

News from the Gardens of Easton Lodge

A large injection of volunteer enthusiasm and healthy dollops of grant aid from Essex's Life Raft Trust and Business Link have enabled the Gardens of Easton Lodge to move ahead with regular openings, replanting and restoration work in recent months, as well as the creation of a new user-friendly website.

The Gardens of Easton Lodge, near Dunmow, were one of the most important creations of the Edwardian designer Harold Peto. His commission in 1902 came from "Darling Daisy", the Countess of Warwick, who regularly entertained society guests there including the Prince of Wales before he acceded to the throne as Edward VII.

Designed in Italianate style around Warwick House which is set in the grounds, the gardens were maintained until 1950, after which time nature took over. Tantalising glimpses of those designs have been resurfacing since 1993, when restoration work first began. Today's visitors can see Peto's Italian Sunken Garden amongst other examples of his work.

Much loved by people across the region because of its beautiful setting, sense of history and unusual plantings, the gardens' 2011 summer Sundays programme features something for everyone. **Sunday 17 July** sees a visit by the Chelmsford Croquet Club to show how the game really should be played, with plenty of opportunities to 'have a go' on the famous Edwardian croquet lawn designed by Harold Peto for Daisy, Countess of Warwick. Harold Peto will himself be the subject of a talk at the opening on **21 August**, while the **18 September** opening will boast a birthday party for Daisy who would have been 150 this year. The final open day of the season is on **16 October** when the gardens assume their marvellous autumn mantle.

More details on the openings, volunteering opportunities and other initiatives are online at www.eastonlodge.co.uk, by emailing enquiries@eastonlodge.co.uk or leaving a message on 01371 876979.

The Gardens are located just outside Great Dunmow in Little Easton, off the B184 (Great Dunmow to Saffron Walden road). Follow the brown heritage signs.