

THE FRIENDS OF CROOME



NEWSLETTER

Spring 2025 Issue 43



The Temple Greenhouse at Croome under scaffold

Croome Garden and Park update

by **Katherine Alker**

I was so pleased that Rapturous Delight, our Christmas event in the house, was extended for a couple of weeks; I hope that you were able to visit. The whole production linked the history of the house and the park so well, with the focus on the Hortus Croomensis incorporated in a brilliantly festive way. If for some reason you missed it, don't worry! We're hoping to be able to show it again next Christmas time, so watch this space!

Over the winter we have had to contend with some dramatic weather; the strong winds of Storms Darragh and Eowyn meant that we had several days of closure in order to keep our visitors safe.

Thankfully when the Garden and Park Team did the post-storm checks after each high wind event, apart from one case of an old oak tree in the park which had its top blown out, we generally had only minor damage to trees and shrubs.

The flooding in early January left some areas of the garden underwater for the first time in several years. It was worst in the Evergreen Shrubbery where the culverts can't cope with the amount of water coming through; happily most of the water drained away within 48 hours, however we are still having to cope with very wet areas across the parkland and in certain areas of the garden.

friendsofcroome.org.uk



Work to the Temple Greenhouse took place last Autumn. The contractors repaired stonework, repointed some areas of brickwork and installed 'chutelets' to the roof valleys to make sure that rainwater does not drip onto the building itself, but lands on the ground to drain away. We took the opportunity to add a gutter to the rear of the building and installed a water butt in the bothy so the garden team are able to use rainwater to water the plants now.

I'm looking forward to another busy year in the garden and park. Our 'Pages from Nature' theme continues with further partnership work to explore more about the Hortus Croomensis and other aspects of the garden's history.



Whilst the scaffolding was in place we were able to see the stone carving above the sash windows up close and personal! The work is incredibly detailed and despite being made of stone is quite delicate. It was created by Sefferin Alken, a craftsman who also worked on the interiors at Croome Court. We asked specialist conservators to carry out a condition report of the carving; some of the metal pins in it have started to rust so need replacing and some of the stone itself has broken, so needs reattaching. We'll schedule this work in when budgets allow. The work is incredibly detailed and despite being made of stone is quite delicate. It was created by Sefferin Alken, a craftsman who also worked on the interiors in the court.



I hope you have time to visit and enjoy the exhibition in the house, as well as spending time in the beautiful outdoors. Keep your eyes peeled for the Great White Egret which has been here over the past few months and is often seen at the lake.

“You have made mine the best furnished greenhouse in this country, the seeds from Botany Bay are not yet come. I will send some to you as soon as I have them ”

Letter from Barbara (née St John), Countess of Coventry (1737–1804)



Preparations for Christmas at Croome

A programming volunteer's perspective by **Maggi Davis**

The 'Summer of Play' at Croome was fast becoming a memory and we had not yet got to Halloween when the Programming Volunteers gathered at Croome for our Christmas briefing. You will gather from this opening that this volunteer role does tend to revolve around school holidays and 'feast days' when we hope to make visitors and especially our family groups feel welcome.

It was clear from the outset that the artistic flair and practical skills of the creative team was going to result in something very different for Christmas 2024. We also realised that we had a lot of work ahead of us to complete our part in the preparations.

As the Hortus Croomensis continues to inspire the theme 'Pages from Nature' it was no surprise to find that we were going to be working with book pages and paper to create this year's decorations. Our first task was to make some flowers using book papers. I know it goes against the grain to damage books, but no great epics were harmed during the creation of these works. The second-hand bookshop was able to provide examples that had hung around on the shelves for some time. We followed various instructions helpfully available online keep us along the right lines.

Programming volunteers met on Tuesdays and Fridays to create in a sociable setting. We were able to book the times as with any other shift. I was even forgiven for being a bit late after my Open Water Swimming escapades each Friday. As well as paper flowers, we made snowflakes from copy paper and Christmas trees from book pages. Some of the spare books from the bookshop were also repurposed to build a fantastic Christmas Tree. It was sometimes difficult to visualise 'The Big Picture' when we were making elements but as time went on and the deadline drew nearer it all started to come together.



