



Michael Smith
Property Manager

I head up four departments at Croome - the House, Visitor Services, Volunteering and Visitor Experience. As my new team develop and strengthen, with their support I aim to exceed our set targets, develop new initiatives, increase our operational performance and drive Croome forward.

Amy Forster



I'm the Property Manager responsible for Croome and South Worcestershire (which includes the Fleece Inn and Middle Littleton Tithe Barn). At the pre-season meeting, I celebrated the achievements and successes of 2011 and looked forward to 2012. I spoke about the exciting challenges arising from the stewardship of the Red Wing explaining that visitor numbers (now approaching 135,000) are highly important because profit is ploughed back in and so increases the operational income of Croome. But costs are huge – exciting as it is, the rescue of the Red Wing is a massive, complicated, lengthy and expensive challenge

MISSION 2012



My department and I shall continue to restore the garden and parkland to the 18th century plans, being as accurate as possible and using the historic archive to guide us.

Katherine Alker
Garden and Park
Manager



Kim Lee

Last year I spent a great deal of time endeavouring to understand the many facets of the Croome estate infrastructure and spoke in detail with the many services suppliers. My future projects include having the court heating assessed. I am hoping to get the blow heaters in the Saloon and the Entrance Hall working which will make those rooms more comfortable for volunteers and visitors alike. It is important to ensure that all servicing and maintenance (with an eye to providing value for money) is being done so that the infrastructure can withstand the increase of visitors.



José Forrest-Tennant

Croome is a magical departure into innocence. I feel like a child each time I'm here. As Artist in Residence there are so many possibilities. I hope that volunteers will share in my journey.

Thatched - then slated

Imagine a summer's morning in a quiet corner of pre-motorway Worcestershire, meadows deep in buttercups and cattle grazing contentedly. A coach and horses arrives bringing house guests for a weekend party and His Lordship the 6th Earl welcomes them warmly. Next morning, a leisurely breakfast before he shows his visitors around the Court, points out the fine decorations, the carvings, tapestries and furnishings: testament to his travels, his wealth, his good taste.

Envisage then a tour of the Park, the stables, the summer houses; imagine the Earl's pride in the sparkling waters of his own lake, his stretch of river, Sabrina languishing before the be-jewelled grotto.

Imagine too – for very little documented proof has come to light – the Boathouse, the fleet of six boats decorated in the Coventry colours of blue and vermilion, the merry laughter ringing out from the Island Pavilion as the guests in all their finery wait for the promised boat trip.



Sadly now the remains of the Boathouse are few, crumbling and neglected. We believe the original was built around 1774 of brick and wood and, in common with most of the more utilitarian buildings such as the ice-house, thatched. But by the early 1900s the roof was of slate. It was then described as a low building with walls only 2 or 3 feet high with a double door at each end. It had oak wall plates, rafters, and an apex roof reaching about 10 feet high.

Jill Tovey believes the Boat House was spacious; there are specific references to an order of 25,000 Bewdley bricks and a bill dated 1795 refers to repairs to a 'Pleasure Boat, Carvel, Wherry, Punt, Passage and Flat-bottom'. Jill also refers to a red dot on the Snape plan which, interestingly, could indicate a second Boathouse on the west side of the river going out towards the Park Seat.

In the 20th century, a flat-bottomed boat, about 20' long, was kept at Croome. Flooding was a local problem and there was a series of plugged ditches which could be opened up to channel water when the flooding risk was high. Six men – a sort of local lifeboat crew – would bring out the boat and load it onto a horse-drawn dray to take it to where it was needed. The boat was used to help the stranded people of Severn Stoke and often ferried folk to and from the pub. No doubt the oarsmen had a pint of ale for their trouble so I doubt they lacked volunteers!

In the 1940s many country estates were falling into disrepair; materials were in short supply and estates were graded according to importance. Croome was not graded highly. Slate was taken from the boathouse roof to repair other priority buildings on the estate. Drastic flooding in 1948 caused more damage and the Boathouse was demolished.

