

# E&DHS 4-DAY HOLIDAY 5<sup>TH</sup> TO 8<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2024

## American Museum at Claverton Manor Bath



This was our first visit on the holiday, it was nice to leave the coach and get into the lovely spacious gardens overlooking the Cotswolds. Our guide was a retired Botanist who was interesting and



entertaining. The elevated gardens are planted in big clumps of the same plant with a stunning effect looking out into the countryside beyond. There was a bust of Winston Churchill who made his maiden speech at Claverton Manor at the age of 23. The house was furnished with American

antiques and a wonderful display of embroidery, quilts and rugs. The cafe was

good too, with a library to buy books by donation.

A great choice by our organisers, a lovely garden, interesting house and history and beautiful art works as well. Thank you again to all those involved, much appreciated.

*Carole Dickinson*

## Stoberry Park Gardens

After following the long drive up to the house and garden we were greeted with beautiful views looking over the City of Wells.





We were welcomed by the owners and given an introduction to the evolution of the garden. The walled garden provided a number of focal areas adorned with colour and mature trees. There were also shaded areas complimented by hostas and ferns. Beautiful sculptures also featured around each section of the garden. To the front of the house was the grass terrace, the focal feature being a large pool surrounded by colourful planting and mature acers. In all, six acres of exquisite design and interest. We finished our visit in the beautiful garden room, overlooking the Vale of Avalon and Wells, drinking coffee, eating magnificent cakes and reflecting on a superb garden, full of delightful planting.



*Janet Faulkner*

## Bishop's palace gardens Wells

The sun shone for our visit to this lovely garden at the heart of Wells. The Palace itself is interesting but the gardens are beautiful and unexpected.



Bounded by a moat and high bank and walkway on two sides you enter the garden through the old high walls of the derelict monastery [beautiful in themselves] and find yourself on a wide green lawn planted with a few specimen trees.



The view from the walkway is down to the moat, orchard and parkland beyond. To the east is the parterre filled with roses and the 'hot' border with flaming crocosmia and yellow achillea and a 'new' knot garden created in 2019 under the oriel window of the Bishop's Palace.

The springs or wells after which the city takes its name arise in this garden. Water continues to have an important presence here. Over time the springs have been channelled into a series of man made pools and at one time provided water for the town

From the East garden there is a bridge to cross the moat, where you find

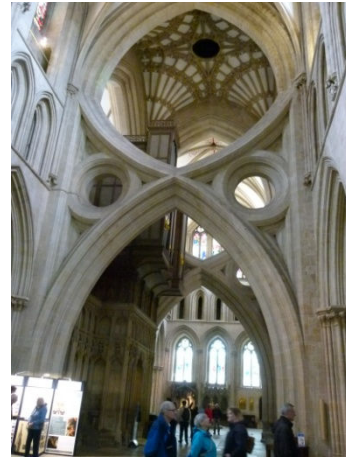


more water channels and springs woven amongst flower borders and lawns. There is a quiet garden containing a circular white building in the form of an 'open spiral' surrounded by white trunked silver birch trees, gently swaying in the breeze, very tranquil. Further on there is a thriving community vegetable garden, an orchard and a wilder area with an arboretum.

*Irene Pennington & Anne Wilkinson*

*Addendum* Several of us visited the adjacent Cathedral in time to hear and see the ancient (and complicated!) clock strike mid-day with its animated horse riders and a figure striking the time. The cathedral's architecture is fantastic.

*Phil Broughton*



## Yeo Valley Organic Garden.

These gardens occupy 6.5 acres overlooking the reservoir at Blagdon, just outside Bristol. Our visit was hosted by Nathan, one of the 4 gardeners. We started with a tour of the compost area, which comprises 5 bays each about 9 square metres, which is large enough to allow temperatures of 70 plus degrees centigrade to be achieved, as seen on the thermostat in the second newest heap. Everything goes in, including weeds and the heaps are turned (by tractor!) every week. The compost in use on



the garden is only 8 months old. The gardens are split into narrow sections enclosed by tall beech hedges, which create micro climates within and protect the vegetables and other plants from wind. All the vegetables were in neat raised beds. We were encouraged to taste the peas. There was a small formal pond plus an area with deep red poppies. There is a grassy area at the side, allowing a few (yellow) red-hot poker to burst forth above the head high grasses. We were encouraged to walk through this area.

