



CORNWALL GARDENS TRUST

HELPING TO PROTECT CORNWALL'S HISTORIC GARDENS AND PARKS

Trewoofe House, Lamorna

Report on a garden visit June 1st 2018

The garden of Trewoofe House lies on a gentle south facing slope with slightly acid soil. A mill leat runs west to east along the southern boundary of the main garden. This is stone lined and leads to Clapper Mill, about two hundred metres to the south-east. The mill site is believed to be five hundred years old. Certainly the hamlet of Trewoofe (pronounced Troove) is of medieval origin. The house now called simply Trewoofe (formerly Trewoofe Manor) is largely 17th century with later alterations. It incorporates a reset late medieval doorway which is all that remains of another, larger, wing of the manor house. Gilbert, in 1820, noted that "the mansion is demolished, and the only remains of its venerable form is a door-way, which bears the arms of the Levelis family". In the 16th century Thomas Levelis married Joan Trewoofe, the manor thus passing into his family. In the late 17th century the site was split between two daughters and was subsequently sold.



In 1912 Charles and Ella Naper, bought three meadows just above the hamlet of Trewoofe. They had long and successful artistic careers as leading lights of the Newlyn school. In the eastern meadow they built Trewoofe House, with a small garden around it. For many years after WWI they let the two fields to the west to commercial Cornish flower growers. The flowers were sent to Covent Garden by train from Penzance station. This continued until the 1960s when the profit went out of the market. The land was then let to a local farmer. Nevertheless, occasional stragglers still survive in the hedges around the garden, including some violets which, though once common, are now very rare. In 1974, when their niece, Maryella Pigott, came to live at Trewoofe House she took back the farmland, put it in grass and began to expand the garden into these fields. The history of the hamlet given above, though interesting, is therefore largely irrelevant in terms of the history of the garden. Nevertheless, the surviving buildings and the leat provide a physical context for the garden and they have been used as important elements in its design and development.

The early stages of the creation garden were inauspicious in that many of the early plantings, in the spring of 1976, were to suffer the long drought of that summer. This metaphorical storm was weathered and the garden thrived, including the survival of two Magnolias (*mollicomata* and *Campbellii* 'Charles Raffill' planted that spring. It was to be 18 and 20 years before these first flowered. In the early days the vegetable garden was very large, as it had to feed a family of five. Many apple trees were planted at this time.

The eastern part of the garden consists of several small lawns that merge into another but are divided as spaces by planting, principally of trees and shrubs. Beds of shrubs and herbaceous plant are interspersed in these lawns, some edged with stone.



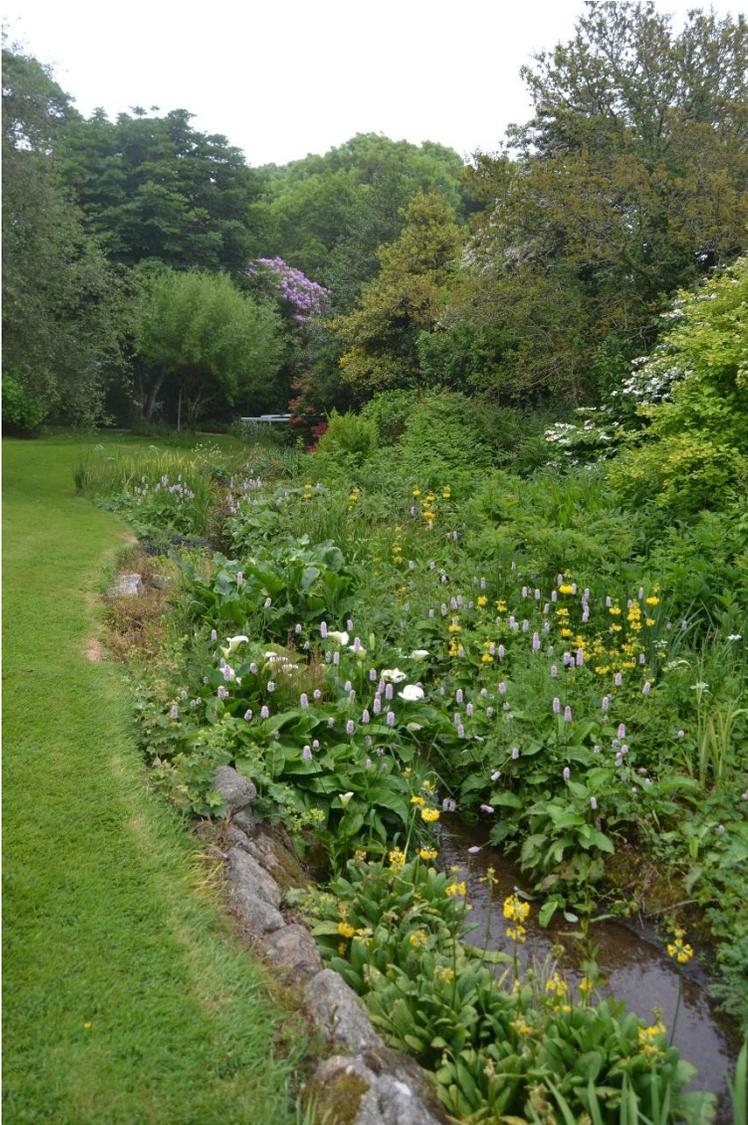
Along the southern edge is the leat, which has been transformed into a bog garden. A small extension to the south includes another lawn and a secret garden which overlooks the hamlet of Trewoofe showing a lovely roofscape. As the gardens extends further west it becomes more informal. The southern part is a woodland garden with curving paths and to the north are square compartments with straight paths bordered by hedging. Towards the north-west are three cordons of apple trees of various varieties, both cookers and eaters, including Howgate Wonder. Beyond this is a small fruit cage. Trees have been planted on the northern boundary to form a windbreak, but Maryella says that denser panting here would be no bad thing. All this work has been done by Maryella, with the help of a gardener for one day a week, more recently extended to two days a week.

