

## U3A Garden Group – Visit to Moor Wood, Thursday 23rd June, 2022

This was a private visit to a beautiful farmland estate situated in a valley near North Cerney, in the village of Woodmancote. The present owners are the third generation of the Robinson family to farm there. Captain Claude Robinson chose to live there in 1911 because of the close proximity to Cirencester, where he could take his ponies to play Polo in the park. The present owners Henry and Susie made us all so welcome. We were conscious of their generosity in giving us so much time as it was obvious that maintenance of the farm land, the garden and especially the outstanding National Collection of about 150 rambling rose varieties was more than a full time job. In the past 6 full time staff had been employed, but now just two part-timers helped out with cutting the lawns and hedges. We were taken on a walking tour round the various sections of the garden, all defined by extensive hedging; Henry pointed out some interesting trees, especially the Tulip Tree which was in flower and an ancient Cedar of Lebanon, thought to be about 300 years old. Saplings of both species had been planted about 10 years ago, in order to replace the older trees in the future. The meadows were also full of wild flowers, and earlier in the year snowdrops, wild daffodils and many others provided a good show.

The rambling roses were spectacular with colours ranging from deep red, shades of orange, pinks and white and with varied flower heads and petals. They scrambled everywhere – up and over the walls, up the side of the house, over roof tops and through the trees. Henry reckoned there were many other varieties to add to the collection. They always opened their garden to the public, under the Open Gardens Scheme towards the end of June and donated all the money taken to Macmillan Nurses Cancer Support and Marie Curie, as some of their family had benefitted from the support of the charities.

Having had only a few drops of rain, we completed our visit with a welcome cup of tea and home-made sponge cake, sitting on the patio. It had been an impressive visit, not only because of the garden but also because of the family attitude to coping with the present situation but being realistic about changes which would have to be made by the son and heir to this peaceful valley, as he took over responsibility of the farm and gardens.

Pat Uglow