

Croome Chronicle

BY GEORGE !

The Chronicle talked to the current Earl of Coventry.

It was with considerable prescience that Cecil Dick Bluett Coventry and his wife Anne gazed upon their first-born son in the dark days of October 1939 and decided to call him George William. For although the family lineage went back to the George William, first son and third child of the 6th Earl, who became the 7th Earl of Coventry, it was by then a fairly remote connection. (Although not as remote, it has to be said, as that of the 5th Earl of Coventry to the 4th, when the 39th in line of succession actually became the 5th Earl in 1719.)

However, the first son of Cecil and Anne, great-great-great-grandson of the 7th Earl and fourth cousin of the 12th Earl did indeed become the 13th Viscount Deerhurst of the hundred of Deerhurst, co. Gloucester, and 13th Earl of Coventry, and the seventh Earl of Coventry to have the names George William.

Born in Devizes, the Earl spent most of his childhood in Kenya, and with his younger brother attended the Prince of Wales School in Nairobi. George William's father fought in the Second World War gaining the rank of Lieutenant-Commander in the Royal Naval Reserve. He was mentioned in despatches and awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.

On his return to England, George William's career path took him into accountancy, and he has lived in south west London for nearly 40 years with his wife, Gillian, and their daughter, Diana. The Earl's first visit to Croome was in the St Joseph's School era. The parkland was an unrecognisable wilderness. He decided to make an unannounced visit to George William 'Bill' Coventry, 11th Earl, at Earls Croome Court, home to

the Coventrys since the sale of the Court in 1949. "Bill", he said, "served us a gin and tonic". The four-times married 11th Earl, who died in 2002, had one son who pre-deceased him. The 12th Earl, who held the title for a brief period of two years until his death in 2004 at the age of 91, was an elderly cousin living in Switzerland, Francis Henry Coventry. He was the fourth child and second son of the second son of the 9th Earl (I hope you're still with me on this.)



So, one morning in March 2004, George William received a letter. It was from the Croome Estate Trustees telling him he was now the 13th Earl. The new Earl met with the Trustees to discover the extent of his inheritance ... sadly, no large pot of family money or, these days, a seat in the House of Lords ... but what a wonderful inheritance of history and achievement.

As the restoration of the Court moves forward, the upper floors will include an apartment for the use of the Earl and his family. Visitors to the Court are endlessly curious about the recent history of the building and are always delighted to hear that the title lives on. Linking the House to the Family again will, in the Earl's words, "be enormously important for continuity". He is very supportive of the National Trust and its efforts to restore and conserve the Court and Park. So, when settled in his new apartment at the Court, we are looking forward to catching glimpses of him ... perhaps sporting a velvet jacket with velvet crest-emblazoned slippers ... or taking a turn with the Croome sheet as a ghost in the basement (that should boost visitor figures).

Meanwhile, how lucky we are that the Coventry family ties with Croome are growing ever stronger and we have an Earl who is so in tune with what the National Trust is achieving.

Look inside forWhat we found up the chimney and the delightful St Mary Magdelene

EDITORIAL

By Christian Walker

This is my last editorial and it gives me great pleasure that the Chronicle will continue - managed by the very able and talented team of volunteers that work so hard to bring strands of Croome news together, including an interview with the 13th Earl of Coventry.

It has been a busy year to date with visitor numbers continuing to increase and they have been matched by high visitor enjoyment scores. We have new temporary catering outlets at Croome – for the RAF Defford Celebration weekend we had three in operation around the park. Our concerts have been sellouts and fundraising and grant applications continue to bear required investment. Before the leaves begin to think of their destination beneath our feet there will be another concert and more



events and hopefully a new shop will be emerging by the time you read this.

We have more staff with Pat Morris becoming Retail Manager at Croome and Damien Cooper becoming Volunteer Assistant.

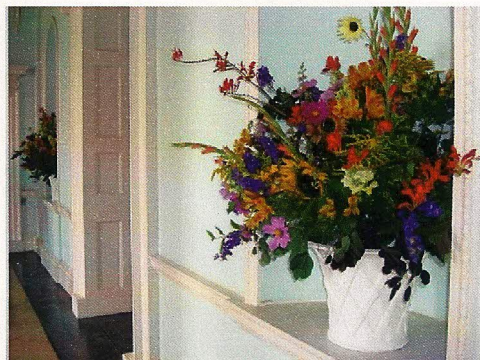
It is hard to believe as I write this in early August that the longest day was almost two months ago and we head towards Autumn! There is a certain spirit that keeps everyone going at Croome – I have often joked that it is a Carry-On gene – but following a conversation with a veteran at the RAF Defford Celebration weekend I think we can share the RAF motto – Per Ardua Ad Astra (through Adversity to the Stars) the future certainly is bright for Croome.

FANTASTIC FLOWERS

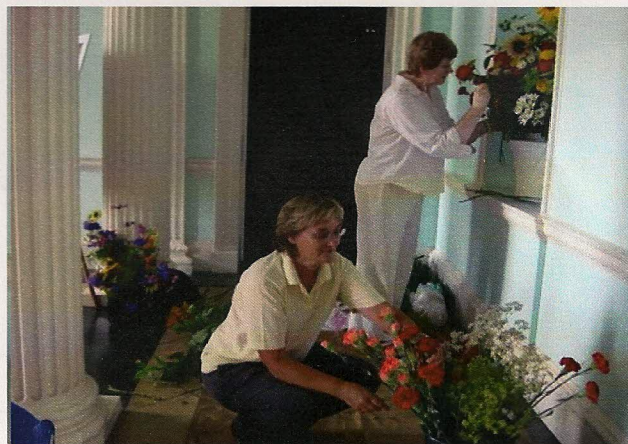
By Sue Coleman

In March, visitors saw the entrance to Croome Court transformed by the addition of 2 large vases of seasonal flowers. By May the profusion of blooms had spread to the Saloon and were ‘accompanying’ music events in the Long Gallery. Under the watchful eyes of Katherine Alker and Sarah Kay who have been making sure that the type of flowers and their presentation is historically correct, volunteers Linda Vernon, Jennie Brown, Jane Hulse & Sue Lloyd are getting the feel for the creation of authentic 18th century style arrangements. They are guided by the Flora Domestica written by Mary Rose Blacker, NT consultant on historical flower arranging. William Dean’s Hortus Croomensis is also used for reference.

Just as 18th century formal gardens were being replaced by a more natural look, so, inside 18th Century houses, flowers were being freely arranged in a natural and haphazard manner as described in Flora Domestica.



As Linda explains ‘We try to make sure that the vases complement each other without being copies – we’re not aiming to make identical displays’.



“We have had a generous donation to enable us to fill the Court with flowers and foliage which we get from a local wholesaler, the Walled Garden & Home Shrubbery and recently Fork to Fork (run by Jenn who works in the Dig for Victory plot). Some of the flowers are provided by volunteers”. The entrance to Croome has some strong colour which allows the team to be quite bold in their palette. I watched them mixing long stemmed red carnations and huge yellow sunflowers – “I love their faces,” said Jennie, “they’re always smiling.” It would be nice to think that the 6th Earl, the plant collector and discerning figure of exquisite good taste, is smiling too.



GARDEN AND PARKS

by Katherine Alker

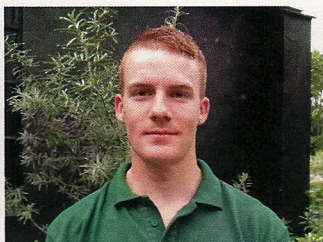
It's hard to believe that it's August – the year is flying by – and as always we've been extremely busy in the garden and park. The dry weather causes nearly as many problems as very wet weather (well almost!); I'm sure you will have noticed the low levels of water in the lake and river, which along with the nitrate laden run-off from some surrounding arable fields, has led to high amounts of blanket weed floating on the surface of the water.