Croome before the National Trust - Oral History Project

The Oral History Project has now been going for seven years and memories and memorabilia continue to flood in. Finally, in November 2011, the new displays were installed in the basement and have been well received. The cards in the Audiopost have recently been changed so that different excerpts from interviews can be heard. Following the Hare Krishna weekend in August, when Phil Douce and I conducted ten interviews, we are now concentrating on other aspects of Croome history, working on compiling folders of photos and memories and expect these to be available later this year. The HLF funding for this project started in October 2005, finishing in February 2008, and we are expected to share this as widely as possible until 2015.

Work has started on producing a CD of excerpts from the 70+ interviews, hoping to complete this by the autumn. We are

fortunate to have received two generous donations towards this from a member of the Friends and the Worcester/Malvern NT Centre. Graham Cartwright kindly responded to my plea in spring 2010 and is a great help with the computer. I am always open to offers of help and would welcome someone willing to print and laminate photographs to improve the display in the Court. Present team members are Graham Cartwright, Phil Douce, Tim Hickson, Jane Hulse, David Hutt, Erica Kenway, Ellen Moore, Sue Smith and myself. We would be pleased to receive any photographs, press cuttings, memorabilia etc. of 'Croome before the National Trust'.

Eileen Clement croome-oral-history@hotmail.co.uk

Apologies to staff whose photo and mission statement didn't make it to our cover - next time !!

Garden and Parks - by Katherine Alker

Winter has been a busy time for us as usual in the garden and park; we've been fencing, mulching, tree guarding, bench making and much more. I hope that this year we have more normal weather – in other words, I hope it rains!! Last year was so dry that new plantings are still struggling, and the lake and river are still low even now.

Plans for this year include further herbaceous planting in the garden, which should survive now we've had rabbit fence installed around the biggest bed!; purchasing some more exotic plants for the Temple Greenhouse; putting barley straw bales in the lake to reduce (too ambitious to say 'eliminate' I think!) the weed problem; and making a start on the planting in the Home Shrubbery.

Plans are in place, along with funding, to restore the Punch Bowl Gates area. Iron gates will be installed between the stone piers across the carriage way, as well as pedestrian gates under the arches. The hoggin carriageway will be extended to meet Westfield Lane and we'll be able to remove the current wooden gate and some of the fencing, creating a much grander and more historically accurate entrance.

I'm having plans drawn up for the replacement of the 1970s Black Bridge, and once we are happy with the designs and have sourced funding, we shall get the replacement installed.

In the Parkland we'll continue making the tree guards for Middle Grove which is a group of about 120 trees on the west of the river, and clearly visible from the court. Later in the year we'll hopefully be back tree planting at Middle Grove, as well as other locations across the park. There's also a huge amount of woodland work to do, which Hugh is starting to plan.

Hugh Warwick, Warden, writes:-

At the moment I'm preparing a woodland management plan for Croome's 70 plus hectares of woodland. This should give us a focus for organising our work to develop and restore the woods over the next 20 years, with the main focus being the next 5 years.

At present much of our woodland is derelict, having not really been managed for several decades. By careful planning we can improve both the habitat and the timber value, and hopefully begin to produce more of our own fuel, as well as high grade timber and coppice products.

It's a hugely exciting project to be involved with and needs to be very carefully thought out. The decisions I make will have an effect on our landscape for the next few centuries!



“Dear Croomers” - a letter from Our Gen

I hope this finds you all well. The last few months have flown by – I'm settled into the new job now, but going from Croome-life to Heelis-life has definitely been quite a whirlwind move!

I'm in the Volunteering & Community Involvement (VCI) team in what is called “Whole Trust” – the bit of the NT that deals with the big picture. Properties, like Croome, are in “Operations”. Essentially, my role is about supporting people who manage volunteers through the provision of resources. The bulk of my time at the moment is working on My Volunteering – the new online area for National Trust volunteers (I hope you've all registered!). It's in its first phase at the moment – already proving popular but has lots of potential to develop into something that is really useful for NT volunteers and volunteer managers wherever they work. The idea is not just to provide volunteers with relevant news and information – it's equally about volunteers getting involved with the site itself, contributing content and sharing experiences.

