

## Press Release



19 September 2008

### KENT'S EXOTIC SPOT

Hole Park Gardens, in Rolvenden in the heart of typical Kentish countryside is particularly well-known for its English bluebells, but late summer takes on an exotic air when the tropical border comes into its own.

Planted two years ago, the border benefits from full sun against a south facing old brick wall. Because the exotic plants need plenty of sunshine, their flowering season tends to be in late summer and early autumn.

Plants in the long border include colourful *cannas*, striking *daturas* (angel's trumpets), unusual *Solanum laciniatum* (kangaroo apple), *Hedychium gardnarianum* (a tropical ginger), impressive Japanese bananas, and the bright, winding *ipomonea* (morning glory).

The border is not a static feature – new plants added last year included *Impatiens tinctoria*, a hardy large, busy lizzie which grows to over 1m high and flowers 10cm wide; *Salvia involucrata* 'Bethellii' whose strong pink flowers will complement the vivid dark blue of *Salvia guarantica* already growing; *Tetrapanax papyrifer* 'Rex' – the rice paper plant – with huge 1m palmate leaves covered in 'felt'; and *Hedychium yunnanense*, an early flowering

ginger. While new this year is the *Sparmannia africana* (house lime) with large hairy leaves and white flowers with colourful centres.

Many tropical plants are notable for a particular feature, such as strong bright colours, huge leaves or flowers, strange shaped fruits, or a powerful scent. The exotic border at Hole Park has examples of all these and even sound, as wind rustles through some of the bamboos and grasses.

Hole Park Gardens are open every Wednesday and Thursday until 31 October 2008, from 2pm to 6pm. There are extra open days in October – each Sunday (5<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup>) to take full advantage of the exotic border and the stunning autumn colours in the rest of the garden. Head Garden Quentin Stark will be leading Gardener Tours on 5<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> October at 2.30pm.

For more information on Hole Park, please visit [www.holepark.com](http://www.holepark.com) or call 01580 241344.

For press information including images, please contact Caroline Edmunds of Pennington PR on 01892 616647 or email her at [caroline@penningtonpr.com](mailto:caroline@penningtonpr.com)

#### Editors' Notes

1. Hole Park is situated 4 miles west of Tenterden on the B2086 between Rolvenden and Cranbrook.
2. Hole Park is open to the public every Wednesday and Thursday from 23 March until 31 October between 2pm and 6pm, and on Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays from 23 March to 29 June between 2pm and 6pm. Admission is £5 for adults and 50p for children.
3. Self service 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.
4. 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 has looked after the estate for the past 45 years and 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.