Also near the lake, along the Worcester Drive on top of the Dry Arch Bridge, hopefully you will have had a chance to admire the restored oak paling fence. We repaired this with the volunteer team over a series of Thursdays and installed the oak cleft fence to deter people from taking the short cut across the grass to the lake.

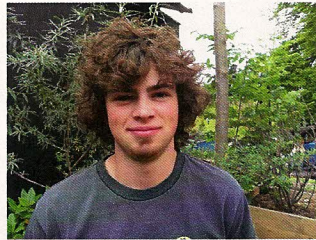


Other jobs for us and the volunteer team over the past few months have included weeding and mulching the hedges – Westfield Lane and the car park; hand pulling the ragwort across the parkland; weeding and pruning in the garden; removing lumps of concrete and bricks from the recently felled area in South Park, left when RAF buildings were demolished decades ago; and getting the plants out onto the gravel standing areas by the Temple Greenhouse.

Some more good news – at last the Garden and Park team is growing!



Jeز joined us in June working 4 days a week. He's had previous experience working for a grounds maintenance company, and has settled into his job here extremely well.



We have also been joined by Seb who is working with us for 3 days a week until May 2011. He is studying Countryside Management at Harper Adams University, and is spending his placement year with us.

Some of you will have met work experience students from local high schools The Chase and Hanley Castle. They really enjoy their time in the different departments at Croome and I really appreciate your help while they are here, so thank you!

Looking forward to Autumn, we shall no doubt be as busy as ever; there are repairs and replacements to stiles needed, and planting in the Arboretum and pleasure garden areas, as well as lots of work in the woodland and shelterbelts.

Everyone needs to keep their fingers crossed that we get Listed Building Consent to restore the sash windows of the Temple Greenhouse. If all goes well, I hope to be able to get the windows in before the worst of the winter – which will be fantastic!

As always I'd like to say a massive thank you to all the garden volunteers, plus those who volunteer at Plant Sales; and the Court Flower Arrangers, who really work hard with Hugh and myself to keep the garden and park at Croome looking great – thank you!

GALLIVANTING GARDENERS

In July, the Croome gardeners went to Highgrove House at Tetbury, country home of the Prince of Wales. At the gate, a policeman solemnly checked our passports, ignored our silly jokes and noted our names ... best behaviour then!

The house dates from 1796 & isn't open to the public. Our 2-hour tour was led by one of the very knowledgeable guides who told us that Prince Charles is heavily involved in the planning, design & upkeep of the garden which is notable for holding the NCCPG national beech collection and includes a wild area, a formal and a walled kitchen garden. It was a huge Cedar of Lebanon at the top of a scented thyme walk which first attracted the Prince of Wales to the garden (sadly, the tree was felled in 2008). The Estate consists of park & woods, farm buildings and about 900 acres of land farmed by the Duchy of Cornwall. There's a beef herd of Aberdeen-Angus cows, and a flock of 'mad' Masham sheep. The move to full organic status was completed in 1996. We loved the informality & variety of the garden which reflected the love and flair of its owner. On to the Highgrove shop: lots of Prince of Wales check, a framed picture of HRH's favourite pig, his special recipe organic ginger liqueur, Highgrove champagne...

Lunch in Tetbury, then to Painswick and the only complete Rococo garden in England. The creators of such gardens liked to show off their wealth with frivolity and flamboyance – hence a mixture of bizarre 'eye-catcher' buildings, a rather lecherous statue of Pan, a kitchen garden, woodland walks and the Anniversary Maze. The garden dates from 1720 – 1760 when English gardens were changing from the formal to the informal. They became regency playrooms, to be enjoyed as an extension of the house. A painting dated 1748 is the guide for the Painswick restoration..



PIMMSFEST - A CROOME EXCLUSIVE

A new event is now firmly established on the social calendar, an event to see and be seen; an event at which polo shirts are de rigueur – although best frocks were also in evidence and one well-known guest sported her gym kit; an event which could hold its head up high in circles where Glyndebourne, Henley Regatta, Wimbledon, are dropped into every conversation.

I speak, of course, of *The Croome Pimmsfest*.

That ancient tippie, invented in the time of the 7th Earl, was mixed to perfection, adorned with strawberries, mint and cucumber, accompanied by an array of yummy snacks and ladled out

to a milling crowd of appreciative volunteers one evening in August.

It was an opportunity to meet and mingle in excellent company while we watched the sun dip gradually behind the Malverns and immerse the Bath stone of the Court in Pimm's coloured light.



Two short speeches thanked us for our huge support to the staff at Croome – we in turn told them we couldn't have done it without them.

Pimm's was first produced in 1823 by barman James Pimms and was initially served as a digestive tonic at oyster bars throughout London. We don't have oysters at Croome but we do have some whopping freshwater mussels – food for thought for 2011 when we all look forward to the next *Pimmsfest*.

A wonderful evening, enjoyed by all and a big thank you to the staff who organized it.

SWANNING AROUND CROOME

What do Croome volunteers do when they have a quiet moment in the Court? Well, last year we enjoyed watching the stately progress of a family of swans: specks of white highlighted against the water.

In 2009 one pair of swans nested on the island and hatched and raised seven cygnets. They stayed together as a family group all through the ice and snow of our very harsh winter, a sign that they had a plentiful food supply. If food is scarce, parents will often drive their young away in late autumn to fend for themselves. All nine survived, maintaining for themselves a circle of clear water midst the ice and snow. By spring this year, the cygnets were fully grown

and the very last of their brown feathers were disappearing.



When the 2010 breeding season started, we counted over thirty swans on the river, as others flew in to assess the 'capabilities' of Croome, and several pairs have remained.

In May two of them seemed to be nesting on the river bank ... the cobb patrolled and guarded, the pen appeared occasionally for a quick dip. Mute swans are mature at two years, but often don't breed till three, four or even five years old. We couldn't see a nest. But were sure there must be one - four to five feet across, with maybe ten or eleven creamy or pale green eggs. We counted the days (incubation is about 35 days) and waited to see a little flotilla of new cygnets. But, nothing. An egg was spotted floating in the water - had they fallen prey to the crows, herons, foxes or mink?

Swans generally only hatch one clutch of eggs each season, so we must wait ... and hope for better luck in 2011.

CLEARING THE LAKE

If you've noticed an improvement in the water quality of the lake, it's all down to the work of the Gardening staff and



Volunteers who have spent many happy days splashing around in waders removing vast quantities of blanket weed.

It entertained the visitors and cheered up the ducks.

Spirogyra adnate is one of the most prolific aquatic weeds; it's a long filamentous alga whose growth is increased by bright sunlight.



Left unchecked it can cause serious oxygen depletion which could cause distress to the huge numbers of fish in the lake.

FASCINATING FLUES

By Sarah Kay

The recent investigations into Croome Court's chimney flues as part of the work funded by the Wolfson Foundation has provided us with some valuable clues and insights into the evolution of the historic fabric.