How the site develops relies on feedback from users – so please do sign up, have a browse and let us know what else it could do to help you in your roles. Already top of the wishlist is a “property specific area” – where you could access documents relating to the place you volunteer. I think we all know how brilliant this would be and how much time it could save, so am hoping we'll get there towards the end of the year. www.my-volunteering.org.uk It's an exciting year to be in the VCI team as Volunteering has just become one of two top priorities for the whole organisation, along with Visitor Experience. It seems pretty obvious to you and me, but I understand it has taken a great deal of work to get to this stage – 2012 should be a good one!

Outside of work, the group that my friends and I set up, Storchley Happenings, had some great news before Christmas: we've been given a small grant to buy our own projection equipment for our pop-up cinema night, The Travelling Bug House. We're very excited about this obviously, and have consequently got a busy year ahead of us. No change there, then...

I'm looking forward to our holiday in Norfolk at the end of March – I'm becoming increasingly obsessed with birds, so I'll be taking my binoculars. There isn't much bird life at Heelis – I've found a friendly wagtail but that's about it. I guess it won't be long before the house martins come back to the Court. Will the swallows be able to get in the Red Wing this year?!

Hopefully see you soon. With very best wishes as ever, *Genevieve*

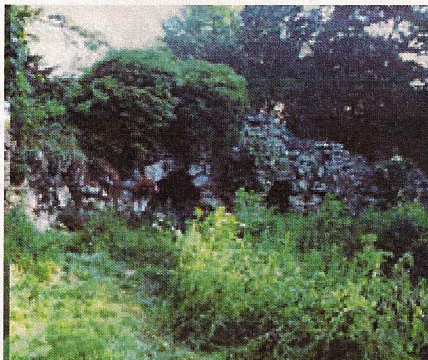
Designed to Ruin

'Grottoes being ruinous by nature...are very subject to ruin'
- Dezallier D'Argenville, 1709

It seems to happen every school holiday. Two or more young children come tearing round the lakeside path ahead of their parents and are scaling the grotto almost before the garden steward has time to point out that it's not a climbing frame but an ancient monument. The parents arrive, full of apologies, and start a conversation. What is the grotto? When was it built? What was it for? What is it made of?

Mystery is an essential characteristic of a grotto. The word is believed to be derived from the Greek word *kruptos* – a hidden place; the word *crypt* comes from the same root word. Grottoes were places of mystery where one might escape from the more formal world and tune into the natural world. The earliest ones were natural caves in ancient Rome or Greece guarding the sources of springs. In the Roman world they were often constructed in sea caves and dedicated to the goddess Venus whose statue would preside over the tumbling waters. Revived in Renaissance Europe, grottoes became a must-have garden feature in large English country estates of the 18th century. In 1725 Alexander Pope built one on his estate at Twickenham in a tunnel which connected two parts of his Palladian style villa. He described it *'finished with Shells interspersed with Pieces*

of Looking-glass in angular Forms...at which when a Lamp...is hung in the Middle, a thousand pointed Rays glitter and are reflected over the place'. The idea was taken up in other estates like Stowe (1739) and Stourhead (1748) Painshill (1760s) and many



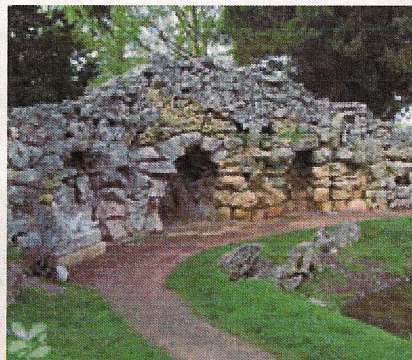
more. Grottoes (like Croome's) were usually decorated with shells and semi-precious stones. The term *rococo*, believed to be derived from the French words *rocaille*, the rockwork found in caves and grottoes, and *coquillage*, the shellwork which adorned them, illustrates further the 18th century fascination with these natural objects.

The grotto at Croome is believed to have been designed by Capability Brown. The accounts of 1765 record the delivery of 'rock stones' for the grotto, and in 1767 the mason, Robert Newman, was paid for undertaking works on the structure. The date it was begun - one year after the 6th Earl's marriage to

Barbara - suggests that her interest in the park and estate might have been a factor which influenced its construction.

