

Replanting Langdon's Landscape Park

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Wembury Local History and Amenity Societies

www.wemburyhistory.org.uk

Replanting Langdon's Landscape Park: the background



Note re illustrations: to ensure that the file size is small enough to download rapidly, only this photograph of Langdon Court has been included. However, our website gallery (www.wemburyhistory.org.uk/gallery) contains a full set of pictures illustrating this account.

Langdon Court (listed Grade II*) dates from c. 1577, with substantial remodelling in 1707 and 1877. In addition to its formal garden (also listed Grade II*), it has a landscape park created by combining three fields in the valley adjacent to the house.

The precise date of this conversion is not known, but the estate owners, the Calmady family, commissioned a highly detailed map of their holdings in 1788/89 on which the landscape park does not appear. Because an 1857 painting by Gertrude Calmady shows mature trees in the garden, it may well be that it was developed late in the eighteenth century.

By 2006 most of the garden's trees were suffering from severe decay. Mrs Eileen Arnold, the Chair of Wembury Local History Society, drew this to the attention of Wembury Amenity Society and proposed that new planting should be undertaken to restore the garden for future generations.

Replanting took place in November, 2007 after Mrs Arnold made a successful application for substantial funding from the Devon Gardens Trust. Mr Tony Romang, the parish Tree Warden and a member of Wembury Amenity Society committee, planned the restoration programme and has now written the following account. The event itself was attended by many members of the local community, including children from Wembury Primary School. Dayna

Landsborough and Lois Bellingham, respectively the school's oldest and youngest pupils, were invited to participate in the planting itself.

David Pinder, Chair, Wembury Amenity Society, January 2013

Restoration of Langdon landscape park

by

Tony Romang

After I had got agreement in principle from the landowner Rodney MacBean, and provided Eileen Arnold with a list of possible trees, Eileen arranged a site meeting with representatives of the Devon Gardens Trust (DGT). The meeting was held on 13th April 2007 attended by:

Eileen Arnold, Trustee of DGT & Wembury History Society
John Clark, DGT Conservation Officer
Clare Greener, Chairman DGT
Carolyn Keep, Chairman DGT Conservation Committee
Mark Jones, Langdon Court Hotel
Rodney and Peter MacBean, land owners
Tony Romang, Parish Tree Warden & Wembury Amenity Society.

The field was walked and a discussion was held on where to plant new trees to replace those that were lost or dying, and where to site additional trees to grow on for the future. The aim was to restore, in principle, the designed landscape which had at one time been part of the Langdon Court estate.

It was agreed that:

- the trees would be provided by me and other interested parties from Wembury. I chose them and they were paid for by Wembury Amenity Society.
- the Devon Garden Trust would provide £500 for the provision of fencing materials; this was later approved by their committee.

- the landowners (the MacBean brothers) would dig the holes and erect the stock-proof enclosures.
- to give the trees the best possible start, whips should be obtained where possible, and that the best time to plant would be between November and February. National Tree Week in November was suggested as a possibility.

The trees finally planted on 26th November 2007 were slightly different from those agreed. Although the planting was arranged for National Tree week and the order placed in September, the growers had not started lifting in time, so the nursery only had part of the order available. Other sources were hastily found.

The trees planted were:

- 1) One *Araucaria araucana* Monkey puzzle/Chilean Pine
- 2) One *Cedrus atlantica* Atlantic Cedar
- 3) One *Liriodendron tulipifera* Tulip tree
- 4) Three *Fagus sylvatica* Common Beech
- 5) Two *Castanea sativa* Sweet Chestnut
- 6) Two *Aesculus hippocastanum* Horse Chestnut
- 7) One *Quercus petraea* Oak
- 8) One *Fagus sylvatica laciniata* Cut Leaf Beech, planted by the MacBean brothers as a memorial to David their brother.

Unfortunately, it was found later that one beech had to be replaced, having been cut or bitten off near its base.

Progress by April 2012

The landscape park was revisited in April, 2012 - four and a half years after the initial planting and at the start of the growing season. By this time the new

beech tree was catching up with its neighbours. One of the horse chestnuts was smaller than the other, but still sturdy. The cedar had struggled to get established but was now growing. All the others were growing well, including the tulip tree, which had caused concern, being the most expensive and having been supplied with a very poor root system. All the signs were that the new trees would ultimately mature very effectively.