

# EDGORTH & DISTRICT GARDEN CLUB

## LATE SUMMER VISIT

### MELBOURNE HALL AND THE DOWER HOUSE

MELBOURNE, DERBYSHIRE  
SUNDAY 4 SEPTEMBER 2022

*Price* £34

The picturesque village of Melbourne in south Derbyshire is the home of two gardens both owned by independent branches of the Kerr family.

Our first visit will be to a plantman's garden at The Dower House, built in 1829. This is the home of Griselda Kerr, a well-known garden writer and a very knowledgeable plants-woman.

She will provide tea/coffee and biscuits on arrival and will be there to show us around or if we wish, to let us explore independently, as we wish.

When they moved into the house there was no garden of any merit and Mrs Kerr designed and built the garden herself. (With the knowledge she gained from this experience she wrote an excellent garden book with superb cross referencing.) Her garden is packed with many rare and unusual plants and has fine views across the lake. The garden now has many different planting opportunities using the slopes and levels of the ground. Shoes with a good grip are advised as there are sloping paths.

Paths and steps descend either side of a balustraded terrace down a huge bank covered in roses and shrubs to the lower lawn. An herbaceous border, at its best in summer and autumn, runs down one side of the main lawn whilst opposite is a hot bed of vibrant reds and yellows at its peak from August to October. A rose tunnel divides the garden which has numerous paths leading to different areas - areas of dark and light, vibrancy and calm, intimacy and openness. There are, hundreds of roses in Summer with interesting plants including the rare *Poliothyrsis sinensis*, *Chionanthus virginicus*, *Tilia henryana*, *Cornus 'Venus'*, *Calycanthus Venus* and *Davidia involucrata* 'Sonoma' amongst many others.

At the back of the house, there is a fruit cage, herb garden and hebe bed. The vegetable garden is accessible from the greenhouse or from the front courtyard where sweet peas climb through obelisks and roses cover the adjacent stable and cottage walls. Almost all of the planting has been undertaken since 2005.



A short walk from The Dower House is Melbourne Hall. This house set in a 17 acre



historic garden being the best surviving example of an early C18th English garden. The garden was designed, built and adorned by Rt Hon Thomas Coke who had been Vice Chamberlain to Queen Anne, who gave Him the Four Seasons monument.

Today the gardens have extensive paths, lawns, fountains, a streamside garden and interesting specimen trees. There is a large formal grassed area with clipped shrubs in front of the house. To the south

the estate overlooks a large lake known as the Pool.

There are shops and a café in the Hall courtyard where we will be able to buy lunch. The village is interesting and suitable for a Jane Austen film set!!

Between the two gardens is a large early twelfth century Norman church thought to have been constructed by Adelulf the first Bishop of Carlisle as his cathedral in order to have his seat away from border skirmishes. This is well worth a visit. His Bishop's Palace was on the site of Melbourne Hall.



On our way home we will visit the nearby, family run Swarkestone Nursery

#### *Draft timings*

- *Depart Edgworth / Bromley Cross 8 20 / 8:30*
- *Dower House: 11:00 to 1pm*
- *Melbourne house Garden and cafe 1pm to 3:15pm*
- *Arrive Garden Centre / nursery 3:30pm depart for home 4:45*
- *Back home: 7pm*

#### *To book a place contact*

*Sue and Phil: [outings@edgworth-horticultural-society.co.uk](mailto:outings@edgworth-horticultural-society.co.uk)*

*or*

*Phil: 01204 300541*

*Members and non-members are welcome*