

Great Dixter update

September

My time at Dixter started in early September and begun with meadow clearing. Pictured below are some of the meadow lands yet to be cut with Andrew, one of the American scholars in high spirits. We spent almost a month clearing the meadows which I thoroughly enjoyed coming from a farming background in Ireland it was nice to do more traditional style farming within a garden setting.



Every morning at 8am we each have an area of Dixter to sweep and tidy before opening to the public. The Peacock garden pictured below was my area for much of the remaining open season and many pleasantly spent early mornings have been spent working in this area so far.



Lunches tend to be a social occasion at Dixter! My picture below on a warm September day illustrates that. Now that winter has set in we have our breaks in the lunch room with its much appreciated warmth!



Shortly after arriving in England to start my time at Great Dixter the Queen sadly passed away and to commemorate Sarah, one of Dixters gardeners and I made some bouquets to celebrate the Queens life, these were displayed on the porch that week.



October

The great Dixter plant fair took place in the lower fields, plant nurseries from across England attended and it was a really successful year for the event. An all hands on deck weekend!



The Dixter team runs a cake stall for the fair, for which we are encouraged to make some items for sale- I made a lemon drizzle which turned out remarkably well considering it was made at 1am the night before after a few whiskeys. Mark a garden team volunteer and fellow Irishman was kind enough to take a photo of me on the day.



The big clean-up after the fair weekend involved loading all the square bales used by the stallholders back into the shed for next year. Photo taken just before it POURED RAIN.



Seeking shelter from that rain on our freshly stacked bales with Fergus overseeing operations. Pictured are all the Dexter 2022/23 scholars- Rob from England, Madelaine from florida, Andrew from Massachusetts and myself from Ireland.



On occasion throughout October we visited a separate project that Dexter is involved with called 'The Silk Route Garden' about a 3 hour drive from Dexter. This year we went to plant thousands of Tulip and other west Asian bulbs. Pictured below is the glasshouse- a prominent feature of the garden with its dramatic open panels.



A fun occasion during October was a harvest dinner that some of the garden team prepared for everyone involved at Dexter. Much of the food was taken from the veg garden and prepared in the old kitchen. Madelaine decorated the table with Dahlias, calendulas and other late season flowers from the garden.



Much of October once the meadows were cut was spent cutting the hedges and topiary around Great Dixter. This was another interesting and enjoyable task learning how best to manage certain parts of the old Dixter yew hedges and getting the best shapes cut into the topiary pieces.



November

A beautiful picture from the Peacock garden in late November with the early morning mist lingering.



Much of November as a result of the garden closing to the public for winter and the need to plant spring bulbs has been spent cutting down and removing this years' growth in the borders. Most areas of high intensity garden are cleaned up with plants individually marked once cut and new blubs planted for the spring displays. Pictured below is some of our recent work in the peacock garden with gardener and past scholar Ben walking through the border on his wooden boards to stop soil compaction.



Potted bulb displays play a large part of the springtime show at Dixter and so throughout November we have been potting up all the terracotta pots with tulip, daffodil and crocus bulbs. Pictured below are some of the pots ready to be stored away until the bulbs show in the springtime. The old Massey Ferguson tractor making an appearance again!