Opposite this was a wooded area consisting entirely of what looked like tall slender silver birch trees. A winding path took you in a circular route through the trees. Half way round there was a cleverly angled wide mirror that reflected the trunks to enhance the overall effect.

Dotted throughout the garden are various sculpture pieces for sale, all with eye watering prices. Just further on from the gravel garden, there is a lawned / meadow area which has panoramic vistas over the grazing fields and down to Blagdon Lake. Each side of the





lawn had a strip about 3 metres wide that had been left uncut for a few months to encourage wild meadow plants to thrive.

There was just time for a visit to the 'Cake Hole' café for a quick ice cream made close-by from the farm's dairy herd, although the cows were in the barn for milking. A shop at the entrance sold various Yeo Valley produce, including yoghurt, butter and cheese.

*Andy Warman*

## Batcombe House Garden

At Batcombe (which opens for the NGS) the owners were busy preparing for a wedding reception (I think family) so were unable to offer us tea / coffee etc as they normally would. We were accompanied throughout by their knowledgeable gardener. The extensive, sloping garden on the side of a valley was the dream of garden designer Libby Russell when she and her husband bought the farmhouse in around 2001.

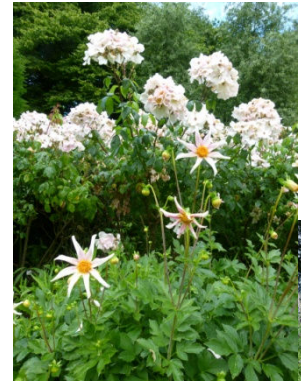


It is described as a garden of two very distinct parts and so it is; separated by a stone wall which they built up the

slope from the house at the bottom. We began in the part to the right from the house which was terraced and had several different areas.



Near to the house were beds with pyramid yews and mixed plantings of annuals and perennials as well as wild flowers. Steps led up both sides of the terraces, leading to a first terrace containing the kitchen garden and green house. Higher terraces were the plants-woman's choice of a dense mix of tall perennials, dahlias roses and annuals offering a long colourful season of interest. The terraces were laced with narrow cross-paths tempting exploration.



After a terrace occupied by a tennis court, the top was reached: a wild flower garden. From this a lovely little doorway led through the wall into the totally different second "part" of the garden.



Here were curved grassed terraces which act like a series of lenses focussed on the house, an ancient (listed) cedar at the bottom and the countryside beyond. Towards the bottom the dividing wall had a herbaceous border at its base and another pretty gateway onto the terraces of the first part of the garden.



A wonderful garden with something for everyone.

*Phil Broughton*



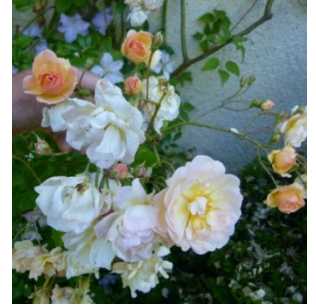
# Stourhead

We arrived at Stourhead about 1pm and gathered around the café, plant stall and shop whilst David Hurion gathered all our NT cards to go off to arrange our tickets. We then made a bee-line for the café but seeing a long queue many set off down "High Street" to the Spread Eagle Inn, near the garden entrance.