Archaeological investigations carried out between 1999 and 2001 produced reports which throw some light on the grotto's origins and construction. The National Trust Annual Archaeological Review 1999-2000 report on the work at Croome described it as being constructed from huge tufa boulders, supported by concealed masonry walls and encrusted with large fragments of limestone pavement brought down from Derbyshire. The 2001-2 report reports that it consists of *'roughly dressed blocks of lias limestone* (Derbyshire is not specified in this second report) *tufa and Daglingworth stone'*.

Visitors often ask about the tufa which can perhaps be seen best in and around either of the caves. This light porous limestone (not to be confused with tuff which is volcanic) is a sedimentary rock, which forms in springs where calcite may be deposited on water plants, twigs or debris. Tufa, and its harder form travertine, are found locally in the Teme valley and were used most notably to build the church at Shelsley Walsh. However, the origins of the tufa used in the Croome grotto are not recorded. Nor does it seem that there is certainty about the fragments of 'limestone pavement' which 'encrust' the grotto although these do resemble pictures of the 'rockified stone' supplied to Painshill in 1762 by Bath stone merchant Robert Parsons.



The 1999-2000 report states that between 1781 and 1786 the grotto was inlaid with spars, shells and fossils. It is thought that this was the work of architect James Wyatt, working under the direction of Barbara, Countess of Coventry.

The 1802 date on the Coade Stone statue of Sabrina indicates that this was a later addition whilst the plaque bearing the inscription – from Vergil's Aeneid Book 1 – came even later in 1810, the time of the 7th Earl.

The grotto was in a sorry state when the National Trust started its restoration of the park in 1996. Many visitors remember seeing it overgrown with ivy and trees and it is due to the dedicated work of the Park Restoration team led by Project Manager and Landscape Architect Tom Oliver, that we can see it today in something like its original splendour.

VIEWPOINT

Wikipedia is very much taken for granted now as an online source of information. Originally christened Nupedia, the online encyclopaedia got off to a slow start in March 2000 with paid contributors who were required to have an established track record. By November there were only two full length articles.

Realising the project was in trouble, the editor decided to broaden the parameters by starting a second encyclopaedia to which anyone could contribute. Now Wikipedia contains almost 20 million articles and is the first place many people go to when they want information. 'Give motivated volunteers the tools they need, and it turns out they can self-organise' says Jim Giles (New Scientist 15 October 2011). No surprise there!

Rotunda Revisited

Located to the east of Croome Court, beyond the walled garden and within the Home Shrubbery, visitors to Croome can now visit one of its finest buildings - the Rotunda, which has recently undergone major repairs and is almost back to its former glory.

The Rotunda is amongst the earliest of the architectural elements at Croome, and because of its intricate plasterwork one of the most ornate. It occupies an elevated position surrounded by Lebanese cedars with views across the park.

Unfortunately during the 20th century the Rotunda, like many of the buildings at Croome became neglected. Its lead dome was lost and the sash windows and stonework decayed. When it eventually came into the care of the National Trust in 2008, it was found that longstanding water penetration through the roof covering had decayed the roof and ceiling timbers to such an extent they were offering little or no support to the ceiling or wall plaster. Remarkably the plasterwork remained largely intact but it was clear that, if not repaired urgently, it could be lost.

Initially work focused on the domed roof and ceiling. With the plasterwork key to the buildings character, repairs were devised to protect and retain as much in place as possible. This was complicated by the relative inaccessibility of the timbers and the precarious nature of the plaster beneath. Steel brackets were designed to support the domed ceiling structure and new timbers were carefully spliced in to replace rotted ones and the plasterwork was carefully re-secured to the timbers. Externally the stonework was repaired, and the lead domed roof was re-instated. With the roof weather-tight, the wall plaster was conserved with unique concealed fixings devised to support the plaster without removing it from the walls. Finally the windows and carved internal joinery were repaired. With the repairs complete a final phase of work, when funds allow, will restore the original interior decoration and the Rotunda's rejuvenation will be complete.