Catriona Hughes, Croome's Conservator organised Keith Mitchell, (of the somewhat worryingly-named Volcanic Chimney Company!), to carry out the investigations. In particular, the Entrance Hall chimneypiece which has always bothered us for several reasons: it is very feminine and delicate, made of modest painted wood: the way it is attached to the wall, where it appears to have been 'spliced-in', and the way it sits on the plinth blocks (see image) looks very unconvincing and unsatisfactory. Traditionally, Entrance Hall chimneypieces were larger, more masculine, more architectural, made of stone or marble and were often the more valuable in the house, designed to give an impressive,

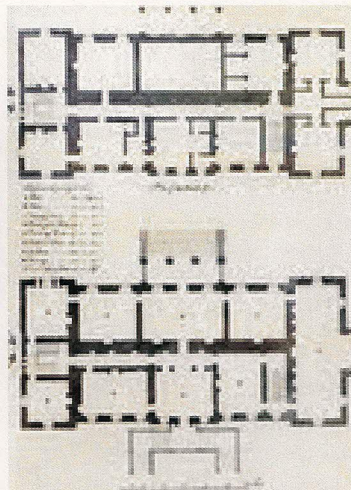


solid welcome to visitors when they entered the house. Our chimneypiece looks as though it could have come from an upstairs bedroom and it would originally have been flat against the wall, which would have better shown off its delicate profile.

Bafflingly, the 1771 Vitruvius Britannicus plan for the ground floor shows no chimneypiece on the west wall. Keith found that the Entrance Hall fireplace shares its chimney with the Billiard Room and was not an original arrangement. At approximately 3 metres from hearth level, the flueways join separated by brickwork built against a metal plate which is visible from the Billiard Room fireplace. Although he cannot be 100% certain, the construction points to the Entrance Hall fireplace being added at a later stage. These findings would seem to prove that the 1771 Vitruvius plan was accurate, certainly as far as the omission of the fireplace is concerned.

At any rate, it disappointingly means that this fireplace is not a suitable candidate for lighting a fire in, as the draw would not be adequate (hence the glass smoke 'cover', which already appears on late 19th century photographs indicating that this must have always been a problem).

It is odd to think that an Entrance Hall should have no fireplace. But there are references to a Vestibule in the 1719 inventory and on a 1758 bill, which may indicate that before Brown's re-modeling, this was a smaller, less



important space and therefore had no fireplace. It also ties in with trying to work out the original arrangement of the main stairs and whether they rose from this space, possibly rising symmetrically on the east and west walls to join on a landing on the first floor level (an imperial stair), which would have occupied the space where the fireplace now is. If this was the case, was there possibly originally a fireplace on the south wall, where the screen of columns now is?!

The other fascinating discovery that Keith made was that the two Saloon fireplaces have both been adapted from earlier openings. The left hand one tapers outwards from the top of the fireplace into a huge 'gather' area, gradually reducing to a large rectangle of approximately 60" x 16", then tapering to its final size of approx 16" square. Keith feels that this construction suggests that it was



once a very large inglenook type fireplace, which invites speculation as to the original function and form of this room. Again, disappointingly, it would require serious intervention to put this fireplace into use. The right hand fireplace flue has had 'modern' alterations to it at a height of 5-6 metres from hearth level and the sizing of the chimney above this suggests it was originally not as large as the left hand one. A poorly-patched area of plaster on the first floor corridor shows where access for this alteration was achieved. Renovation of this fireplace would require re-opening of this access hole and so again is quite problematic.

The Dining Room, on the other hand, apparently has a well-formed gather and chimney built specifically for the size of the fireplace. There would be some work required to gain access to install liners and a cleaning door, or 'soot lid', which appears to have been removed or plastered over, as well as work to the top of chimneystacks and cappings, but encouragingly, this fireplace is a possible candidate for lighting a fire, as is the Long Gallery, whose chimney is the only relatively straightforward of those surveyed, which is understandable, it having been constructed from scratch as part of Brown's 'new-build'. Keith describes this one as an ideal candidate for restoring to original working condition with some work to prepare and improve the flue lining.

Catriona is planning interpretation on these interesting findings to be placed in the Court very soon, including showing some of Keith Mitchell's images from inside the flues and a display of the blackened twigs removed from the Saloon flues!

EXPLORING DOWN UNDER

With Tim Hickson



Nine times out of ten, when you descend the stairs into the gloom of the basement at Croome Court, it will be a male face you see smiling a greeting and bidding you welcome. Basements seem to be 'man things' - a bit like sheds and lawn mowers. However, all that is about to change. Female reluctance to meet the challenge of enthusiastic basement stewarding is about to become a thing of the past.

Tim, our basement 'expert', has just compiled a very readable, informative and confidence inspiring set of notes to help explain and bring to life the seemingly endless stretch of empty corridors and rooms.

Over to Tim:

"During the War, Croome, along with Madresfield, Spetchley and Hindlip, was earmarked as a possible refuge for the Royal Family, HM Government, and Winston Churchill should circumstances dictate that they must leave London. At Croome, rooms had been allocated and supplies of food were stored in the Stables.

There are internet sites which state that the Dutch Royal Family stayed at Croome, but although there are witnesses to a Dutch royal party arriving at the Court, we have no actual evidence that they stayed. We do know that Juliana spent much of the war in Canada with her family, and Queen Wilhelmina resided mainly near or in London.

"An invaluable resource when talking to visitors is an elderly photocopy of the 1940 plan, which was drawn when

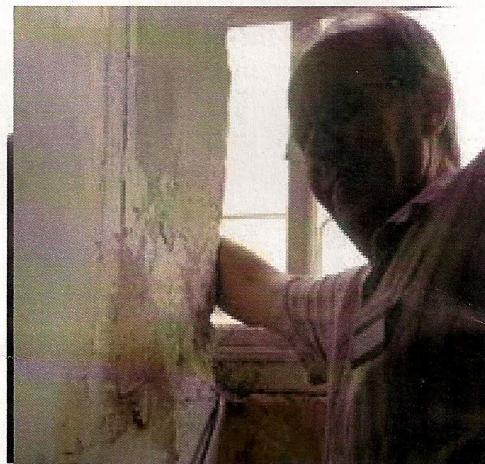
the Ministry of Works requisitioned the Court just before the 10th Earl was killed at Dunkirk. It shows how his family were using the basement and the ground floor of the Red Wing*. When he inherited, he merely asked the Croome Estate Trust to modernise the utilities in the house.

The 9th Earl claimed he never altered anything, whilst the 8th Earl, as well as being notoriously stingy, spent most of his time elsewhere. The 7th Earl was blind when he took over, so probably the room uses shown on this plan were largely those intended by the 6th Earl and Capability Brown.

"There are, however, two differences that we know of: one major, one minor. First, the rooms just inside the Red Wing are shown as a kitchen, larder and scullery in 1940, yet we know that in the 18th century this was a set of rooms for a steward. Jill Tovey, Croome's archivist, believes there had always been two stewards, a House Steward and a Land, or Estate, Steward. One of these had a significant residence in the complex of buildings to the East of the Court.

"Second, the bay-windowed room below the Long Gallery, currently used by Croome volunteers, which had since the 6th Earl's time been a smoking room - probably for senior male servants - was altered in Victorian times by the 9th Earl but still used as a smoking room for when he or his sons wanted a cigarette, a pipe or a cigar (personally, I think it was probably a respite from the severer demands of the ladies too).

"We know that the basement largely dates from the earlier Jacobean house. The plan clearly shows how the thickness of the walls varies: the thicker ones are those of the older house and the thinner ones those where Capability Brown added the wing for the Long Gallery. Also demonstrable is the extra width Brown added to the windows (see photograph) - four panes visible from outside, but the profile is cut by a wall on the interior and shows only three panes, the width of windows in the original house."



Tim's full set of notes go on to talk about the Butler's Pantry and Strong Room, the kitchens in the 1940s and in the 6th Earl's time and the Red Wing.



*Ed's note: THE RED WING - The minutes of Malvern Hills District Council meeting on 27 April this year show that the Council were moving towards issuing a Compulsory Purchase Order for the Red Wing. To read information so far available in the public domain go to: www.openlylocal.com/documents/28943

Click on 'Find out more about item 67', then 'History'.