A Christmas tree made of books in the Library at Croome



Seasonal decorations to the chimneypiece in the Tapestry Room

We are fortunate that through 'The Four Seasons' project, Croome has forged links with 'The Joy Project' from Malvern. Thanks to their creative skills our individual flowers were combined to make a fantastic garland across the fireplace and a wreath below it in the library. They made paper chains that were used elsewhere in the property, and I hope that this involvement will continue. I believe that staff at visitor reception were also kept busy during their quieter times. It was a real team effort.

When we learned of the idea of grouping all the Christmas trees together, we all had visions of Narnia. The all-white decorations were designed to complement this theme. 'Let the snowflake making begin!' I didn't manage to count how many there were in all, but I know that I made 70 for the collection. The completed room looked awesome. Thanks are due there to another group of staff and volunteers who gave their time to build the Christmas display. It was lovely to see the children's excitement when they saw the room full of trees. They loved meandering in and out of the trees and of course counting them; not too easy when they are also reflected in the ornate mirrors.

On one occasion I was tasked with threading purple beads that had been requested by the flower team to represent berries. It is great that Croome is trying to be sustainable in its re-use of resources and avoidance of plastics in decorations where possible. I know that many people provided dried flower heads for use in their arrangements too. 'Christmas wouldn't be Christmas'

without the expertise and flair of Croome's flower team who did not disappoint. Their displays across fireplaces and in empty spaces throughout were stunning.

As the weeks progressed, we were intrigued to hear snippets of information about the immersive display that was going to be a highlight of Christmas at Croome. The artists Leo & Hyde were commissioned to create 'Rapturous Delight' which, I am sure you will agree, took your breath away. The illustrations and animation were truly wonderful and really told the story of the Hortus Croomensis. It was great to hear Croome's Gardens & Outdoor Manager explaining the historical background to Capability Brown's landscape. This was a veritable team production including Sound Design and Projection Mapping. The route to the house was even transformed thanks to the generosity of the owners the walled garden at Croome who provided the lighting.

This was a really different experience for the house staff and volunteers who had to guide visitors through the experience in a very different way and entertain the queue on many occasions. Many staff and volunteers worked extra hours to make sure that as many people as possible could enjoy the experience.



Christmas trees in the Saloon at Croome

It was heartening to hear Croome's General Manager thanking volunteers for their input at the 'Year Ahead' event in February 2025. The visitor figures were superb and the feedback from visitors was strongly positive. Hopefully we will see these people again in 2025 as many of them have been introduced to the property through this event. If you volunteer at Croome or visited during Christmas 2024 then I am sure that you can offer your own perspective. Here I give mine and can only say that being a Programming Volunteer is a thoroughly enjoyable experience to share with others.



Croome Walled Gardens

by **Chris and Karen Cronin**

As we embark on another exciting year, we are delighted to share some updates from the privately owned Walled Gardens at Croome. Since restoration work began in 2000, so much has been achieved, and this year is particularly special as we celebrate 25 years of dedicated conservation effort. One of our most significant ongoing projects is the restoration of the Pineapple House, which has been progressing well since 2024. Dan has been hard at work crafting and fitting the window frames, while other essential tasks have included digging out the floor area and filling it with gravel. The glass is on order, and everything is on track for completion in time for our reopening in April this year. Head Gardener Melanie has also been busy potting pineapples, ready to take pride of place in their restored home.

February 2025 sees our builder Simon return to continue work on the new water feature. We'll share more details on this exciting development in a future newsletter. Meanwhile, our gardening team, supported by National Trust volunteers, has been making fantastic progress with the Water Feature Garden. The first seeds of the year have been sown (though they are yet to sprout!), and work has been

carried out in the Mosaic Garden to refine the layout of the surrounding beds. In the orchard, two new pear trees have been planted alongside cherry trees, damson trees, and cobb nuts. Other essential winter tasks have included greasing the apple trees and setting up sticks for the tomato plants that will flourish later in the year.