I went to investigate the plant stall where I discovered a small climbing rose that I had admired at the previous garden (Batcombe). I made a mental note to return and buy one before leaving. Ignoring lunch I headed across the

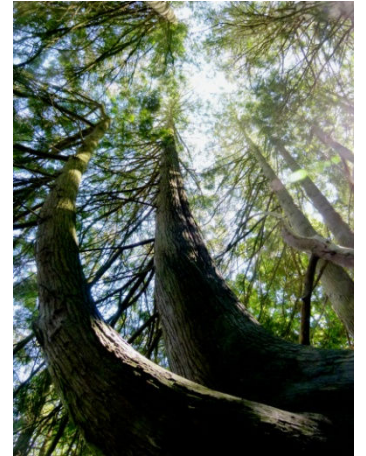


little bridge over High Street to the small walled vegetable garden where I discovered Carole Woodvine. Beyond this, in the stable yard we found refreshment at a mobile café (no queue!). Carole then headed up to the Palladium Mansion and I turned onto the high path into the garden.



Some way along, a steep green swathe heading up to the Obelisk was too tempting. On reaching this, the marked short cut back to the path proved to be too steep and impenetrable so I had to return to the path down the swathe. The high path was

marked as "shh" (quiet) and it was; I saw no one. It gave great views across the lake through breaks in the trees. The path emerged onto the lower path at the bridge across the end of the lake where I joined others of our group walking round it with David H. We all knew about his knowledge (and recall!) of plants but we now discovered this also extends to trees, making the walk full of interest. Just before the Grotto we reached a fascinating group of trees - Western Red Cedar (*Thuja lobii*). When young, the lower branches layer (take root) and turn upwards into statuesque tall trees still connected to the parent tree by the now huge branches. Incredible shapes but difficult to photograph! Our timing at the Pantheon couldn't have



been better; we were hit by torrential rain and could dive inside! This was designed as a focal point for the landscape garden, especially from the garden entrance where it plays its part perfectly. Inside, the plaster walls are painted a subdued rich red and surrounding the circular interior are several large white marble statues. In pride of place opposite the entrance and originally lonely, is Hercules sculpted on 1747 by Rysbrack using a London boxer as a model. The others were added up to the early 1900s. The shower having passed, we

continued on, crossing the small dam below which is a waterwheel. This originally drove a pump to lift drinking water up to the main Mansion. Shortly, we reached a rough arch and through it, if you chose, was an opportunity to exercise the lungs by climbing steeply up to the Temple of Apollo. The views from here were worth the effort though the temple was locked and disappointing close up. Descent from here arrived to near the Palladium Bridge with the classic view of the garden across the lake.



*Phil Broughton.*

## Courts Garden

The approach to the garden is down a walk way that has apples trained each side of the path, giving a peaceful approach and an inkling of how tranquil the garden is going to be.



The grounds are set out in a series of garden rooms which lead you seamlessly around the grounds. In the kitchen garden a wonderful apple and vine covered pathway divides the beds and at each corner of the beds

were very vibrant orange Calendula to deter greedy bugs. They certainly work as the beds were well stocked and looked very healthy.



The two lawned areas have large borders filled with various perennial plants including Day Lilies, hydrangeas and Crocosmia giving a relaxing atmosphere. Leading on from the Temple borders takes you to the water areas in the garden. There is a Lily pond, followed by a larger more informal pond which has lush planting and a lovely Monet bridge.



Away from the more formal areas of the garden is the Orchard and then the Lower and Upper Arboretums where we were able to enjoy a peaceful wander.

On leaving the garden it is hard to believe that this was originally a 19th Century woollen mill and has been transformed into a unique English garden.

*Judith Rowell.*

## Hanbury Hall, Worcestershire

Hanbury Hall was our last garden to visit and provided a welcome stop for lunch on our way home in the Stables Café.

Hanbury Hall itself is a magnificent William and Mary style building started in 1701 and greatly added to in 1700's by the barrister Thomas Vernon, giving us the 18C house that stands today. It contains wall and ceiling paintings by Sir James Thornhill which have recently been renovated. It also had some of the first outside 'ash pit' loos for the staff

The original gardens were laid out by George London who was fashionable at the time, these were later eradicated as gardening fashions changed and designs by people like Nash and Brown replaced London's work. Few of his gardens now exist [there is one at Melbourne Hall which we visited last year] However, London's garden at Hanbury has been recreated using his original 1705 plans and other historical drawings. The result is the fabulous Parterre Garden with its topiary that exists today.



*Jean Turner*