HOARDING HISTORY

By Kath Morris

Have you looked around the RAF building lately? If so you will have noticed that the exhibition space now houses a compact but fascinating collection of memorabilia from the wartime years. Jill Price, from Upton upon Severn, generously donated the items in the display, organised by Jane Hulse. Jill tells their story.

"I come from a family of hoarders," she told me, "so it's quite a challenge when I am left to sort out the collections of older family members who have died." Sifting through what other people might regard as junk, Jill has unearthed treasures which reveal both the wartime experience and the everyday life of her family during the 1940s. It is these that now reside at Croome.

One display case contains items which belonged to her brother Peter Price who served in the RAF and undertook pilot training, some of it in South Africa where 30,000 RAF and Commonwealth personnel were trained between 1942 and 1945.

"I found all his lecture notes, log books, first aid packs, flying helmet and gloves. There was half a parachute. I well remember running down the garden with this billowing behind me. Now there is only half of it left and I assume the rest of it must have been transformed into a garment.

"Then there were a few items from my father's Home Guard experience and several things of my mother's: wartime recipe books, leaflets from the Ministry of Food, ration books, Kilner jars for bottling fruit, stone jars for salting and preserving beans and little net milk jug covers, edges crocheted by mother and threaded with glass beads to weight them down."

These items tend to bring back nostalgic childhood memories for visitors who remember the wartime era. Many have lost their own family's mementoes of the 1940s. There might still be the odd Kilner jar still around and RAF memorabilia are keenly sought after, but the joy of this collection is the number of items together, a small compendium of a local family's wartime experience.

BIRDS IN THE PARK

By Sue Coleman

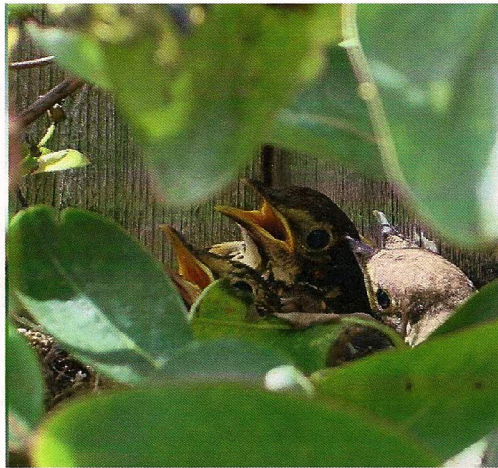
Croome Park is a great spot for bird-watching at any time, and particularly on quiet days out of the main season, with a wealth of variety of habitat from wetland and reed bed to ditch and meadow, from hedge to conifer, river-bank to rooftop. We used to have a resident Robin and a family of Blue Tits at the back of the old Portakabin and a Goldcrest, at 9cm Britain's smallest bird, in a pollarded yew by the Wild Walk. I've picked up Owl pellets in the Arboretum, watched the Skylarks soar above the meadow and heard the first Cuckoo heralding spring in Menagerie Wood. We've had our share of 'twitchers' too – I remember a large number of visitors one winter's day who were following up the sighting of a Butcher Bird – I had to look it up to discover it was a Red Backed Shrike, a rare visitor to these parts, which gets its name from its nasty habit of hunting small birds and mammals and impaling its captured prey on thorn bushes by way of a larder. A flock of Corn Bunting were spotted too, stopping off at Croome one winter before taking up temporary residence just across the fields near Wadborough and attracting throngs of bird-watchers heaving heavy photographic equipment over the stiles and looking out of place in their borrowed wellies.

Pat Griffin, a volunteer at Croome for many years, has kept a note of the birds he's seen – often between 15 and 20 different types in an afternoon: "Robins, Chaffinches, Blackbirds, Blue and Great Tits foraging busily in the shrubberies. Coots and Moorhens, Mallards, Swans and Canada Geese (and Tufted Ducks this year).

Summer's aerial acrobats the Swifts, Swallows and House Martins swooping for food (and water) over lake and meadows before returning to nests round the Court. Gangs of squawking squabbling Jackdaws around the plane trees near the 'black' bridge. Then there are the giants like the Herons and Buzzards; the silent pass of a hunting Sparrowhawk; hovering Kestrels and passing Gulls; noisy Magpies, Jays and Great-spotted (or Green) Woodpeckers around the shrubberies; and flocks of hungry Fieldfares and Redwings in winter. And it's no surprise to see a busy flock of Long-tailed Tits pass through, perhaps with a Nuthatch or Treecreeper nearby; Stonechats, Greenfinches, Goldfinches and the occasional Bullfinch.

Any 'specials'? Kingfishers occasionally – last year I was lucky enough to spot one dart round the lake, under the 'black' bridge, up onto a high dead branch from which it promptly plunged vertically for a fish; the spectacular flight of a passing Peregrine late one recent afternoon; Spotted Flycatchers in '09 near the Island Pavilion; an Egret (just one so far), a few Lapwings, a Redshank and a Curlew in the South Park; a Hawfinch one winter; and perhaps my favourite – the tiny Wren which nested for two summers in holes in the main Grotto cave, waiting (stoically or sometimes frantically) for hundreds of innocent humans to let her feed her babies two feet above their heads."

There are still plenty of gaps on the list, so The Chronicle invites readers to add to it and share any special sightings.



THE CHURCH OF

an interview with C

It's all too easy to dash past the Church and overlook what treasures it contains – in this issue we hope to raise the profile of the Church and tell volunteers a little about it so that they can encourage people to visit.

The original Church at Croome is mentioned in 1283 and was dedicated to St James the Apostle. An engraving from 1714 shows the Church attached to a range of domestic buildings immediately west of the house. In the mid-18th century, the 6th Earl secured the agreement of the Bishop of Worcester to pull down the old church and build a new one on the hill.

He cited his reason as the dilapidated state of the old building and its inconvenient location; looking back, one wonders whether it was rather more to do with The Grand Plan !



The Earl must have been very relieved when the Bishop gave 'Planning Permission' for the move! The new church was consecrated on 29th June 1763 when the dedication was changed to St Mary Magdalene, perhaps to honour the Earl's late wife Maria who was originally buried at Pirton, but whose body was later taken to the family vault at Croome.

In the days before the M5 split the Croome estate, Geoff Sherwood and his parents were living in the Worcester Lodge which can still be seen on the road to Kinnersley from High Green. Geoff's grandfather had been Head Wagoner in charge of a team of horses at the Court; his father worked in the gardens, his mother in the Court. Geoff has a great affection for Croome and has continued to be a frequent visitor, valued supporter and volunteer. He has a particular interest in the Church of St Mary Magdalene where he often stewards in order to meet visitors and answer some of

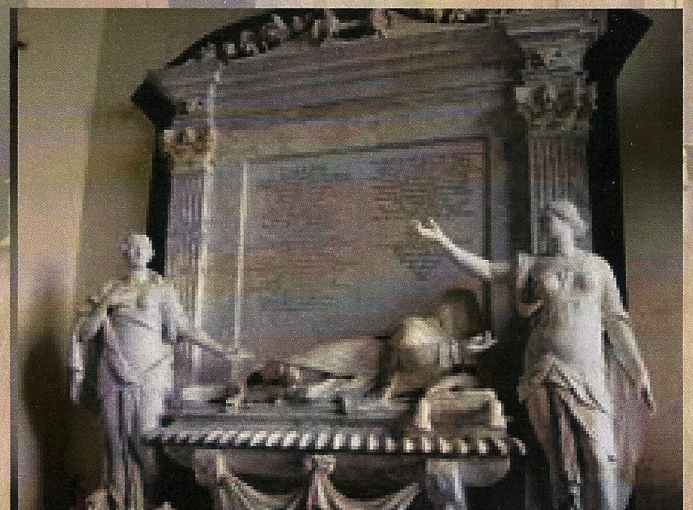
their questions. Many will know him as a very authentic Father Christmas, hiding with NT volunteers at the back of the church during the annual Carol Service and making a surprise appearance to hand out sweets and mince pies.

