

Gardens Group 2017

Welcome to new and existing members of the Group. I'm writing this on one the wettest days this year/winter but plants are springing into life; daffodils, snowdrops, camellias and miscari are all out. I shall try to arrange roughly one visit per month between March and September. I am choosing a mixture of days, where I can, to try and be helpful, but I know that whatever I choose it won't be convenient for everyone, similarly for venues. We go whatever the weather forecast, we've a pretty good record, even during wet years.

I enclose details of the first four visits for this season. I hope there is something here to interest you. When it comes to directions, I give those from the Yellow Book or the appropriate website, the postcode and the map reference, so don't blame me if you get lost! Everything in italics I've copied from the literature.

This year I've managed to arrange parking at The Toby Inn, Middlemoor, they couldn't take us last year. It is £1 per car and there is a loo if you slip quietly in. Parking is in the rear car park, off Rydon Lane not off the Sidmouth Road. The H bus and Sidmouth buses go out to Middlemoor. According to Google it's a 12 min walk from Sowton and Digby Station.

As usual I've got lots of ideas for visits and I've tried to bear in mind that many of you say you like having a house to see as well. Not always possible though.

Friday 31st March Wood Barton, Kentisbeare, EX15 2AT OS192 055090

Meet at **14.30hrs** by the entrance. 8m SE of Tiverton, 3m E of Cullompton. 3m from M5 J28. A373 Cullompton to Honiton. 2m L to Bradfield/Willand, Horn Rd. After 1m at Xrds turn R. Farm drive ½m on L. Bull on sign.

Established 2-acre arboretum with species trees on S-facing slope. Magnolias, 2 davidia, azaleas, camellias, rhododendrons, acers; several ponds and water feature. Autumn colour. New planting of woodland trees and bluebells opp house (this part not suitable for wheelchairs but dogs are welcome here). Sculptures and profiles in bronze resin. Renewed water garden.

Entrance including tea and cake, £6.

This is a visit just for us so please let me know if you intend to come.

Friday 21st April, Castle Hill Gardens Filleigh EX32 0RH OS 180 662278

Meet at **11.30** at the entrance. <http://www.castlehilldevon.co.uk/>

Leave the A361 (North Devon Link Road) at roundabout signed South Molton onto B3226. Take second turning right signed Stags Head and Filleigh. Shortly after passing through Stags Head, look out for the yellow mansion on the right. Follow the brown sign and drive through gates on the right hand bend and continue towards house. For gardens, turn left at small crossroads signed 'Parking for Gardens'.

Castle Hill is thrilled to be included in Jim Gardiner's top ten Woodland Gardens to visit in 2015. Mr Gardiner is Executive Vice President of the RHS and has visited and enjoyed hundreds of gardens in the UK and around the world. Castle Hill is listed in his top ten alongside Holker Hall and Gardens (Cumbria), Westonbirt Aboretum (Gloucestershire), Caerhays Castle (Cornwall) and Bondant Garden (Wales) amongst others.

Castle Hill Gardens surround the magnificent Palladian house, seat of the Fortescues since 1454. The house was built in 1730 as the Earl Fortescue's family home in North Devon. Today, Castle Hill is home to

the 15th generation of the family. It is set in a spectacular 18th century parkland landscape punctuated with statues, follies and temples built by each generation of the Fortescues.

Truly a 'garden for all seasons' there is such a variety of things to see that you could spend all day here Castle Hill's family and dog friendly gardens attract plenty of comment, and one of our proudest is:

"Probably the best privately owned garden in Devon".

Entrance is £6 unless you are an RHS Member when it is free as a Partner Garden in April.

Please let me know if you intend to come

Thursday May 11th is Bowood House and Gardens <http://www.bowood.org/bowood-house-gardens/> Calne Wiltshire

This is a visit by coach. We will leave the car park at **The Toby Inn at 08.30** returning around 18.00 hrs. The coach company is Dartline.

Bowood Gardens in Wiltshire is home to a wide variety of speciality gardens, making for the perfect day out for horticultural lovers. Bowood's magnificent stately home stands within one of 'Capability' Brown's most beautiful parks, with gently sloping lawns stretching down to the lake and distant views to the chalk downlands. Delights within the park include the Cascade, Doric Temple, Terrace Gardens and for children, the fantastic Adventure Playground. These Wiltshire gardens are one of the special glories of Bowood and encompass almost every period of English garden design from the early Georgian period onwards. Enjoy a cream tea or a light refreshment at [The Treehouse Café](#) after soaking up all the Estate's history.

Bowood House sits within 100 acres of beautifully landscaped 'Capability' Brown Parkland and has been home to the Lansdowne family since the 1st Earl of Shelburne purchased it in 1754.

Since then, the house has seen huge changes. From the 2nd Earl beginning major improvements using the then, renowned architect Robert Adam, who worked on the interiors including creating the beautiful Orangery, to the 'Large House' being demolished after the second World War when it fell into disrepair.

There is a lot more about the house on the website. I have booked an hour long tour of the house for our group.

There is a restaurant as well as a café.

Coach is £14.20 and entrance and house tour is £14.50. Please therefore, send me a cheque for £28.70 made payable to the University of Exeter. Please check first that places are available.

Thursday 22nd June South Wood Farm Cotleigh EX14 9HU £5 + £3 for (a very good) tea and cake Meet at 14.00hrs at the entrance.

3m NE of Honiton. From Honiton head N on A30, take 1st R past Otter Dairy layby. Follow for 1m. Go straight over Xrds and take first L. Entrance after 1m on R.

Large country garden surrounding listed C17 Devon farmhouse set deep in the Blackdown Hills. Incl walled courtyard planted with late summer herbaceous and yew topiary, kitchen garden of raised beds with step over pears, fruit cages and trained fruit trees, sunken dry stream bed walk and reflecting pond, formal plum orchard, nuttery and traditional Devon cobbled yard with lean to glasshouse.

This is owned by a fellow academic with a very good Head Gardener!

This is another visit arranged just for us so I need a minimum of 15 for it to go ahead. **Please let me know if you intend to come**

July, August and Sept visits are still being arranged.

For all visits please let me know by email first. a.c.mayes@exeter.ac.uk