



## Forum 2024 – The Speakers

### **Will Woodman – Head Gardener, Knightshayes (National Trust)**

#### **‘The History and Future of the Kitchen Garden at Knightshayes’**

Will started his horticultural career at Shuttleworth College, then a few apprenticeships, working at some stunningly beautiful gardens such as Hever Castle, The World Garden, Windsor Great Park and Savill Gardens and at High Beeches in Sussex along with a few others. After a few years of working across the whole southeast England, and trying to learn the widest breadth of horticulture possible he found himself at Chevithorne Barton, with the national Oak collection due to a more recent fascination with this majestic genus. It was there he fell in love with Knightshayes Court gardens, bringing him to today where he says he has ‘the very fortunate role of Head Gardener at this gorgeous property’.



**Siân Alyce Thomas, BA, MA, PhD, MCIfA, FSA**

#### **‘The Glasshouse and Walled Kitchen Garden at Althorp’**

Siân has worked in the commercial archaeology sector for a number of years and currently works as a Project Officer for Archaeology Wales Ltd. Siân has led a number of their large excavation projects over the last few years and has been responsible for both the site work and the production of the final reports. She has written and contributed towards numerous specialist reports on Roman pottery, Roman coins, Roman small finds, and Ceramic Building Material.

Siân completed her PhD at Cardiff University and her research focused on the material culture of societies and communities in the south-west of England in the Late Iron Age and Roman period. She analysed how identities changed from the Late Iron Age through the Roman period through the analysis of artefact assemblages excavated from sites across the south-west peninsula.

### **Lord (Julian) and Lady (Jan) Darling – owners of Wood, Bishopsteignton**

#### **‘The Walled Garden at Wood’**

Julian is a Chartered Surveyor, spending much of his career managing landed country estates, most of which have, or had, walled kitchen gardens, a relationship that began early in that career:



'My first home was the vacant old garden boys' bothy on the north side of the walled garden on an estate in Oxfordshire which was deemed unfit for an estate labourer to live in in 1965, but good enough for the side-kick at the local firm of land agents running the estate. Luckily (for me) the lean-to greenhouses were demolished as I arrived and the kind owner agreed to knock windows and a French door through to provide the bothy with light and access to a small garden. I was very happy living there until 1970 when we got married and moved to a lovely farmhouse on the same estate where Jan made her first garden with help and advice from Allen Paterson; she is the gardener and I remain the garden boy to this day. She is slowly recovering from a very serious brain aneurysm a year ago, so Rosie arrived in October last year to take charge on a part time basis'.

With Jan, they came to Devon from Intwood Hall, Norwich, (where they had five walled gardens) and bought Wood in 2008 when the house was very run down and the walled garden was derelict. They asked Dan Pearson to prepare a masterplan for the estate (all 67 acres of it) and a detailed concept plan for the walled garden. Applications were submitted to the annual Georgian Group awards in 2013 which was a very good record of where they had got to with the house, landscape (including the walled garden) and orangery by then.

Julian will be joined by their gardener at Wood, Rosie McNamarra