After the Coventry family left the Court in 1949 the parish was no longer viable and the church and churchyard passed into the care of The Churches Conservation Trust (CCT).

The Church has always attracted visitors but, sadly, some still hurry by without calling in, a great pity since the church is steeped in history .

"Let us not forget", Geoff says, "that many of the craftsmen the 6th Earl employed at the Court worked on the church as well. For example, the ceiling was created by Joseph Rose, who worked on the Long Gallery ceiling in the Court. The tall carved doors were designed by Robert Adam and the pulpit was the work of John Hoberaft.

The fine marble memorials in the chancel originated from the earlier church and had to be carefully rehomed. Of particular note is the memorial to the 4th Earl (1687) on the north side of the chancel, with its intricate carvings by Grinling Gibbons dated 1690 in Italian marble, which, to quote the Architect from the CCT, is "Some of the finest carving in the church!". The top garlands are typical of Gibbons and the exquisitely fluted Corinthian pilasters flanking the wide reredos are also believed to be by him.



John, 4th Baron, 1654 - 1687, reclines on a sarcophagus. Carving by Grinling Gibbons.

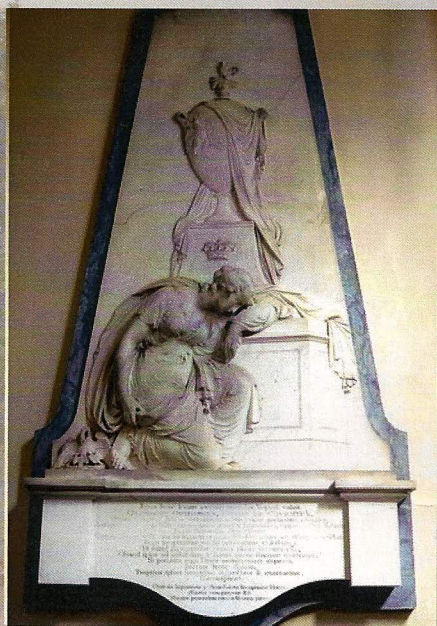
ST MARY MAGDELENE

Geoff Sherwood

By Sue Coleman

The Latin inscriptions on the monuments have been translated into English for the convenience of interested visitors.

“On June 24th, we were visited by a group of Trustees from the CCT, including their Chairman Lloyd Grossman. Anne Docherty (also a Church Steward) and I were asked to address them and an informal and enjoyable discussion followed.



George William, 1722 - 1809, Carved by John Bacon the Younger

“Church stewarding is enjoyable and very rewarding in part due to the interesting folk you meet and on two occasions this year I have been asked about the Rev. Phillip Cheeseman who was Rector of Pirton with Croome from 1945 to his early death in 1971. He was also Rural Dean of Bredon from 1964 till 1971.

“I remember him well and on one occasion, when he overheard me playing an old pedal organ at my aunt’s house in High Green, he asked me if I would play the organ in Croome church for one or two services! I was 14 years old at the time and declined the offer, probably embarrassed at that age. Phillip Cheeseman was a real gentleman; he’s buried in Pirton churchyard

I greatly regret that he’s not remembered in the church at Croome.

“Particularly relevant this year, as we remember the 70th anniversary of the evacuation from Dunkirk, is the memorial to the 10th Earl of Coventry. The 7th Battalion Worcestershire Regiment diary tells us that on 27th May 1940 at Givenchy in France D company, including Lord Coventry, held the village of Bassee with 70 men until 15.30 hrs. ‘Considerable casualties were inflicted on enemy infantry, but not without severe casualties to the company. Lord Coventry killed’



1st Baron Coventry, 1578 - 1639, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal.

Those stark words meant the end of an era for Croome. George William Reginald Victor Coventry is buried in the communal cemetery at Givenchy-les-la-Bassee, Pas de Calais, Grave 2 Row A, and the grave is tended by the villagers.”

On most Thursdays you can find Geoff at the Church and he’s always happy to pass on some of his knowledge. In 1998 the Church was broken into and the Font, an intricate mahogany design by Adam with carving by Sefferin Alken, was stolen. It was eventually recovered and has been in safe-keeping elsewhere in the county - however, negotiations have been taking place and there may soon be some important news.

THE FURTHEST FOLLY

By Kath Morris

It was in 1794 at a surprisingly advanced age of 73 that the 6th Earl decided to expand his collection of Follies. He engaged James Wyatt to embark on plans for building the Saxon Tower at the top of Broadway Hill. According to Tower literature it was completed in 1799. Many would say it is the most spectacular of the Croome Follies.

Broadway Beacon, on which it is built, is the second highest point on the Cotswold Ridge, narrowly beaten to first place by Cleeve Hill. At 312 metres (1024 feet) above sea level the Tower commands views of a vast green panorama across the heart of England and into the bordering counties of Wales. From the top fourteen counties can be seen on a clear day; on a stormy one the Tower emerges fitfully from the clouds, full of Gothic mystery.

Why was it built here? Tradition claims that it was for Barbara, Lady Coventry. One legend is that the Earl and his second wife wished to be able to signal from here to Croome almost fifteen miles away that they were on their way back from nearby Springhill House. It was certainly a magnificent viewpoint for the Earl and Barbara to look out proudly on their estates - if at that stage in their lives they could manage to climb the staircase to the top of the Tower.

James Wyatt was a specialist in the Gothic style and it seems likely that he enjoyed this assignment. Fifty five feet high, the Tower embodies a mixture of styles without any attempt to be consistent. The underlying structure is a six sided tower. This is embellished by turrets at three corners. Whilst the style of the windows in the turrets is 'castlelike' and defensive, the distinctly unmedieval windows in the main tower with their little balconies are purely for pleasure. Amazingly the Tower is built without foundations. It sways in the wind and, according to the managing director, the children who lived there when it was a farm used to find their beds, which were on castors, moving about the floor in high winds!

After the death of the 6th Earl the Tower became the property of John, Barbara's first son and George William's second son - the one who was said to be his favourite. Fifteen years later it was sold to Sir Thomas Phillips, owner of nearby Middle Hill House, who was famous for being possibly the greatest collector of books and manuscripts in history. The Tower was described by one French scholar as 'a light house signalling to all men of learning that a hospitable roof exists under which all pilgrims of learning are made welcome'. After the Phillips era the Tower was let to a series of tenants and in the late 19th century became a centre for the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood of artists including William Morris. Morris used to bathe in a zinc bath on the top viewing platform of the Tower. His daughter describes how the wind kept blowing the soap away, '...but how the clean aromatic

wind blew the aches out of our tired bodies, and how good it all was.'

By the early 20th century, after its more glamorous past, the Tower became a farmhouse occupied by a succession of tenant farmers who worked the surrounding land known as Tower Farm. The longest occupation of this kind was by the Hollingtons who lived in the Tower from the early 1930's until 1972. When I came to live in the Vale with my family in 1968 one of our first trips was to Broadway Tower. We paid our shillings to Mrs Collington who was sitting on a chair outside selling tickets and made our way up the dark, narrow staircase to the top, carefully avoiding stepping on the huge number of cats who were perched in every available space. I wonder if any other volunteers remember that Broadway Tower experience.

Like Croome the Tower has its RAF connections. During the Second World War a Royal Observer Corps post was set up close by and Mr Hollington was one of the two Corps members who tried to save the airmen whose plane crashed on Beacon Hill on June 2nd 1943. Near the Tower is a memorial to those who died.

