

Knightshayes (April 2006)

This was our first meeting of 2006, not many of us, but small and select! The conditions were very much to our liking - beautiful weather, a wonderful array of intriguing plants, some knowledgeable ground staff to answer our queries and very few other people around. It's not that we're unsociable, but it is nice when you can almost imagine that it's your garden!

Docton Mill (May 2006)

A small, but naturally, select, group braved the inclement (and that's being polite!) weather on Monday to visit Docton Mill. It rained on the way there and started again as we left, but, amazingly, it refrained totally whilst we were there. True it is was rather muddy underfoot and hiking poles had their uses, but we all remained upright and enjoyed our amble round, no one fell in the leat or stream and we rewarded ourselves with a very welcome tea. Some of our party had heard that surfers made a special inland journey for the cream tea and I can see why, highly recommended!

Mapperton (June 2006)

A full coach set out for Beaminster and Mapperton house and gardens. Again it was really hot but there were lots of seats and benches some in the shade. Most of us were very impressed with the various gardens (one of our high ranking officers did express disquiet over the odd weed or two...), it certainly is a magnificent setting. We were served a very appetising lunch with local produce and much appreciated freely available jugs of iced water. One loo sported a bird's nest which provided a conversation piece. After lunch we were escorted round the house in two groups by a very knowledgeable lady who patiently answered all our questions.

Plant World (July 2006)

A very hot day but plenty of overhanging trees to linger under. We had the whole place pretty much to ourselves and were able to admire how the plants from differing parts of the world were standing up to the drought. The nursery proved too much of a temptation for our weaker brethren - to be fair they do have some very unusual plants. Then there were the cream teas and ice creams. Our only criticism was that the wall was too high to admire the view over the Teign estuary when seated at the tables, never satisfied!

Bramblehayes (August 2006)

Very different, a small private garden, a riot of colour with mixed flower and vegetable planting. The owner was a bit taken aback when so many of us (14) turned up as soon as he opened. So were some of us given the turning off the A35! He really took water storage seriously with a 600 gallon oil tank turned into a giant water butt.