The Walled Gardens will be open to visitors every Saturday and Sunday from April to September, including Bank Holidays. Opening hours are 11 am to 5 pm, with last entry at 4 pm. Admission is £7 per adult, and children under-14 visit for free (regular National Trust admission applies). Every visit supports the ongoing restoration and maintenance of these remarkable gardens. Croome Gallery & Pottery will be open every Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and Bank Holidays from April to September, with variable hours from October to December. Visitors can access it via the National Trust visitor centre, with no additional entrance fee when The Walled Gardens are closed (regular National Trust admission applies). Follow the signage to The Walled Gardens' gate, then down the hill behind the gazebo, to find the gallery.

Water Feature Garden, November 2024

The Pineapple House, January 2025





The painting showing areas of damage © Annabelle Monaghan

Historic painting of the 5th Earl of Coventry and his family returns home

by **Nicola Hewitt**

In December 2025, one of our paintings returned home to Croome Court having been away for conservation at the studio of Annabelle Monaghan. The painting is by Charles Phillips (1703-1747) and was painted c.1730. It shows the 5th Earl of Coventry and his wife and their three sons. It left Croome in May and Anabelle's report details the steps involved in its conservation.

The back of the painting was dusted with a flat brush and the dust and debris removed from the back of the stretcher bars. The mould on the back of the canvas and the stretcher bars were removed. The front of the canvas was then dusted and the surface cleaned with a specialist solution in de-ionised water. The old varnish was then removed after the painting had been examined under ultraviolet light.

The examination of the picture revealed that there were two layers of varnish on the canvas. The inscriptions on the painting are a later addition between the two layers of varnish. To preserve these inscriptions a margin of varnish around the identifying inscriptions was left. The overpaint and retouches which showed that the painting had been damaged in the past by overcleaning and a chemical agent coming into contact with or being poured onto certain areas of the painting particularly the left side, were also removed. Even so, the groom's eye and face and hair was missing. There were also old tears and losses in the canvas which added to the paint loss.

The next step was to consolidate the areas of unstable paint before varnishing the painting. The losses were then filled and another layer of varnish applied before retouching of the missing damaged areas. In order to re-construct the missing face on the groom, Annabelle studied other paintings by Charles Phillips including "Outdoor conversation piece of Thomas Hill" and "First family at Attingham" which both contain a groom in profile. The inscriptions along the lower edge were retouched where some of the letters were damaged or missing.

The identifying inscription for Elizabeth Countess of Coventry is beneath her husband's and only the word "Countess" survives, the leading words letters are completely missing. The word "Countess" where the letters were damaged was retouched, but the missing were not repainted. A final layer of varnish was added to the canvas.

The canvas had been removed from the frame several years ago for conservation. The frame was also sent away with the canvas so that they could be reunited. After a slight delay, the painting was finally hung, temporarily, in the painting store at Croome. The plan is to have it on display for visitors to see in the near future.

Now the painting has been cleaned, previously hidden details can be seen. The two younger sons George and John are each holding



Inscriptions for the 5th Earl and Countess of Coventry © Annabelle Monaghan

badminton racquets with John also holding a shuttlecock, and appear to be just about to start a game. The eldest son, Thomas, is stroking the head of a deer whilst a groom looks on holding a pony. The Earl is standing next to an empty chair and the countess is pictured in a luxurious bath chair.

Whilst we know much about the male family members in this painting, less is known about the Countess. Her death notice in a newspaper states that she was the daughter of John Allen of Westminster, London and died in 1738 of dropsy. Dropsy is a condition where fluid fills the tissues of the body causing swelling and inflammation. It is associated with liver, kidney or cardiac disease. Most usually the latter. Peripheral dropsy which would have caused swelling of the limbs would have made walking very difficult and this could be the reason for the bath chair.

In a letter to Margaret Cavendish dated 1736, Lady Elizabeth Montague refers to Miss Diana Bertie as Lady Coventry's "natural

daughter". Further research into this led to the will of Peregrine Bertie and the discovery of not just one but two "natural" or illegitimate daughters of Elizabeth. Diana baptised in 1708 and Harriet in 1709. The father of both was Peregrine Bertie.

Peregrine Bertie was the second son of Robert Bertie, 3rd Earl of Lindsey and his second wife Elizabeth Wharton. He was a member of parliament and later became Vice-Chamberlain to the Queen from 1692 to 1706 and the Teller of the Exchequer from 1706 until his death. He was "struck dead with a palsy" whilst playing cards and died on 10 July 1711. He did not marry Elizabeth and died unmarried, but recognised both daughters and is recorded as their father on their baptism records. And on his death left Elizabeth and their two daughters his estate and fortune. The will also records that Elizabeth is also known by the name Mrs. Poltney. Elizabeth married William Coventry in 1719/20, and they had the three sons pictured in the painting, Thomas, George and John.