Now the Tower is home to a shop and an attractively laid out museum, which is small in area but chock full of information about the various stories associated with this historic building. On top is the viewing platform with a toposcope to help you identify points of interest in all directions.

The furthest folly is well worth a visit, whether you prefer to make your way by car up tortuous Fish Hill to the picnic site on Beacon Hill or follow the Cotswold Way by foot from Broadway. And if you're wondering about the fourteen counties, see below.



Avon, Buckinghamshire, Gloucestershire, Gwent, Herefordshire, Northamptonshire, Oxfordshire, Powys, Shropshire, Somerset, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, West Midlands, Worcestershire.

MEINE GUTE !

By Sue Coleman

Croome Court may have had many uses over the years, but the Park too has seen its share of the limelight. In July 2003, hoping to benefit from the media coverage, the National Trust agreed to host the first stage of the inaugural Marathon of Britain in aid of Children with Leukaemia.

The Marathon covered 175 miles over 6 days and 34 runners duly set up a temporary wigwam village in the orchard east of the Church and were taken by coach to the Abbey Gate in Great Malvern for the first stage of 15.8 miles ending back at Croome.

The runners included Lloyd Scott, famed for running the London Marathon in full diving gear, the ex Mayor of Stratford and some visiting Germans.

Floella Benjamin fired the starting gun and the runners set off to ascend the 1385 feet to the Worcester Beacon – unfortunately, the lead runner set off at a gallop in the wrong direction and all the others followed. Shouting and waving their arms, the marshalls had to 'leg it' after them to set them back on track.

The runners found the going tough, mostly off road and through rough pasture and crops of beans; the final mile passed through the Park and the Court, ending on Church Hill where they arrived hot and tired.

Volunteer Gardener Ted Rice takes up the story: "Having finished the race, the German runners were hoping to cool off and discovered the cold water standpipe in the old car park (now the play area).

They stripped off and enjoyed an exuberant and noisy shower. Their naked state alarmed the staff who were unsure of how to deal with such behaviour and conferred nervously. Then I was sent to convey a message to the organisers along the lines that The National Trust regrets that nakedness is deemed inappropriate on Trust property"

However, the promise of media coverage had worked and visitor numbers at Croome were high that day.

If anyone happens to have any photos of the event the Chronicle team would love to see them ...

ON THE TAPESTRY TRAIL

By Susan Leech

In March this year, Jill Tovey, Christian, Gen and I headed off to North Yorkshire to visit Newby Hall.

The purpose of our mission to view Newby Hall's set of Gobelins Tapestries. Lucinda Compton, the present owner of Newby Hall and her manager, Stuart Gill, gave us a very warm welcome and a great tour of the Hall. We were extremely honoured as they even opened the blinds in the Tapestry Room for us – a very rare occurrence!

Manufacture at some time after the end of the Seven Years War with France. His set of tapestries were the second weaving of six weavings for English aristocracy (the Croome set was the first) and they were made between 1766 and 1771.

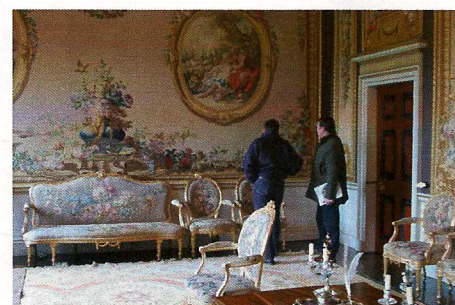
The Newby Hall tapestries are not identical to the Croome set, the most obvious difference is the pale mauve/pink background instead of the vivid crimson of the Croome set. Some of the paintings in the medallions and some of the details in the borders are different. The matching tapestry-covered furniture is also similar to the Croome set but has differences in decorative detail.

Unfortunately the Newby Hall set is not in great condition. As well as being very faded, one panel has been damaged by leaking bath water, and various panels, especially those above the chimneypiece, look as if they have been cut and then stitched back together. Interestingly, the tapestries do

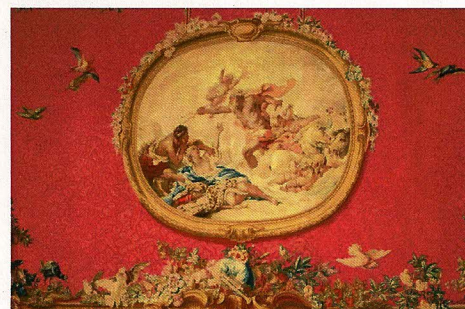
not cover the walls entirely. Maybe this was deliberate or perhaps the tapestries have been altered or may have been made for a different room?

After one of Christian's favourite pork pies, we managed to fit in a bonus visit to Lotherton Hall on our way home.

There we were shown 'our' magnificent pier tables and mirrors originally from the Saloon at Croome. The next time you are in the Saloon, have a good look at the dado rail either side of the south door and you will see where it has been cut to accommodate the cornices of the pier tables and the holes for the screws used to fix them to the wall. I am sure the tables would slot back in if they ever return to Croome.



Newby Hall was the country seat of William Weddell, a contemporary of George William, 6th Earl of Coventry. Weddell also visited the Gobelins



BIRDS ON THE BOX

By Hugh Warwick

After over a year of work behind the scenes to secure money, agree on the design and specification, and wait for the go-ahead from our expert bat consultant, our batcam and bird box camera were finally installed in March.

The bird box was a massive success with the first visit coming within 48 hours of the box being attached to the wall! Despite fears about boiling blue tits, our dedicated parents worked restlessly as a perfect team to fatten up a very healthy brood of eleven chicks. All had turned from wriggly, pink squeaks with beaks into birds looking bigger and healthier than their parents within a month. Apologies to all who suffered the constant cackle from the bird box microphone working in either the visitor service office or on reception! But it has served well to draw people down the corridor and investigate what all the din was about.

Now there is a much more pleasant noise, if you're lucky enough to catch it! Along with the infrared cameras to spy on our bats, we have a bat detector, through which you can now hear a lovely high-pitched warbling. This is the sound of a bat's sonar; noises sent out at ultrasonic frequencies that they use to map their surroundings.

After a slow start, and fears that maybe they were camera shy and we'd scared them off, we now have another very healthy colony of bats in our maternity roost.

Anytime from the middle of July onwards we should start to see bat pups on the cameras and see them suckling on their mothers, a feat of acrobatics which I'm sure defies most laws of physics. Alongside the TV and console, there is also an interpretation panel which I wrote and designed. This provides a little further information on our residents and their lives.

When people ask me what I do at work as a gardener, as you can imagine it's quite hard to describe and not always what you might expect!



WILD FLOWERS

By Ann Meadows

Ann asked us to display these photos of the Grass Vetchling and to say that she's so grateful to the gardening staff for protecting it. Where one struggled last year, there are now 3 or 4 with lots of seed pods popping open.



News of the Lesser Centaury is not so good – with the re-routing of the path from the Church to the Court we seem to have lost this completely.



Look out for the Bracket fungi climbing up the yew tree trunks. In some lights the colours are amazing.

RATTY ON THE RIVER

By 'Ratty'

I was thrilled when I heard there was a chance that I could spend a weekend at Croome Park with my friends Toad, Badger and Mole.

Toad had polished his car specially for the occasion and parked it on the South Lawn quite close to the mansion called Croome Court; a house rather similar to Toad Hall.



Toad could be heard giving excited loud "Poop poops" throughout the entire park.

Badger, looking exceptionally well-groomed felt very much at home leaping in and out of the shrubberies, surprising visitors. He was sometimes spotted strolling along the river bank looking really cool in his shades.



