler) in the mountains above the city.

The original vegetation was temperate rain forest with conifers - Douglas fir, Western Red Cedar, Western Hemlock - and scattered pockets of maple and alder. The largest urban Park in North America - Stanley Park - has a good selection of native and introduced plants, for example the Chinese Silk Tree (*Albizia julibrissin*).

Opposite Vancouver, in the mountains, lies the Capilano Suspension Bridge Park. The bridge was built in 1889 and spans the



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Capilano River. It features a rain forest with Douglas Fir and Western Red Cedar. It was good to meet my old friend the Salmon Berry (*Rubus spectabilis*). Its leaves were different from what we grow here in cultivation (clearly research into names needed).

“The island has a rich fauna including black bears and wolves but perhaps fortunately we only saw a bald eagle”

An hour and half calm ferry journey brought me and the other 27 members of the International Dendrology Society to Vancouver Island – a large Pacific Island 290 miles in length, with the warmest climate in Canada. The rain shadow effect of the island’s mountains creates a wide variation of rainfall – wetter on the West and drier on the East. Its temperate rain forest biome includes the Douglas fir, Western Red Cedar, madrone, Garry oak, salal (*Gaultheria shallon*), Oregon-grape (*Mahonia aquifolium*) and Manzanita (*Arctostaphylos* sp). The island has a rich fauna including black bears and wolves but perhaps fortunately we only saw a bald eagle.

Another highlight was Tofino, at the western end of Highway 4 (from here the whale watching boat set out late last year which capsized, drowning many

passengers). As I looked out from the beach over the Pacific Ocean, there was nothing between me and Japan. Here, I found another old friend, the British Columbia honeysuckle (*Lonicera involucrata*) - an attractive shrub with tubular flowers which are red and yellow, and in nearby marshy areas, the insectivorous plant *Drosera*, *Gentiana sceptrum* and *Pinus contorta*. On the return ferry journey we passed Cathedral Grove in Macmillan National Park – a rare and endangered remnant of an ancient Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) forest. They were gigantic with the girth of the trunk – 3 feet above the ground - over 20 feet.

The town of Kamloops in the dry part of British Columbia is a considerable contrast with much higher temperatures. In the Juniper Beach Provincial Park there the cactus *Opuntia fragilis* is native together with *Juniperus maritima*.

We were privileged to go with a knowledgeable guide – the Curator of the University of British Columbia Botanic Garden; however this is such a spectacular district that everyone can enjoy its wonders.

A Military Garden

John Townson remembers vegetable growing on the home front during World War One

I have an old copy of *Country Life*, dated March 30th 1918, and in it there is an article under the above title, which concerns my Grandfather, Major

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George Townson, and a project he was involved with at Osterley Park, just outside London. Osterley, now owned by the National Trust, was the home of Lord Jersey and in peacetime was famous for its garden parties. In WW1 however, the growing of food was just as important as the ‘Dig for Victory’ campaign in WW2 and if soldiers on home soil could grow their own vegetables, it was a great help to the war effort. The Park became a training

depot for the Army Service Corps and the men’s huts were built with large vegetable plots dug between them, 240ft by 60ft. These were planted to potatoes in the first year and then to a rotation of vegetables in the ensuing years. All other corners of the Camp were utilised; not only for vegetables, but for flowers as well.

As *Country Life* put it, my Grandfather was in charge of the project as he “*was very competent for the purpose, as in*



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earlier and more peaceful days he farmed on a considerable scale and has a thorough knowledge of crops and their management". What he had in mind were "those useful vegetables

"those useful vegetables which the British soldier, like every other useful British citizen, is in the habit of seeing upon his table"

which the British soldier, like every other useful British citizen, is in the habit of seeing upon his table. The great crop, of course, was potatoes, 500cwt grown last year, which would have cost the army £200 to buy. Next to them in bulk come turnips and swedes. Of cabbages 495cwt were grown, which would have cost about £300 to buy. Brussels sprouts, artichokes and lettuces were the other principal crops. It will be gathered from the list that the eye of the gardener was, as it should have been, kept carefully upon the mess-table all the time".

The *Country Life* writer felt that the growing of these vegetables and the

RHS Rosemoor

Today at Rosemoor has been rather like the calm before the storm, with a lovely sunny, windless and mild day – a welcome change from all the rain. The Gardens are bursting into growth with drifts of snowdrops and the scent of *Sarcococca* wafting across the paths.

There are all sorts of really interesting courses available for adult learners at RHS Rosemoor.

These range from 'Shrub Pruning', 'What Now ? Spring', 'Principles of Propagation' to 'Willow Weaving'.

To find out more go to the RHS Rosemoor website

www.rhs.org.uk/gardens/rosemoor,

or contact Sarah Chester

sarahchesteer@rhs.org.uk/gardens/rosemoor

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supplying of their own canteens did a lot for the men's morale in the Camp. He also felt that the land was economically used and waste kept to a minimum. On asking my Grandfather whether he had thought of keeping pigs, the reply was that there was not enough waste to do so. This reply surprised the writer who perhaps was one of those "*who consider that waste is rife in the Army, and who are ready to regard it as more or less inevitable on account of the large, and not only large, but fluctuating numbers to be catered for*". At Osterley Park waste was kept to a minimum.

