

# Peamore, a Picturesque Pleasance

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Nestled in a bowl of hills just south of Exeter lies Peamore House situated towards the southern extremity of an estate that in 1910 comprised 750 acres and whose core picturesque designed landscape today remains largely intact. However, that landscape is under threat. The estate is in multiple ownership: the mansion divided into four, two houses built to the west replacing a much earlier range of buildings removed in the nineteenth century, on the opposite side of the main road to the east there has been development in the former kitchen gardens and farm, and a bungalow constructed beside the Pond; the park, woodland and other land is also in multiple ownership. In addition, the expansion of Exeter and further potential development in the Teignbridge Local Plan to the north, south and east threaten the setting of this landscape that inspired artists including Francis Towne and John White Abbott, and which has connections with Humphry Repton and his son, George Stanley Repton. The research informing this article has been the basis for the Trust's decision to apply to Historic England to add Peamore to the *Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Importance in England*. This article summarizes the research and discusses potential influences on the design of the landscape. A detailed report is available from the Trust.

## Ownership

Historically Peamore was in the parish of Exminster, where the south chapel of the Church of St Martin of Tour, refurbished as the Peamore aisle in 1631 (now the Lady Chapel) contains memorials to Peamore family members including Grace Tothill who died in 1623 and the sons of Lewis Pendarves Kekewich who died in World War 1.<sup>1</sup> Noted in the Domesday Book Peamore (Peumere) passed by inheritance through several centuries to Henry Grey, 1st Duke of Suffolk, the father of Lady Jane Grey, who was attainted and executed in 1554 when the estate passed to the crown.<sup>2</sup> It was bought by Jeffry Tothill, MP and Recorder of Exeter, whose grand-daughter Joanna married Robert Northleigh (1581-1638) of Matford in about 1620 after which Peamore became the Northleigh family seat. In 1739 their great-great-granddaughter Mary Northleigh married John Hipsley Coxe of Ston Easton Park in Somerset.<sup>3</sup>

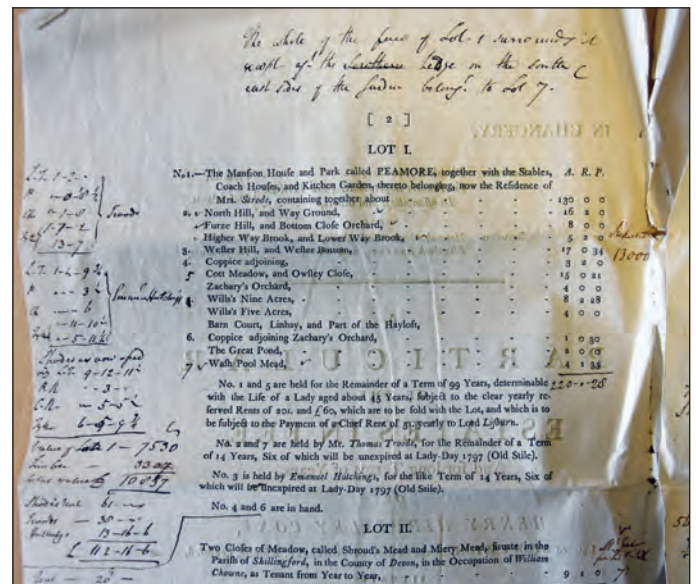


Figure 1. *Particulars of Estates To be Sold on the 14th Day of May, 1797, at Four o'Clock in the Afternoon, SHC, DD/HI/C/523, South West Heritage Trust.*

In addition to Peamore, Mary inherited substantial property in Devon and Somerset from her mother's Davie side of the family which helped to finance the enlargement of the new Palladian house at Ston Easton.<sup>4</sup> In 1769 Richard Hipsley Coxe (born in Peamore 1742) inherited their estates; he never married and made Ston Easton his principal residence, enlarging the house and estate, spending to such an extent that on his death in 1786 his debts amounted to £30,000, equivalent to around £4 million in 2020.<sup>5</sup> Richard's brother, Henry Hipsley Coxe, continued the improvement of the Ston Easton estate, commissioning Humphry Repton in 1792 (see below).

