

## Falmouth's £2.3m garden restoration project completed

**A £2.3m restoration project has been completed on a subtropical garden in south Cornwall.**

The Gyllyngdune Gardens restoration project in Falmouth was awarded £1m by the Heritage Lottery Fund, with additional funding from Cornwall Council and Carrick Leisure.

The project included the restoration of a quarry garden, a shell grotto and a chapel overlooking a beach.

Plants had also been returned to an "historical context", staff said.

The garden formed part of the Gyllyngdune Estate, with a house designed and built by George Wightwick for General William Jessor Coope in 1837.

### **'Strange, rare plants'**

In the early 1900s, Frederick John Horniman purchased the Gyllyngdune estate for £14,000 and sold part of the estate to the town council.

In 1907, the Gyllyndune Gardens were opened, along with the Princess Pavilions.

Head gardener Matt Stannard said: "It's a little hidden gem."

"We have exotic plants here, plants that you are not going to see in lots of other gardens as we have a special micro-climate.

"The Victorians were plant collectors, with strange new rare plants, and we've tried to carry that on.

"We've tried to keep the history of the place and follow the planting scheme of the plants the Victorians would have had."

Mr Stannard said his team were also trying to introduce new rare varieties and different plants that people had not seen before to carry on what the Victorians are were doing.

There is also a quarry in the gardens which was excavated for the building of the manor house.

Mr Stannard said: "We have to abseil down to weed the the cliff face of the quarry, but we've tried to put in agaves, proteas and telopeas.

"People are surprised that this garden is in the middle of Falmouth. I don't think many people know about it," he added.

A spokesperson for Carrick Leisure said: "It is our aspiration to make Gyllyngdune an inspirational, innovative and accessible place to visit where everyone is welcome and experience the garden's heritage which is rich in people, places and plants."

The money is also funding refurbishment work at Princess Pavilions.