I had heard there was a river and was delighted to find a boat just the right size for two animals. It was complete with oars, an umbrella and cushions to sit on and was very much like my own little boat back home in The Willows. Mole and I had a wonderful time rowing up and down and got very excited when we had to lie flat to avoid losing our heads under the bridge.

Mole had not had the pleasure of rowing before, but took to it like a rat to water. It was very pleasant seeing dragonflies and damselflies skimming over the water. It was a good thing Toad was not with us or he might have eaten them!

(Thanks to Christine Riley)

A DAY OUT WITH A DIFFERENCE

By Kath Morris



National Volunteer Week 2010: we all boarded the coach at an early hour on the 1st of June for an exciting trip to an exotic destination, Bhaktivedanta Manor, the headquarters of ISKCON, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

It's near Watford – but that sounds much less appealing! The Manor was donated to ISKCON in 1973 by George Harrison for the growing number of Krishna devotees and is now a thriving community dedicated to uplifting society through study, spiritual education and lifestyle.

On entering the estate we were warmly welcomed by our friendly guide, Rhadhamohan or, more comfortably, Richard, who looked after us through the day, showing us different aspects of the community's life and patiently answering questions.

The manor, a Victorian mock Gothic building, was built on the site of an earlier timber-framed manor house. It houses a dramatic temple room where we were privileged to take part in a ceremony, the Raj Bhoga-arati, which takes place each day at noon.

Curtains were drawn back to reveal the magnificent altar of carved wood and gilt with its three domed shrines to the deities, whilst monks chanted, played their instruments, held before us the sacred flame and scattered incense.

After lunch the rain stopped for a timely interval in which we walked round the gardens, scented and verdant on a wet spring day and reflecting careful nurture and care for all living things.

We saw the farm and sacred cattle, who were waiting patiently in a stall to be milked by hand – to music. Then removing our shoes again to re-enter the Manor, we were invited into the theatre to meet the President of the Community, Kripamoya Das, who had been at Croome in 1981 – 2 and did his best to answer our searching questions.

Did you know ?

- Bhaktivedanta Manor preceded Croome as an ISKCON base by seven years. The contract for the Hare Krishna Community to buy Croome was completed in December 1980, according to Jill Tovey's research.

- The two communities had different purposes. Whilst Bhaktivedanta remained a devotional centre, Croome became the base for educational work, housing a television editing studio, a printing press, a novice training programme and a school. Some income came from the import and sale of oil paintings.
- Croome was sold by ISKCON after a disagreement in which Jaya Tirtha the former leader of the community left, apparently in disgrace, after a huge argument with other leaders over his use of drugs to heighten religious experience. Kripamoya Das remembered that the discussion of this issue took place in the Long Gallery.
- When the leader left in 1982, taking 30 or 40 of his followers with him, Croome ceased to be viable and many of the remaining members returned to Bhaktivedanta, necessitating huge expansion there. The Court was put up for sale in 1984.
- Monks, who wear saffron robes, live the single monastic life until they marry. Then they wear white robes and, whilst still members of the Hare Krishna Community, they live in the wider community. At a later stage in their lives they can return to the monastic life. Lay members of the Croome Community lived for the most part in the Worcester area with their children, who would have attended the school.
- The chapel in the stable block at Croome, which had been used by St Joseph's School, was converted into a Temple Room by the Hare Krishna. This was the centre for worship in the community and housed colourful statues of the deities as does the Temple Room at Bhaktivedanta.
- The dining room artwork was designed by a consultant to the Hare Krishna community: possibly one lady was responsible for all the actual painting. The original background colour was turquoise. The room was possibly used as a celebration room. There are still a lot of questions which we hope to answer about this room – so watch this space.



Photos by Linda Pritchard

BACON AND EGGS

By Rosie Styles

He came down the staircase very slowly for someone who showed no signs of decrepitude. Stepping into the basement, he paused, shut his eyes and took a very deep breath. Holding it for a moment, he exhaled gently, only to take another intake, even deeper than the last, lifting his nose as if to scent the air.

"Aaaah," he said, as he opened his eyes wide and let the breath go. "I can smell the bacon and eggs."

He had an accent which I couldn't place. Lost for words, I raised my eyebrows and inclined my head in query.

"I was here in 1957. Where we are standing was the kitchen and I have the most wonderful memories of porridge, bacon and eggs for breakfast."

"Oh good," I thought. "One of the schoolboys" but before I could formulate any questions, he was continuing.

"I came to camp here in the summer holidays of 1957 as a boy scout. We pitched tent pretty much underneath that cedar tree over there," indicating

with his arm, even though it was out of sight. "It was a very wet summer, I don't suppose you remember it," – flatterer! – "but one night there was a complete deluge and by the morning we were all pretty much soaked. As we got up and tried to sort ourselves out, we were aware of two nuns who came out halfway onto the little bridge. It was as though they couldn't come over onto our side of the river. They stood there waving their arms to get our attention. They had come to insist that we came into the Court for breakfast. Although it wasn't the tough Boy Scout thing, we were overcome by their persistence, and we ended up in this room after having been sent to have hot showers, eating the most delicious breakfast you can imagine. Truly, they were so kind to us."

It turned out he was an English chap who'd emigrated to Canada and had been visiting family. He explained that although he wasn't due to fly back for another two days, he'd felt the need to leave early to give himself 'a bit of space'. As he set off, he'd decided that

his normal motorway route to Heathrow would be too frantic, and opted for the side roads, which brought him down the A38, where he suddenly saw a sign for Croome and on an impulse, followed the signs. Entering the house, the one place he needed to find was the kitchen. After much reminiscing, he began his tour of the house, but before he left, he came back to say farewell. "I set out this morning in need of spiritual refreshment, and I feel I was led to Croome. I'm going to go out to the Cedar Tree now," and he went, to nurture his soul with a walk in the Park.



RISING STARS IN THE LONG GALLERY

By Phil Douce

On Saturday 26th June, we held the second of the planned music events in the Long Gallery. Following a very successful first concert, this one was "Rising Stars at Croome Court". It was a recital given by young musicians. It was a beautiful evening and about 140 people were treated to a superb concert.



The first artist was pianist Levi Moscovici who played a selection of music ranging from Brahms to Gershwin. He was born in the

Democratic Republic of Congo in 1982 and now lives in London.

He was followed by Edward Pether who began playing the violin at the age of four. Edward played a sonata by Ysaye.

Andrew McCade then performed two pieces on the tuba. Andrew is another who started at the age of four and having tried many instruments finally chose the Tuba and after only six lessons successfully auditioned for the National Children's Orchestra. Having listened to Andrew the audience were made aware of the range of sounds the Tuba could make.

The fourth performer was Hannah Roper. Hannah studied at the internationally renowned Yehudi Menuhin School. She played a variety of pieces ranging from Vivaldi to Beethoven.



The final artist was Osman Tack another pianist who at the age of 17 achieved first place at the 2010 Chandos Young Musician of the year competition and will later this year be touring the USA.

It was a wonderful evening providing a wide range of music and extremely talented performers.

THE FUTURE'S BRIGHT

By Christian Walker

For many years since I first moved to Cheltenham I have driven on the M5 and seen the Panorama Tower and the Cedars behind Pirton Tower and wondered what this obviously lost landscape was. It is therefore interesting that I came to Croome as Operations Manager last year in fixed-term role.

Croome Park has been through an incredible period of change and growth over the last year – an exciting time although one

not without some growing pains. If current expectations are met we will have increased our visitor numbers by over 50k in one year as we head to 130k visitors. While it is critically important to

remember these numbers and the associated income that this brings, allowing us to restore and invest in Croome it is equally necessary to think of the individual and their experience of Croome. Sometimes quality over quantity does matter and as I reflect on my own fifteen months operating Croome I have many memories with individuals that I am able to take away that – from the bizarre to the ridiculous!

