

Press Release

Summer 2011



See Exotic Plants from Around the World at Hole Park Gardens Celebrating 100 years of Gardening

2011 marks a significant milestone in Hole Park's history as the Barham family celebrates 100 years of residence. The gardens too have enjoyed special attention this year with new plantings and the opening of a restored ice house in the grounds.

The gardens are known for year round colour, and next to feature is the garden's beautiful exotic border which bursts into life with vibrant colours and lavish green palms between August and October.

The striking border was planted five years ago and is now a mature planting of rare and unusual plants to delight the visitor from summer until the gardens closes for winter.

Every year Head Gardener Quentin Stark adds something new and interesting to the border which can be found next to the old coach house.

Quentin said, *“new plantings in the tropical border this year will include Salvia leucacephala, a rare species from Ecuador which grows to about 3ft tall with green leaves topped with clusters of ruby red flowers. We have also added Salvia 'Wendy's Wish' a chance seedling found in Australia, with magenta flowers and reddish calyxes and stems which reach 3ft in height. Salvia gesneriflora from Mexico was planted for its impressive 2” long scarlet flowers and impressive height (it reaches 25ft in its native land of Mexico). We chose Salvia 'Phyllis Fancy' for its furry white flowers tinged with lavender and Solanum pyracanthum (Porcupine Tomato) from Madagascar for its bluish leaves, orange veins and prominent spines and lavender potato like flowers.”*

After enjoying the tropical border take a walk through the extensive grounds and gardens and visit the new renovated Ice House, a 1740's construction which was used to store ice long before the days of refrigeration. When the ice was cut and stacked it would last for up to three years in this cool environment. Visitors can view the Ice House from the Woodland Walk.

Enjoy afternoon tea with homemade cakes in the coach house tea rooms where there is a plant stall selling a varied selection of plants to take home. Jam, preserves and apple juice made at Hole Park are also available.

The gardens are open to visitors in the summer and autumn months until 27 October on Wednesdays and Thursdays between 11am and 6pm and also for Autumn Sundays on 9, 16 and 23 October.

For more information on Hole Park Gardens, please visit www.holepark.com or call 01580 241344.

Group bookings are welcome at any time between April and October please contact Hole Park to discuss your requirements 01580 241344.

For press information and images, please contact Caroline Edmunds of Pennington PR on 01892 616647 or email her at caroline@penningtonpr.com

Editors' Notes

Hole Park is situated 4 miles west of Tenterden on the B2086 between Rolvenden and Cranbrook.

Afternoon teas with delicious homemade cakes are available at the gardens throughout the season, and a plant stall operates on Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays.

A family owned estate, Hole Park has been owned by the Barham family for the past four generations. The gardens manage to combine formalised gardens with natural woodland. They cover some 15 acres and were developed, laid out and planted by Colonel Barham, the great-grandfather of the present owner, in the years between the two World Wars.

Hole Park is now owned and managed by Edward Barham, and much of what can be seen today is due to the contribution made by Edward's father, David Barham, who still takes an active interest in its future today.

The garden is renowned for beautifully clipped topiary and great yew hedges which provide shelter for the lawns and splendid borders. The walled garden contains mixed borders, pools and a water garden. Marvellous climbing plants also provide a fine display here. The natural garden has bulbs, azaleas, rhododendrons and flowering shrubs.

There is a woodland bluebell walk and, in the autumn, the foliage colour is spectacular. Hole Park has many fine trees and the garden is surrounded by superb parkland with wonderful views across the Kentish Weald.

Formal gardens surround the house. Walls and yew hedges, which are a particular feature of Hole Park, shelter broad expanses of lawns. Clipped entirely by hand, it is claimed that nowhere in the county can yews be seen trimmed to greater precision. Fountains and a swimming pool, the egg pond, the walled rose garden, herbaceous borders and wrought iron gates all contribute to make a series of gardens within a garden, united by the lawns, while outwards there are lovely views of the Weald over the surrounding 250 acres of finely timbered parkland.

At the rear of the house, beyond a beech hedge measuring six feet thick and 12 feet high, lies the Policy, massed with daffodils in April with its heathers, flowering trees and shrubs, banks of rhododendrons and its azaleas. Amongst the trees can be seen collections of birch, juniper, cypresses and fine oaks. Rhododendrons, camellias, magnolias and primulas are all here in abundance and further plantings are now being made to adjoining woodlands.