



guilhelmus Tuenen

WELLS OLD DEANERY GARDEN PROJECT

The Old Deanery, Wells, Somerset BA5 2UG

newsletter

ISSUE TWENTY SUMMER 2012

Something Special for a Very Special Garden

There is something exceptional about the revival of the Old Deanery Garden, which captures the interest of so many. That is why, over the last 9 years experts in a variety of garden-related disciplines have given so willingly of their time and expertise.

The latest craftsman to have been enthused is Ivano Pepe, a joiner well known in Wells and beyond for his skill, love and dedication to his trade. He has a lifelong interest in old furniture and its construction. When the idea of a Tudor-style table for the Lower Italian Courtyard was suggested we knew he was the one person to contact.

Using green oak and only hand tools and construction methods that would have been used in Tudor times, he has made the lovely oval table which now enhances the Lower Italian Courtyard. In true craftsman style, his initials and the date are discreetly inscribed. A labour of love which will last for generations to come.

The result is a piece of simple, robust furniture of a kind that would have been familiar to Dean William Turner in the 1550s-1560s, with no sharp, machined edges – look at its legs, shaped with a spoke-shave and neither quite square nor quite round – that is solid, yet graceful and makes you want to run your hands over its smooth surface and rounded edges. It

**English Heritage
Open Day**

Old Deanery Garden and Building

Saturday 8th September 2012

10am - 4pm
Admission Free

is designed to be out of doors, and the wood will mellow from its present honey-colour to a silvery grey. On it stands a small pot full of wild strawberry plants, our garden logo.

People often remark of medieval buildings and woodwork, that ‘they could not do it nowadays’. This delightful table shows that some craftsmen can, and Mr Pepe is one of them. This is not imitation or pastiche, but genuine modern craftsmanship in late medieval style – a most pleasing addition to the revived Tudor garden of the Old Deanery. *FN. & S.R.H.*

Turner’s Plants & Cures

Talking to groups and visitors in the garden, it is noticeable how in recent years people do not just ask what a plant is, they ask what it was used for medicinally. It reflects an increasing interest in herbal medicine. The trouble is, it is not always easy to remember, on the spot, what Turner said a particular plant was ‘good for’! A simple ‘crib sheet’ for non-specialists is being compiled, with an alphabetical list of Turner plants in the garden and a brief note of what they were thought to cure. Barbara Lewis may supply examples of modern uses, from her expert herbal knowledge, in due course. The list will grow and change as we add other plants. A laminated copy of the latest version will be in the stewarding ‘kit box’ for anyone to use, and another will be kept on top of the filing cabinets. Please do not take them off the premises. *FN.*



Ros with the new table, photo by Marianne

'Oh yes we will - Oh no we didn't!'

The idea of an excursion to the National Botanic Garden of Wales with our Patron, who kindly booked the date twelve months ago, was enthusiastically received by everyone in the general meeting in the Autumn of 2011.

A little flurry of bookings was received shortly after the booking forms were distributed and then it stopped. I had just 18 paid up places booked despite considerable efforts, which included looking at alternative size transport, I had to cancel the coach and the booking at the garden. It was just not viable.

Considering the weather on the 7th July perhaps those who were not able to book knew something I didn't! *S.R.H.*

*** Date for your Diaries! ***

It may seem a long time in advance – but please note the date in your diary NOW! Our Winter Event for members of the Old Deanery Garden Project is on **Saturday 24th November 2012**, at the Old Deanery, 10.30-12.00. At this relaxed, out-of-season get together, Annie Maw will be talking about 'The *other* secret gardens of Somerset & the South-west', and her researches and discoveries in assembling the material for the stand she masterminds at The National Gardening Show, held at the Bath & West Showground, this year from 31st August-2nd September 2012. The Winter Event is for us, as opposed to all our work during the season for the public. We do want to see you all there!

Marsh Mallow, Then and Now

No sooner had one of the gardeners, weeding the Pond Bed, cleared the wild strawberries that were obscuring our marshmallow plants (grown for us by Jean Fairburn) and their labels, than one of our Wednesday afternoon visitors stopped me to tell me that it was many years since he had seen a marsh mallow plant, and that his grandfather, a coal miner in northern England, invariably used its leaves and stems to make a healing poultice for any bruises, aches and pains he sustained in his heavy work. This is exactly how Dean William Turner used it, 'brused and laid on by it selfe, [it] is good for woundes, swellynge, and wennes.' Turner wrote that he had seen the 'Marrishe Mallowe growing in Somerset shure a myle from Welles towards ye Mere', out on the moors in the direction of present day Meare, making it one of the most local of his plant references.

Isn't it satisfying when our Turner plants give such pleasure to visitors, and link past and present in this way? *F.N.*

William Turner Book Update

Dr Marie Addyman has just finished the text of her book on William Turner - the much anticipated follow up to the colourful booklet which is still so popular on our sales table on open days. It will still be some time before it sees the light of day, but we look forward to it, and will let everyone know the details in due course. She is also working on a chapter on Turner for a volume on the history of medical herbalism which is coming out before too long. *F.N.*

Contact Details

Newsletter: Lucy Newman 01749 676860 lucy.newman@mac.com

Events & Diary Dates 2012

Saturday 8th September, 10am-4pm
English Heritage Open Day

Friday 5th October
Deadline for Autumn/Winter
Newsletter

Monday, 5th November, 9.45-11am
General Meeting
Carey Room

*Saturday, 24th November, 10.30am -
12pm*
Friends Winter Event
Annie Maw: 'The **Other** Secret
Gardens of Somerset & the South-
west'

Don't Forget the
Heritage Open Day
on Saturday 8th September

10am-4pm

Any articles for the newsletter are gratefully received. They can be e-mailed to me as Word Documents or posted to me handwritten, I usually try to get as much in each newsletter as possible. Anything that you feel has a relevance to our project - whether it is about a Tudor garden you have visited, a book you have read or your experiences of helping on the project, are all suitable areas.

Deadline for the next newsletter is

Friday 5th October 2012

Thank you! *L.N.*