Throughout the garden are twelve trees planted for Maryella's grandchildren. These are at various stages of maturity and provide a continuity of vision as well as a broad range of specimen trees that give interest throughout the garden. A list of these trees is given below

Among the many other trees are a late flowering *Syringia prestoniae*, a tulip tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) which has not yet flowered in its 30 year lifetime and a *Hoheria sextylosa*, which produces white flowers in August. This last is supposedly evergreen but the "Beast from the East" that struck Cornwall earlier this year brought snow even to this sheltered spot and caused the *Hoheria* to lose its leaves. Thankfully it is recovering well.

Having planted trees for her grandchildren, they have, of course, demanded to know which their grandmother's tree. Maryella has decided that the purple beech (*Fagus sylvatica* "Riversii") is hers. This is a focal point of one of the lawns and of course is a stunning tree, with deep purple leaf, turning to reds and golds in autumn. It is further defined by leaving a circle of tall grass around it, underplanted with snowdrops and narcissi.

As well as the grandchildren's trees there are a plenty of other interesting ones, including a mature *Drimys winteri*, a *Cinnamomum* and a self-seeded *Weigela* with unusual bi-coloured flowers.



The course of the leat had included a sluice gate when the Naper's bought the land but this has now gone. The leat is shown in a painting by Samuel John "Lamorna" Birch in the time of Charles and Ella Naper. This shows an area below the house where the leat has been widened, presumably for decorative effect. Maryella has planted a bog garden here extending westwards towards the woodland garden. The woodland garden is a small haven of over 35 camellias as well as rhododendrons and native broadleaves.

The northern area includes further gems such as a *Gingko biloba* and a pergola draped with a wonderful *Wisteria* shot through with purple clematis.



Grandchildren's trees (aged 33 -18 in 2018), in date order:

- *Sorbus* 'Joseph Rock' (mountain ash with yellow berries and good autumn colour)
- *Prunus* Shimidsu Sakura (Japanese cherry, double pink opening to white)
- *Malus hupehensis* (tea crab apple)
- *Fraxinus excelsior* 'Jaspidea' (with yellow leaves both when young and in autumn)
- *Magnolia doltsopa* (Sweet michelia or Temple magnolia, with fragrant flowers)
- *Prunus avium* 'Plena' (double white flowering cherry, with crimson leaves in autumn)
- *Magnolia sunrise* (with reddish pink flame-like marks at the base of the cream flowers)
- *Tamarisk ramosissima* Pink Cascade (with plumes of deep pink flowers in late summer)
- *Catalpa Bignonioides* (Indian bean tree)
- *Prunus* Shirotae (or *Prunus* 'Mount Fuji'; white semi-double flowers, with orange and red autumn colour)
- *Prunus padus* 'Colorata' (bird cherry; leaves reddish purple when young, pale pink flowers in racemes)
- *Styrax japonicus* (Japanese Snowbell – small white bell shaped flowers with yellow stamens in summer)