

U3A Gardening group May 24 report for Forum

In May we had our first outing of the year with a visit to Holker Hall & Gardens in the south of the lake district. The visit was very popular so we had a large 52 seater coach which was tricky for our driver to manoeuvre through the narrow streets. We arrived safely and were greeted by a representative of the hall and garden. Most of the group made straight for the Courtyard Café for welcome refreshments.

Holker Hall dates back to the early 1600s and has been home to the Preston, Lowther and Cavendish families. The hall is still occupied by Lucy Cavendish and her husband Tor McLaren. We were able to tour the house and had magnificent views of the garden beyond.

The gardens are made up of formal areas close to the house. It was a wonderful day to visit with some beautiful swathes of pink and white tulips underplanted with white forget me knots to make stunning displays. The formal garden included topiary with cleverly pruned shapes including elephants. In the wider landscape there were rhododendrons and azaleas in flower underplanted with bluebells, camassias, wild garlic and wood anemones. At the centre of the estate sits the cascade and fountain flowing down from a statue of Neptune. The cascade has just been renovated over the winter and the water now flows freely. The wider gardens have a labyrinth and willow den with woodland walks and the deer park.

As the visit drew to a close we were able to make purchases from the gift shop and farm shop. The visit was another wonderful day out with positive feedback from Members.

On 7th June we will be visiting the RHS Bridgewater garden.

On Friday 5th July we visit Brodsworth Hall and Gardens.

Julie, Fran and Kate