By John Middleton, Architect, John C Goom Architects & Historic Building Consultants

Amidst the Sylvan shade

The beautiful little building known as The Rotunda was first documented in 1756 when John Hobcraft bills for carving the sash windows and the hatch door, amongst other things, so by that time, the basic fabric was already complete. James Lovell and Vassali, also worked there at this time. Then, in 1757, there is a bill from Vile & Cobb for: "6 Good mahogany sophas on castors for the Round Summer House, stuffed & quilted in linen. £23-10-0" and "A large round mahogany dining table for your Round Summer House, £8-15-0"

In all this we have an indication of Lord Coventry's intended function of the building – it was a place for elegant dining and entertainment, for impressing his friends with his modernity, but – for looking at the landscape? - Probably not just yet, because the work there had hardly started and Dunstall Castle wasn't to be built for another 8 years. Later though, as now, the views from it became stunning and it was the culmination of the walk through the beautiful Home Shrubbery in which were planted so many rare and important plants.

In 1762 Robert Adam must have got in on the act, because the six external panels above the windows were added, carved by Sefferin Alken; and the plasterer Joseph Rose also did work.

Why, therefore, would the Earl bother with 'a Folly' when he and Brown were deep in the throes of completely re-modelling the Court? There is some tantalising evidence of a possible explanation... i.e. that there was a building, which was an important Croome icon, on the site already. Look at the copy of the painting of the 5th Earl and his family in The Coventrys of Croome, and at the horse race picture in the Saloon, they both have a domed building in the background, as a representation of Croome. Look at the c.1750 Doherty plan in the Billiard Room - where is the avenue, that was important enough to have the Chinese Bridge made for it, heading?

Finally, why does the ha-ha, which was built in 1746/7, divert around the site? This shows very clearly in the Snape plan.

For me the answers I would give to these questions point to a building of function. It was a place of entertainment and pride - yes, but also somewhere that had meant a lot to the Earl and his family before and that he wanted to re-create to continue that meaning, perhaps as a memorial gesture of a son to his parents and brother. Let us move on a little with this speculation.... We know that George William and his elder brother were very close – is it not odd that there's no obvious memorial to him at Croome? The Classical imagery of the building is very strong – the little oval plaques let into the plasterwork around the walls represent (clockwise from the left of the door) Minerva, Apollo, Juno, Saturn, Jupiter, Diana and Mars; all this very much on the themes they must have discussed together whilst at Oxford.

So, as you can probably tell, to me it is a building of wonderful aesthetic function. Other people, of course, might think that all these reasons point only to a rich man's folly!

Unfortunately, through most of the 19th and 20th centuries there is hardly any reference to the building; the only mention I've heard is that Lady Maria and her siblings used it as a playroom on wet days.

So let's hope that, now it is owned by the National Trust and when it is fully restored, it will once again become obvious to visitors what its original purpose was and they will really appreciate its beauty.

By Jill Tovey

More Revelations from the Basement

Peter Booth has produced two plans of the Basement and the ground floor of the Red Wing. One shows what we have today but with the 1940 room uses. The other gives the room uses that we think were in place in the late 18th century, some of which we know from archival evidence, others are informed speculation.

Larger houses than Croome did not have two servants' halls. That the 1940 plan shows a second, next door to the Housekeepers' Room would, I suggest, be part of a withdrawal from the Red Wing. During her visit, Dr Pamela Sambrook kept repeating that Croome was missing a Still Room. Catherine Gordon, the architectural historian, agrees that this room is likely to have been the 18th century Housekeeper's Still Room, with the Servants Hall then being just the one in the Red Wing.

The Butler's Pantry would appear to be his work-room, in which he would supervise a couple of footmen. Pamela Sambrook thought it very unlikely that he would have slept here. A more obvious place for his quarters would be the room (s) in the south-west corner of the Basement. That would of course be convenient for the Wine Cellar.

One of the most intriguing discoveries during the past six months has been the diamond-paned window hidden in the wall space between the Wine Cellar and the room under the south portico. A stout iron grid that must have been blacksmith made supports the window. (Similar arrangements can be seen, for example, in College Hall in Worcester.) This is the type of window that would not look out-of-place in a timber-framed Tudor house. How old it is actually remains a matter of speculation until Croome can afford to unleash Catherine Gordon with a scientist or two. However, it is a fragment from an earlier house than Brown's. That has set us looking for other evidence of the earlier buildings. Here it turns out that doorways are the most eloquent. Croome is like a Russian Doll.