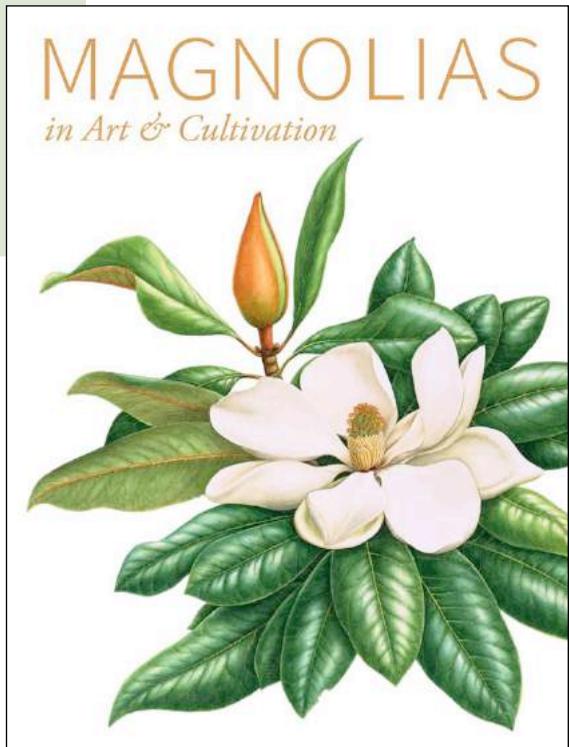
My Grandfather had a number of photos of the project, one of which accompanies this piece.

Anthony Pugh Thomas reviews 'Magnolias in Art & Cultivation' - Barbara Oozeerally, Jim Gardiner and Stephen Sponberg.

Kew Publishing in association with Royal Horticultural Society. 2014. ISBN 978 1 84246 499 1

Magnolias are thought to be one of the most ancient genera of flowering plants with fossil remains being found in rocks dating back to the Tertiary Period (2-65 million years

ago). They are named after Pierre Magnol, a physician, botanist and an inspired teacher who was appointed to the Chair of Botany and the Directorship of the Botanic Garden at Montpellier in 1694. They were first introduced to England by Bishop Henry Compton of London, one of the great gardeners of his day at Fulham Palace, who on 16th April 1687 received from his agent in America, John Bannister, a *Magnolia virginiana*.





“The great plant hunters of the early twentieth century, ‘Chinese’ Wilson and Frank Kingdom Ward, recorded their sense of wonderment when they found Magnolias”

In her introduction Dr Sherwood, the founder of the Sherwood Gallery of Botanical Art at Kew that was opened in April 2008, comments that the *“non-specialist will be amazed at the range of magnolia flowers, in terms of shape and colour ... The character and essence of each subject have been caught with meticulous observation....”* by Barbara Oozeerally who became a botanical artist in 1996 and whose works have won prizes at Kirstenbosch in South Africa, and Chelsea and whose work is to be found not only at Kew but also in RHS Lindley Library. Born in Poland, she came to England and became fascinated by magnolias: with the help of Jim Gardiner, at the time the Curator of RHS Wisley, who provided a list of magnolias, and people and places to

visit, she recorded magnolias in the United Kingdom, the USA, Europe and New Zealand in such famous gardens in the UK as Caerhays, Chyverton, Marwood Hill, Wisley and Kew, Herkenrode in Belgium and Eisenhut and the gardens of the late Sir Peter Smithers in Switzerland.

But this is more than a picture book. Before you reach the illustrations there are sections dealing with the taxonomic history of magnolias, their pollination, hybridisation, medicinal uses (an infusion being used in Sichuan as a cure for coughs and colds); their economic uses and their folklore; and then each variety is described in lay terms followed by a Botanical Description written by Stephen Spongberg, Curator Emeritus of the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University.

The great plant hunters of the early twentieth century, ‘Chinese’ Wilson and Frank Kingdom Ward, recorded their sense of wonderment when they found Magnolias; the non-specialist can share that experience when looking at Barbara Oozeerally’s illustrations and those who wish to know more will find it in the detailed descriptions.

A book to be prized.



A Pot of Geraniums

What is the pot with brick red flowers, overflowing the edges untidily?
A summer statement of warmth and blue skies, of endless time and hope?
Or, a townpeoples' shout of defiance among a grey and treeless housescape?
Or, maybe, it is a garden brought to town, a statement in miniature of longing for a
green and vanished countryside - memoirs of lost oak-shaded golden hay fields?

Each pot is a garden,
each garden a field,
each field a landscape,
each landscape a way of living.

Note: written from Spaniards' love of plants in patio pots when they live in towns coming from their inherited country roots.

Christopher Bond



Events for 2016

Sunday
28th February

The Artist and the Garden
Christopher Woodward

Wednesday
16th March

First Ladies of Gardening
Heidi Howcroft

Thursday
19th March

Hartwood House

Thursday
2nd June

Three Oxfordshire Gardens
Broughton Grange,
Broughton Castle and Buscot

Tuesday
14th June

Two Dorset Gardens with
Sea Views

Thursday
23rd June

Two Cottage Gardens

Wednesday
6th July

Arundel Castle and
Heale House

Friday
22nd July

Burton Pynsent House

Thursday
20th September

Bowood House

Thursday
2nd November

Making an Elizabethan
Garden at Montacute House

Photographs: Front & Back Cover: courtesy of the Editors

www.somersetgardenstrust.org.uk