The painting after conservation © Annabelle Monaghan

William Dean and the Hortus Croomensis Bi-Centenary Celebrations at Croome

by Tom Oliver

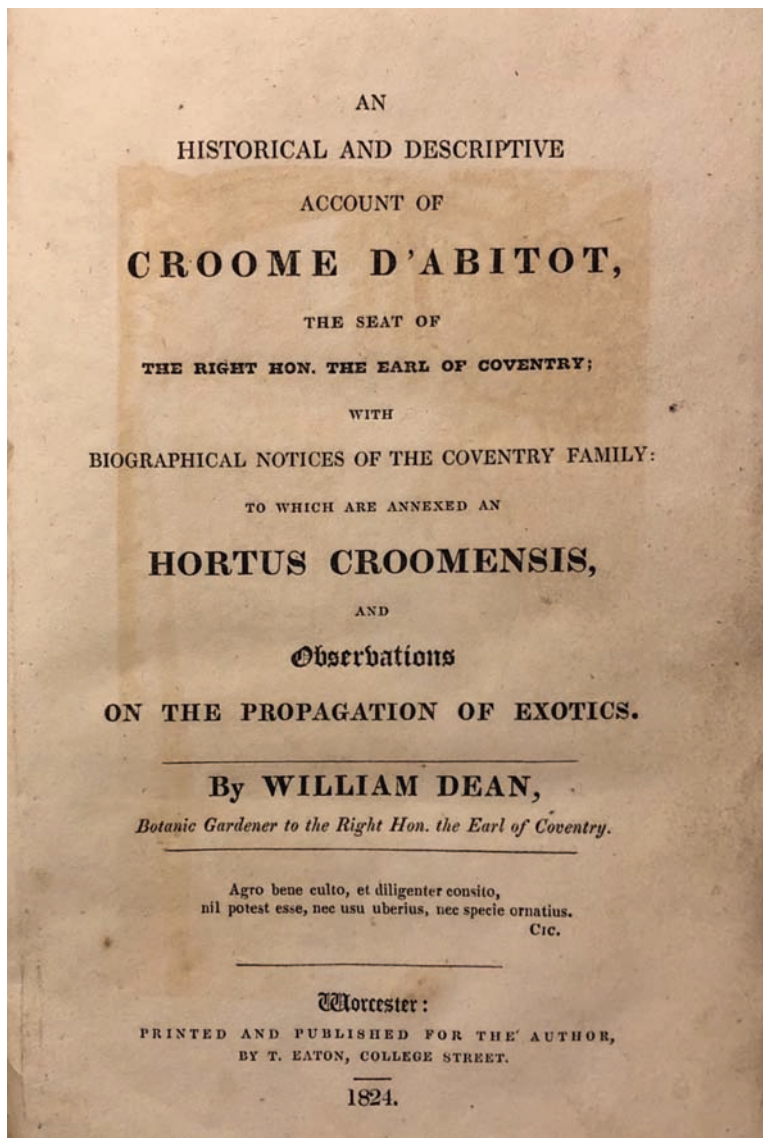
This article first appeared in HORTUS 152 (Winter 2024) and is reproduced by permission of the editor. (hortus.co.uk) It is two hundred years since the publication of a guidebook and garden catalogue for Croome Park in Worcestershire, which provides a vivid and detailed description of what was at the time one of the most ambitious and admired designed landscapes and plant collections in Britain.

Croome Park rests in a shallow valley between the much greater topographies of the Severn and Avon vales, to the west and the east. At the centre of the designed landscape, the house, Croome Court, stands on the site of much older predecessors. But such was the transformation of the whole by 'Capability' Brown, working with Robert Adam (with later work by James Wyatt), that there was – and miraculously still is – a staggeringly pure Georgian realm stretching in every direction.