By Tim Hickson

The Boy from the Gorbals - his legacy to Croome

Visitors admire the restored Bath Stone of the Court's North steps. Why were the steps chosen, we are asked, when there is so much at Croome which requires urgent attention. How do we prioritise restoration? So an opportunity presents itself to explain. We tell them that the Wolfson Foundation funded half the cost, then a private bequest allowed us to finish the job. Natural England is another supporter of development and restoration at Croome - the recent restoration of the Rotunda is one of the many projects where both of these organisations played a part. What exactly is the Wolfson Foundation and where does its money come from? And who or what is Natural England?

The Wolfson Foundation is a charity founded in 1950 by Sir Isaac Wolfson and his family, generously endowed by his hugely successful Great Universal Stores empire. Today the Foundation is run by a Board of Trustees (including several family members) '... of wide experience and enjoying public confidence ...' and donates in excess of £30 million a year. Awards in December 2011 alone ranged from £1000 to St Andrews Church in Naunton, Glos, for repairs, to a massive £20 million to University College, London, for a new Experimental Neurology Centre - a total of 119 separate awards in the fields of science and medicine, the arts and humanities and education. For listed buildings like Croome awards are for 'conservation or refurbishment work to the historic fabric of the building' and the National Trust is one of many partners with whom the Wolfson Foundation works. It is a quite incredible journey of achievement and philanthropy by a man born in the Gorbals in Glasgow in 1897, son of a Jewish cabinet maker who had emigrated from Bialystock in Russia.

In contrast Natural England is a 'green Quango' paid for by the taxpayer. Formed in 2006, from an amalgamation of several countryside agencies, and funded by DEFRA, the purpose of Natural England is '... to ensure the national environment is conserved, enhanced and managed for the benefit of present and future generations'. It is the Government's independent advisor on the natural environment. It protects marine conservation zones, cares for over 4000 National Nature Reserves, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, runs stewardship schemes and manages and funds hundreds of conservation, countryside and heritage projects each year. It is actively involved in encouraging people to get out and enjoy the countryside, to value it, and to get involved in preserving it. In its last Annual Report, Natural England highlighted that 96% of our premier wildlife sites were now in favourable or recovering condition - up from 73% in 2006 - and considerable progress had been made safeguarding our marine environment. In 2011 its annual budget was £242 million, with over 2500 employees. Natural England survived the 2010 cull of quangos, although has had to take its share of recent public spending cuts and streamline its operations.

Two very different entities, but Croome has reason to be grateful to both.

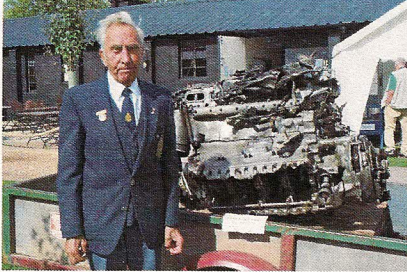
Ann Butcher is retiring and Tracey Blackwell is the new Property Administrator. On behalf of the volunteers, the Chronicle Team sends Ann very best wishes for a happy healthy retirement.

Thank you for all your help in the past and for putting up with us when we all invaded the office for our printing sessions.
Editors

Defford Airfield Heritage Group

The Defford Airfield Heritage Group (DAHG) was established last year, to research, record and preserve the history of RAF Defford, and the role of the airfield especially in vital radar research during the Second World War.

The Group operates in support of the National Trust at Croome, and is committed to providing expert advice, information and displays to help inform visitors to Croome and the community at large, about this very important chapter in the story of Croome. Accordingly it is pleasing to report that the role of DAHG has been formally recognised as a National Trust Supporter Group, and individual members of the Group enrolled as National Trust Volunteers at Croome.



Albert Shorrocks with the Merlin engine of Gp Capt McDonald's Spitfire, recovered and restored by DAHG members.