These include teapot shortages in the Canteen, the BBC filming of a future without the National Trust (!), a plane landing on the South Lawn, a new programme of musical concerts, holes swallowing a lorry, floods and snow, to trying to stem the outbreak of laminate signs but not forgetting golf buggies.

I am not sure what can prepare you for joining the National Trust but one thing

that has continually been a source of pleasure is the genuine and thorough passion people have for Croome.

From meeting neighbouring farmers at the Game Fair in July through to the detailed research carried out by volunteers into areas of the property.

There are so many reasons that are varied and incredibly diverse but I can honestly say the relationship in the 21st century between people and a traditional 18th century English Estate

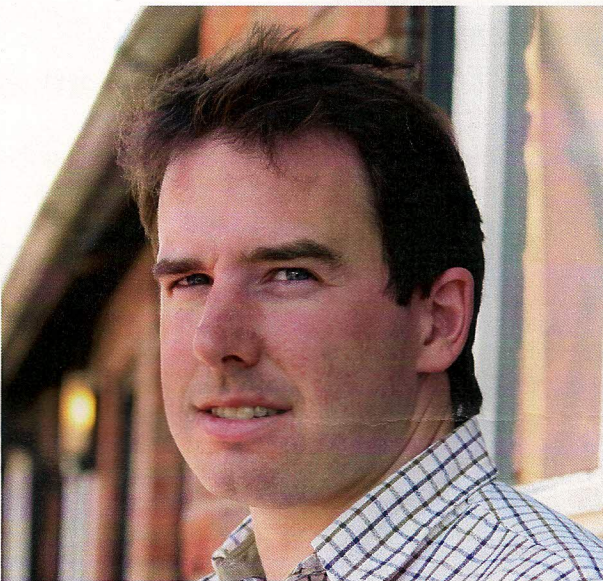
for whatever wide-ranging reason is really pleasing and interesting.

The key highlights for me have included opening the Court last year, getting the musical concerts off the ground, bringing the hunt back and

seeing the interest in the Oral history project.

The biggest pleasure however has been getting to know and working with a fantastic team of volunteers and staff - building a solid bedrock upon which to welcome visitors to Croome. While there have been problems for example, with buggies, our Visitor Enjoyment scores continue to rise – we are now over 76% compared to the low 60s last year when Croome was Portaloo world.

The future for Croome is a bright and an incredibly exciting one full of opportunity and potential and for the effort of the team (volunteers and staff) as well as visitors I hope this is fully realised. While I am sorry not to be continuing I can now drive up the M5 and be continually reminded of Croome – its landscape but of equal importance its people both past and present.



KATHERINE ALKER WRITES....

There surely can't be anyone involved here at Croome who doesn't know that Christian has moved on to pastures new to become Operations Manager at Coughton Court.

During the time he was here, Christian has been involved and responsible for some key events, such as the opening of Croome Court; the opening of the new kitchen at RAF visitor centre – including the drama of purchasing the canteen teapots (ask Catering Dept for further info!); hosting Croome Hunt at Christmas; interviewing and employing several new members of staff; planning the new shop (building work starts soon); and dealing with many crises – the saga of the buggies, first aid provision, and blocked toilets to name a few!

It will be a bit strange without Christian around, but I am sure you join me in wishing him all the very best in his new job.

BOOKSHOP NEWS

Preparations continue for the Friends of Croome Second-hand Bookshop, with well over 1000 books currently being priced and stored in the Carpenter's Workshop. Delays in the granting of planning permission for the new shop mean that we shall probably not be able to take over the present shop area for sometime. However, there will be a stall outside the reception area over the August Bank Holiday period, 28th to 30th August. If anyone would like to help in manning the stall over this time we are currently drawing up a rota. Please email Phil Douce on phildouce68@gmail.com.

The Editors of the Chronicle

would like to wish Christian every success with his new posting at Coughton Court and thank him for his unquestioning, enthusiastic, if amused, support after he asked us to take over The Chronicle.

VOLUNTEERS ONLY



Croome-a-doodle-doo !

Every second Tuesday of the month 6-8pm, usually in the RAF Canteen. Come and meet the other volunteers. A chance to chat and share experiences. There will also be Q & A sessions with the experts.

14 September - VOLUNTEERS DAY OUT TO KELMARSH

Coach will leave Croome at 9.00 and return at 6.00. Tour of the house, garden and Croome furniture Exhibition, accompanied by Sarah Kay and Jill Tovey. A 50 seater coach will be provided but some may like to make their own way there. Costs will be subsidised at £10. Kelmarsh entry will be £8 and the coach £2. Payment in **CASH ONLY** to Gen or Damian at RAF building by 8 September.

12 October - Q&A and specialist talk

9 November - Q&A and specialist talk

14 December - Christmas Meal in the RAF Canteen.

National Trust Branded items

Some volunteers have asked about obtaining NT polos, fleeces and lanyards. Ann Butcher has told us that a new range of garments and higher quality core garments will be launched in January 2011. We will keep in touch with Ann who will let us know when the items become available, how much they cost and how to order them via the office.

FEEDBACK FROM OUR LAST ISSUE

Just one email message (thanks, Angela) suggesting more Q and A content. We have put boxes in both Volunteers Rooms (in Court and next to Reception) for any contributions or burning questions you may have. We will do our best to find answers to all questions and look forward to publishing your contributions ... anything interesting would be welcome ... funny stories about visitors, volunteers or even staff (!), ideas, recollections. We look forward to hearing from you. Meantime we have made some of the suggested alterations put to us and will develop your ideas in future issues.

DIARY THIS !

MUSIC IN THE COURT

4 SEPTEMBER Saturday 7.30pm CROOME ENSEMBLE in the Long Gallery. 18th Century music

GREAT EVENTS

22 AUGUST - 5 SEPTEMBER 10 - 4pm EXPLORE CROOME
- Free self guided trail

11 SEPTEMBER Saturday HERITAGE OPEN DAY

25-26 SEPTEMBER 12.00 - 4.00pm HARVEST CELEBRATIONS

1-31 OCTOBER 11.00 - 4.30pm VANLEY BURKE Exhibition in the Court.
Celebrating Black History month

3 OCTOBER Saturday 11.00 - 1.00pm AUTUMN WALK with Katherine Alker - £

8 OCTOBER Friday National Garden Scheme day

30 -31 OCTOBER SPOOKY CROOME - Halloween trail and activities - £

10 NOVEMBER Wednesday 11.30am LECTURE LUNCH - The Tapestry Room of Croome Court. £18

17 NOVEMBER Wednesday 11.30am LECTURE LUNCH - The Lives of the Hare Krishna with Chris Upton. £18

4 DECEMBER 3.30 - 4.30pm CAROLS AT CROOME with the Malvern & 6.00 - 7.00pm Priory Singers in St Mary Magdelene

4 -5 DECEMBER

11-12 DECEMBER CHRISTMAS AT CROOME Father Christmas in

18-19 DECEMBER the Court Grotto. £3 for Grotto trail

CAPABILITY BROWN BEFORE STOWE

This not a National Trust Event and is not endorsed by the NT, but will be of interest to fans of Lancelot Brown

Thursday 14 October Venue: Kellogg College, 62 Banbury Road, Oxford. Doors open at 7.30 pm Pay on door. £5 (glass of wine/juice included). If you intend going, please email Secretary Joanna Matthews on secretary@ogt.org.uk or ring 01865 777531 so they have some idea of numbers.

CONTACTS

Remember the Duty Manager's phone number is 07920 751589

Telephone number for Croome is 01905 371006

Croome Chronicle is alexis.chronicle@gmail.com