An Historical and Descriptive Account of Croome d'Abitot and its accompanying botanical catalogue, the Hortus Croomensis were written by William Dean, botanical gardener to the 7th Earl of Coventry and his father before him. The book was published and printed by a Mr Eaton of College Street, Worcester and dedicated to the 7th Earl and his father. The author enlisted the help of a 'Friend' who was in Dean's words 'more practised in writing than myself to make the topographical and historical parts of the text 'more deserving of your Lordship's notice'.

Hortus Croomensis is described by Catherine Gordon, author of The Coventrys of Croome (published by Phillimore and the National Trust in 2000), as a gazetteer for horticulturalists. With page numbering independent of the 'Account' it stretched to no fewer than a hundred and forty-four pages of plant lists, recording about four thousand five hundred individual species as they were described at the time. The 'systematic' name, English name, native origin, and time of flowering for each was provided. There was also a clever suite of abbreviations, symbols denoting essential botanical information: 'Hardy shrub or tree', 'Greenhouse Perennial', 'Shrub requiring the protection of a frame or mat', 'Stove Perennial', and so on. The guidebook was by no means the earliest of its kind. The first guidebook to Stowe was published from 1744, and Mavor's New

Description of Blenheim in 1810, for instance. But it was still an early example, published before railways made indigenous tourism much easier. Chatsworth's guidebook was published in 1845 and Alnwick's in 1865. The Hortus Croomensis was a different matter. It described a huge and almost unprecedented botanical garden. As early as 1801, Arthur Young, in his Annals of Agriculture, believed Croome to be second only to Kew as a botanical collection.



By 1824, William Dean had been in charge for more than twenty-five years. He had held the post for the last decade or so of the sixth earl's rule, appointed by the man who had commissioned and accomplished the spectacular landscape design at Croome. He had continued under the seventh earl, for another fifteen years while the Croome design was completed and refined. Dean did not arrive until some time after Lancelot Brown had died, but James Wyatt was still working at Croome during his first years there.

The value of the Account and the Hortus Croomensis lies partly in the thoroughness and level of detail of both parts. If Croome had not been saved by the National Trust, the book would still have provided a remarkably clear view of this great landscape and its botanical qualities.

Happily, the action of the Trust in 1996 to buy most of the core designed landscape has allowed a restoration to be guided by the book,

adding greatly to its authenticity and faithfulness to the original. Croome Park was bought by the National Trust in 1996, after inspired vision was shown by Jeffrey Haworth, Historic Building Representative in the then Severn Region of the Trust. The majority of the funds (£4.9 million) were awarded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. The Trust bought six hundred and seventy acres of the core designed landscape, which left a small but vital part including Croome Court in the hands of a developer and a far wider sweep of landscape still owned by the Croome Estate itself and an institutional owner, the Society of Merchant Venturers. The National Trust's objective was to save and restore what was Brown's first complete designed landscape and to work with the other owners so far as possible to the same purpose. Through the excellent offices of



*The Temple Greenhouse
Designed and built by Robert
Adam and Lancelot Brown,
1758-60.*

*From An Historical and
Descriptive Account of Croome
D'Abitot, published by T. Eaton,
1824.*

*Top: drawn by J. Pitman, engraved
by C. Turner, 1824.*

*Below, after restoration in 2014.
Photograph by Tom Oliver.*



many people, house, designed landscape and outer eye-catcher buildings are all now under excellent stewardship and open to the public. I should pay tribute in particular to the wise and rigorous guidance of Hal Moggridge, chief Heritage Lottery Fund landscape adviser during Croome's restoration.

When I arrived at Croome in late 1997 my first main task was to write the Conservation Plan, including the Statement of Significance. The Restoration and Management Plan followed in 1999. I had the benefit of very extensive and impressive research by Camilla Beresford and Richard Lockett. There was also a really magnificent estate archive of an extent and depth which offered the chance to plan an exemplary restoration. Jill Tovey, the estate archivist at Croome, went to admirable lengths to allow the Trust to mine this sparkling lode. In particular, there was a huge collection of plant orders and bills, which extended from the 1740s until the 1820s. It is a truly extraordinary survival, for which we have to thank a series of diligent and far-sighted estate land agents and Jill Tovey herself. But what made the prospects for a high quality restoration so specially good was the remarkable fact that a good guidebook and rigorous plant catalogue had also survived, describing the landscape and its planting, from the years when the whole reached its zenith, in the decade or so after the death of the primary author of the design, the 6th Earl of Coventry. This combination of immensely detailed records of the process of design and a precise description of the finished work astounded me. Dean's book – ghost-written though it might have been – was a vast and amazing help as I undertook to grasp the extent of the work the National Trust needed to do. Dean or rather an increasingly bedraggled wad of transcribed pages of his work – became a benign companion as I gradually worked