The annual reunion of veterans who served and worked at RAF Defford, was on Saturday September 10th, held in and around the 'RAF Canteen', with displays of photographs and artefacts. The displays proved of great interest, especially for visitors attracted by National Heritage Weekend. DAHG volunteers were kept busy manning the displays and talking to visitors through both of the two days. Albert Shorrocks, the stalwart who has been running the RAF Defford Reunion Association for many years, has retired from office, and the Reunion Association has been merged with the DAHG, which now has responsibility for keeping in touch with veterans and their families.

The officers of DAHG, who meet quarterly with Michael Smith and his senior management team to review progress, are Graham Evans (Chairman), Dennis Williams (Vice Chairman – Archivist, Historian, Archaeologist) and Bob Shaw (Secretary). They are now enrolled as Volunteers, as are members Antony Whitehead, Mike Freer, Phil Butler, and Tony Waller.

Bruges Encounter

He was a trimly built, softly spoken black man, looking far younger than his 84 years - rather like Trevor MacDonald in fact. I met him on holiday in Bruges and in the usual polite chat about where we came from talked about Pershore. His face lit up. Pershore? RAF Defford? Did I know it? He had been stationed there in World War II. Recruited at the age of 16 ½ from his school in Guyana, he had been posted to RAF Defford with Fighter Command and spent some time also at Pershore Airfield. He remembered the billets, wooden huts close by the air strips, walking by the river in Worcester, the walk back from Upton through the wonderful countryside - more poignantly his mother's anguish when he left home to go to war at such a young age. He was an only child. "It all seems a long time ago", he said.

6,000 West Indians served with the Royal Air Force and the Royal Canadian Air Force, in roles from fighter pilots to bomb aimers, air gunners to ground staff and administration.

Where do the Swans Go ?

The Croome Mute Swan population does seem to vary from time to time. As a rule, a family group will remain together until winter or spring when the juveniles are evicted, often quite forcefully, from the breeding territory. Until the young birds reach breeding age, they form flocks of non-breeding swans. Later, they pair up and begin the search for a vacant nesting territory. Some birds then stay in their chosen territory while others, not moving far, may join up with a flock over the winter. It has been noted that there were large flocks of Mute Swans at Pirton Pool and near Clifton this winter.



OVER the past few weeks we have been trying to establish how many Court and Garden Steward volunteers we really have. By volunteers we mean "active" volunteers. A figure of 260+ is often bandied about but these are not all active. An analysis of the signing in sheets from the RAF Mess for the last 6 months gave the total number of different names volunteering for the Court as 118. The Court requires 12 shifts of at least 8 making 96 as a minimum. In the summer this is nearer to 108. If we now look at the requirement for Garden Stewards we need 14 shifts of a minimum of 2 people making 28. The buggy requires a further 12 shifts of one making 12. So the total minimum requirements per week are 136. The Rotunda is now open and should be manned adding a further 14 per week. So in all the minimum number of volunteers we require is 150. In the summer it is nearer to 166. We need more **ACTIVE** volunteers !

Friends of Croome Bookshop

By the time you read this article the second hand bookshop in the basement will have taken over £2000. All this money goes to a conservation project at Croome. The bookshop is run on an honesty basis and money is collected in a payment box.

We have several volunteers who price the books and generally manage the shop and the stock is replaced on a weekly basis. We are always looking for new volunteers to help in the shop, so if you are interested please let me know. We have started to get some quite valuable books being donated and these are removed and priced separately. We currently have a number of books worth in excess of £50 and these are being sold on an individual basis mainly to dealers.

We are always looking for more stock, so if you have books that you can spare then please leave them at reception or, if you have a large number please contact me and I will arrange to meet you at the Court to off load into our storeroom.

If you need to contact me you can reach me on phildouce68@gmail.com or by phone on 07760 352086.

With the new challenge of the Red Wing, and the continuing Appeal for the restoration of the Court, there is plenty to fundraise for in the year ahead at Croome. We are planning another Morgan raffle at Croome; two opera evenings in May with "Opera in the Park" on May 12th; receptions and open days for major donors and legacy pledgers; a Grand Dinner in September; an Art Auction; and a reception at the House of Lords.

