

# An Exploration of Endsleigh

## Discoveries reveal vision of master landscaper



### ENDSLEIGH: A 'COTTAGE' BY THE TAMAR

A GARDEN is like a face, or a room, says Olga Polizzi, hotelier and interior designer for the Rocco Forte hotel chain. If the structure isn't there, little can be done.

When she first saw Endsleigh, in the Tamar Valley about six miles from Tavistock, she was quick to recognise that here was a landscape that had structure – a structure imposed by the landscape artist Humphry Repton.

*The article by Keith Rossiter and accompanying picture were published in the Western Morning News, Wednesday, December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2018*

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**Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2019**

10.30am to 4.30pm

A special day at Repton's great creation on the River Tamar with Keir Davidson and Ben Ruscombe-King. Keir Davidson is author of *Woburn Abbey: the Park and Gardens* and Ben Ruscombe-King is Endsleigh's head gardener.

This is a joint event with Devon Gardens Trust.

The day will include:

A talk, two course lunch, tea and biscuits.

Cost:

£40 DGT and CGT members

£45 Non-members and Guests

Reply to John Wilks (preferably by the end of February).

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She admits that when she bought Endsleigh she knew very little about Repton and his connection with the house.

"It's only in the past few years that people have started talking about Repton," she says.

She knew it was an important garden, but it was only when she started looking around that she realised just what she had.

Much of the garden needed restoration, and that work is still under way. Recently they have uncovered a previously hidden waterfall. We are slowly, slowly putting it back."

She extensively renovated the Grade I listed building and gardens, and opened it as a boutique hotel, now Hotel Endsleigh, in 2005.

The house – Endsleigh Cottage – was built between 1810 and 1816 by John Russell, 6th Duke of Bedford as a 16-bedroom fishing and shooting lodge, designed by the Regency architect Sir Jeffry Wyattville.

The Duchess came from Scotland, and liked the place because it had a feel of Scotland about it.

"Every time I go there with my husband, I say: 'Why don't we come and live here'," Mrs Polizzi says.

"The Duke and Duchess wanted to pretend to live a simple, rural life. They had 30 gardeners, but the gardeners had to disappear in the morning and not be seen. When I bought Endsleigh, I bought it more with my heart than my head. It was expensive for a small hotel" – just 18 bedrooms. "It's terrifying have a 100-acre garden and a house that needed so much work."

There are also few places in England where you can see a landscape pretty much as Repton designed it.

Mrs Polizzi's daughter Alex Polizzi, television's Hotel Inspector, oversaw the renovation and managed the Hotel Endsleigh in its first year.

By Keith Rossiter