through the planting plans for the shrubberies and gardens surrounding the various outstanding buildings and structures. I had an early thrill when in May 1999 the Royal Forestry Society planted a *Sophora Japonica* to replace one described precisely in the Account. To see its striking dark twigs and brilliant buds back where they had been in 1824 was hugely satisfactory. The same year, I visited Wootton and noticed the very venerable cut-leaved alder growing close by the lake. Back at Croome, with Dean in hand, I sought out where Dean and I would agree to replant the alder, long lost from the Lake Garden at Croome. Being brushed by its curiously rough and at the same time delicate leaves each time I visit, remains a great treat. Some of the last traces of other trees remained – the remnants of the 'cracked and fungous bark' of the original cork tree growing in 1824 could still be touched. One of the most spine-tingling moments was realising that the juxtaposition of a depression in the shrubbery earthworks and a 150 year old oak growing with a great lean away from the depression indicated the site of 'a seat, thrown round a huge elm' in 1824 from which key views could still be seen. The loss of the great elms at Croome in the 1970s, some well over a hundred feet high, was a serious blow. The great arboriculturist Roy Finch made a sound recording of the felling of the greatest of these elms in the mid 1970s.

My early efforts to use the Hortus Croomensis to detail and replant the designed landscape were exciting and sometimes intensely frustrating. At that time, scholarship surrounding the evolution of the 'systematic' botanical names of the 1820s towards, by degrees, the contemporary botanical – and indeed English – names, was far less developed. When I did make a conclusive identification I was very pleased. Sometimes, I just could not do so, and I either left that



The Rotunda

*Probably designed and built by Sanderson Miller and Lancelot Brown, 1753-57. From *An Historical and Descriptive Account of Croome D'Abitot*, published by T. Baton, 1824.*

Top: drawn by J. Pitman, engraved by C. Turner, 1824.

Below, after restoration in 2014. Photograph by Tom Oliver.



particular detail for my successors or did my best to decide on a credible answer of my own.

The great breakthrough in understanding and appreciating the Hortus Croomensis began 4 years after I left Croome. The Croome Plant Research Group set up in 2006, published a remarkable paper in the Summer 2015 edition of *Garden History*. It set out their detailed examination of the plants described, estate plant bills and contemporary descriptions and the nurserymen and seedsmen involved. Responding very positively to this wealth of detective work and insight, the National Trust has published a book based upon the 2015 article: *An Eighteenth-Century Obsession The Plant Collection of the 6th Earl of Coventry at Croome Park, Worcestershire*. Complete justice might require adding the 7th Earl to the accreditation.

It gladdens me to write that the National Trust have risen to the occasion of the bi-centenary of publication with an exhibition, *Pages from Nature*, which celebrates the 'people behind its pages... the legacy of the Hortus Croomensis and how it has inspired the restoration of Croome's parkland and gardens... In an imaginative and intelligent initiative, the Trust has commissioned the Gloucestershire Society for Botanical Illustration to create contemporary images of some of the Croome plant collection of two hundred years ago. The exhibition in the Library at Croome Court continues until the end of 2025. At the official opening of the exhibition in March, I can attest that there was a really welcome sense of appreciation and excitement at the botanical wonders of this book and its subject. Between us we managed to bring together no fewer than five copies of the *Account* and the *Hortus Croomensis*, only one fewer than the

six bought by Lord Coventry himself in 1824. The continued relish and commitment to the Croome plant collection displayed originally by William Dean during his thirty-three-year tenure as botanical gardener is a joyful thing to bring to his graveside. His gravestone lies yards from Brown's fine Gothic church, built only three years before Dean was born, and from where a really magnificent view of both the designed and the 'borrowed' landscape can be quite overwhelming.

