

The Garden House (April 2005)

A small, but hardy group of members braved the early morning rain and unpromising weather forecasts, and set out on 26th April for the inaugural meeting of the Garden Group at the appropriately named Garden House at Buckland Monachorum, near Yelverton. They were rewarded by firstly a magnificent run over Dartmoor in crystal clear and sunny conditions, and secondly by the garden itself, looking resplendent with the spring bulbs. Having worn ourselves out struggling to remember the names of some of the plants, we sensibly retired to a local hostelry for lunch. Some of us even resisted the temptation to buy plants, will it last?!

Bickham House (May 2005)

A slightly larger group gathered for this visit, but at least we don't lose people on the way round with small numbers! Many of us were unaware of this hidden gem so close to Exeter, the weather was fine again and the owners were very chatty and welcoming. Cynthia discovered that the lady of the house once worked at the University. This time the resolve over purchasing plants crumbled (they were good) and, naturally, we had to sample the fare on offer in the tea room.

Cothay (August 2005)

An intrepid group of 25 members found their way down narrow, very muddy lanes (though some cheated with satnav) to the field which was the car park. After donning overshoes and hanging up our coats we had a most enjoyable tour of this delightful manor house. Of special interest were the various wall paintings on old plaster. We left the house, emerging to very welcome sunshine - it had rained just a little in the hours before that - and refreshed ourselves with tea before setting off to tour the garden. As usual, we failed to identify all the plants, but some were very unusual, and unfortunately, not for sale.

All in all, a very successful event.

Hestercombe (September 2005)

The Garden Group maintained its plan to ensure that the gardens we visit are never crowded. Thus we set out in torrential rain, the sort that any rational person would consider totally inappropriate for any outdoor activities. On arrival, we turned the tap off, and a little later indulged in some sunshine. Seriously, we were very lucky yet again and were able to walk round the whole garden and admire the views in the dry. After being tempted by the plant sale - 25% off - we decided that we needed to regain our strength and so partook of the lunchtime menu, sitting outside to do so.