

Restoration and renewal at Weston Park

Head Gardener Martin Gee on the continual effort for the perfect stately garden

Over the last 20 years the gardens at Weston have been going through a programme of restoration by the Weston Park Foundation, the charity that owns and maintains Weston.

Work started in the Formal Gardens in 1991 where we re-instated the box hedging and parterre and re-designed the Rose Garden. We then moved onto the Teardrop and Rose Walk which were restored to their original glory.

Over the last two years my team and I have been busy creating two new gardens of memory on the estate. Lady Anne and Lady Joan were sisters to the 6th Earl and while Lady Anne lived to the grand age of 94, her sisters life was tragically cut short at the age of 19 in 1931 following a riding accident.

Following Lady Anne's death in 2009, her family made a generous bequest to the Foundation to create a garden in her memory and to restore Lady Joan's cascade garden in Temple Wood.

These gardens are now starting to reach maturity and are beautiful places to stroll through and feature flowering trees and shrubs, a restored water cascade and water loving plants.

In line with the work undertaken in the gardens we have also been busy over the last ten years restoring the Parkland to Capability Brown's original vision in readiness to celebrate the 300th anniversary of his birth in 2016. We are fortunate to have one of only five remaining examples of a Brown Pleasure Ground in the country, Temple Wood, and we have dredged Temple Pool, removed rhododendrons and opened up views and vistas across to the Knoll Tower in the distance – whilst remaining sympathetic to the legacy of previous generations.

The Walled Garden hasn't been forgotten either! This area is already home to a yew hedge maze, apple and pear orchards, chickens (whose eggs are delicious!) and rare breed sheep. In the northern corner we have started work on a contemporary garden which includes sculptures and a wild flower meadow.

We are looking forward to welcoming visitors in May and for our new date in September - there is so much for them to explore and I will certainly be on the lookout for new additions to Weston's gardens from the nurseries attending.



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