The *Account* and the *Hortus Croomensis* were published by subscription. A brief analysis of the subscribers offers a parting insight into this fragment of landscape and garden history. There were four hundred and ten recorded subscribers. Most bought just one copy, but a significant number bought several and the Duke of Gloucester ten – the most of all. On the list can be found gardeners at a significant number of great establishments, including Stoneleigh Abbey, Powis Castle, Badminton, Tottenham Park, Combermere, Eastnor Castle and Plas Newydd. There are some quite exotic subscribers: the Professor of Botany at the Royal Botanical Garden of Madrid and the Superintendent of the Botanical Garden of St Vincent. A number of nurserymen and seedsmen subscribed, including Harrison and Bristow of Brompton, Colvill of Chelsea, Lee of Hammersmith, Baker and Alien of Bristol and Young of Epsom. Just under a tenth of the subscribers were from the nobility and a similar proportion were clergy. Eleven per cent were women, subscribing on their own account. My favourites, however, are Mr. Dye, gardener to the Rt. Hon. Lord Littleton (sic) from whom I am a very distant descendant and the Rev. Thomas Brown, Rector of Conington and, as the book proudly adds, son of the celebrated Lancelot Brown. He bought TWO copies.



The Return of Croome Church Bells

Following restoration at Matthew Higby's foundry in Somerset, the bells were finally returned to St. Mary Magdalene church at Croome during w/c 7 October last year with a successful test ring carried out on 18 October. Four of the bells (nos. 1,3,4 and 6) were re-tuned. The weight of those bells now being less, (the biggest was reduced from 10 ½ to 9 ½ hundredweight) new clappers, wheels and bearings have greatly improved their performance. We were pleased to be able to recommence our weekly Sunday afternoon ringing on 3 November last year after nearly seven months of silence! The church was made redundant on 30 October 1973, and 26 February 2025 will be the fiftieth anniversary since the Churches Conservation Trust took over the care of St. Mary Magdalene. A full peal (lasting about 3 hours) will be rung that day to mark the occasion.

Paul Smith





The Firs, Lower Broadheath, near Worcester, Elgar's birthplace © National Trust

The Firs: Elgar's Birthplace

An introduction by **Ellen Cooper**



A young Edward Elgar © Daily Telegraph

For those who have not yet visited, The Firs celebrates Sir Edward Elgar, one of Britain's greatest composers. His most well-known works include Land of Hope and Glory and Nimrod. On site is the humble cottage where Elgar was born, when just two years old when he and his family left Broadheath, he never forgot this cottage and its surrounding landscape. Elgar wished to be remembered here after his death. His daughter, Carice, made sure this happened and in 1938 the Elgar Birthplace Museum opened.

At The Firs we have a fully accessible modern visitor centre which has a museum space dedicated to Elgar – where you can learn about his life as well as see manuscripts and his personal items. Excitingly, Little Al's Kitchen will be once again running the café here; they pride themselves on serving consistently great and fair-trade coffee, refreshing teas, and a selection of brunch favourites. Many of their options are traditional favourites with a twist, and they swap out ingredients provide seasonal varieties when visitors stop at The Firs for a tasty lunch. They aim to cater to everyone and offer a selection of alternative goods, such as gluten-free options, milk alternatives, and vegan choices.

"My idea is that there is music in the air, music all around us; the world is full of it, and you simply take as much as you require."

Edward Elgar

On site we have an amazing function room, the 'Carice Room' where we love staging concerts. This year we aim to have a regular programme of paid-for as well as free concerts throughout the year. We also hold regular talks which give a fantastic overview of who Elgar really was. All year round our gardens and orchards are worth visiting. The classic cottage garden at The Firs offers a place to sit and relax, with colourful borders throughout the year, a fruitful orchard and views of Elgar's beloved Malvern Hills. Explore the Sound Garden and fill the air with music or take a seat and enjoy a quiet moment in Elgar's summerhouse.

Finally, the jewel in the crown of The Firs is Elgar's cottage. The ground floor allows visitors to understand who Elgar's family was and how important they were to his success and what life would have been like for the family living in this cottage. The first floor takes us back to the time just after Elgar's death, when the cottage was first laid out with his personal effects and belongings.

After closing for the winter, we were excited to re-open last month and will be open every Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday. Please come and say hello, we hope to see you there!