If you have any new ideas for fundraising, or want to discuss any aspect of fundraising at Croome, please see me at the Estate Office or on 370019 phil.sharpe@nationaltrust.org.uk



Phil Sharpe

I work part time as Property Coordinator. I'll be backfilling Michael and Amy to spend more time on the HLF project. I deal with project budgets and finance and I'm the head of Administration at Croome. I'm also the contact for Croome Court's "Boys School" connection. This involves liaising with the ex pupils of St Josephs Special School for Boys 1948-1978



Alice Padley

Together with all 3 permanent and 3 casual members of staff in reception, we aim to sell around 650 memberships in 2012/13, converting over 10% of paying visitors to NT membership, with takings in excess of £140,000.

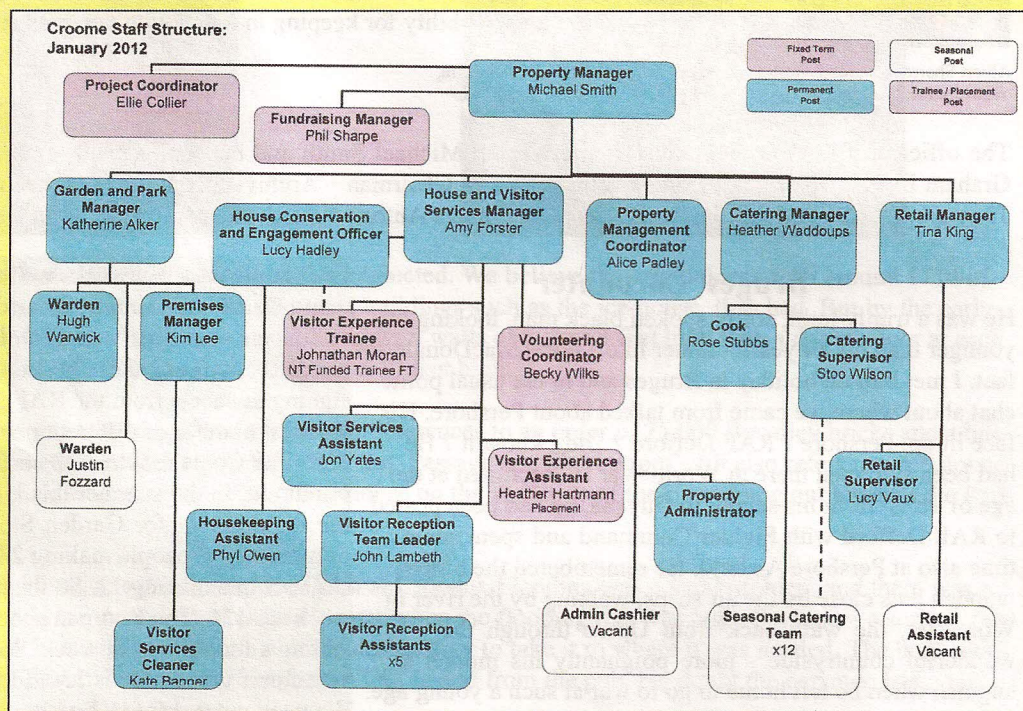


John Lambeth

Ellie Collier



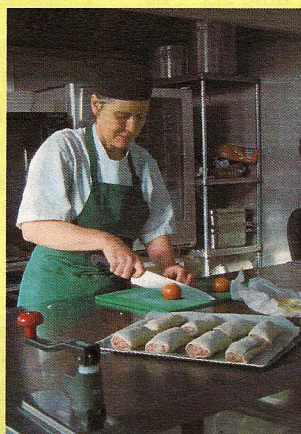
I am currently working to develop an HLF bid due to be submitted in June 2012. If successful this will bring £4.8million to Croome



Becky Wilks



As Volunteer Coordinator I am here to work for all volunteers at Croome. I wish to develop the volunteer experience to make it an enjoyable and fulfilling role in an ever changing environment



Heather Waddoups

With the Canteen open 364 days this year and a target of £500,000 through the tills, Heather is hard at work. Winter themed lunches, craft and cookery workshops will help her meet her biggest challenge of motivating business through the winter.

With the help of an experienced team of staff & volunteers, I am looking forward to the Shop's first full season. 'We're just beginning to receive some exciting new ranges of stock so please don't forget to keep popping in to see what's new and remember you can receive **20% discount** on all your purchases!'