Following the death of Mary Coxe in 1771, it is likely that Peamore was let out for some years.<sup>6</sup> In a survey that year Mrs Culme is listed as the tenant at Peamore House and Gardens at an annual rent of £30; but the Park with other land was rented by Henry Chowne for £177. 1. 0.<sup>7</sup> In 1789 Samuel Strode took a life lease on Peamore from Henry Hipsley Coxe, the estate comprising 163 acres 3 rood 30 perches. Strode spent the winter at Peamore and the summers in The Moul, Salcombe.<sup>8</sup> He died in 1795 but his wife, who died in London in 1804, continued to live at Peamore, being listed as the tenant in 1797 for an annual rent of £20 of 'Part of Peamore and late Chownes or Wills's in Exminster' comprising 'The Mansion House, Stables, Coach Houses and Garden at Peamore' together with The Park of which 102 acres 2 roods 10 perches were tillage ground and 25 acres, 1 rood, 30 perches were woody ground; she also rented a further 31 acres.<sup>9</sup> She may have continued to rent even after it was sold to Samuel Kekewich (1765-1822) in 1797 for £13,000.<sup>10</sup>



Figure 2. *Design for remodelling Peamore House, Alpbington, Devon; perspective of the garden front incorporating paper flap in place showing the structure after the alteration, George Stanley Repton, 1825, RIBA Collections, RIBA29479.*

(Figure 1) The estate then remained in the Kekewich family until it was sold in 1948.

Samuel Kekewich (1765-1822) was a barrister and High Sheriff of Devon in 1805, he was born at Bowden House, Ashprington, but his ancestors' seat in the sixteenth century was at Catchfrench in Cornwall, where he inherited property which was still in the family ownership in the twentieth century.<sup>11</sup> It was during the custodianship of him and his son, Samuel Trehawke Kekewich (1796-1873), who was MP for Exeter 1826 – 1830 and for Devon South 1858 – 1873, that there is most evidence of the developments to the Peamore landscape.

Successive Kekewich generations increased and consolidated their land ownership until 1945 when Lewis Pendarves Kekewich sold Pottles Farm to the east of Peamore comprising 151.482 acres to Ida Annie Nickels.<sup>12</sup> Other parts of the estate were offered for sale in the same year.<sup>13</sup> Lewis Pendarves Kekewich died in 1947, and his son Sydney Kekewich (1893-1980) sold the estate. On Friday 23 April 1948, Peamore House and estate were offered for sale by auction at the Rougemont Hotel, Exeter, in two lots: Lot 1 the house and pleasure grounds the whole amounting to 12 acres 3 roods 9 perches; Lot 2 the [kitchen] gardens and gardener's cottage comprising 38.617 acres, the farm having already been sold.<sup>14</sup> By 1950 Peamore was operating as a country house hotel and was sold again in 1961 when the mansion was divided into four separate houses.<sup>15</sup>

## The House

Peamore House has elements dating possibly to the sixteenth century, but it has been much changed over the centuries.<sup>16</sup> Swete in 1793 noted that the house 'though low, carries with it a venerable look', his comment reflecting the eighteenth-century preference to build on higher ground and possibly suggesting an old-fashioned architectural style. George Stanley Repton (1786-1858), youngest son of Humphry Repton, was commissioned to propose alterations and additions to Peamore House, although who commissioned him and when is unclear. (See below.) (Figure 2)

## The Landscape

It is unknown whether there was a designed landscape during the Tudor or Stuart periods. The remains of an avenue leading up the hill directly to the north of the mansion might indicate an early formal landscape, possibly early eighteenth century, however, this is not shown on the John Donn map of 1765 nor on the Ordnance Survey surveyor's drawing of 1801, although the latter is lacking in detail including the Pond that is shown on an estate map of 1793.<sup>17</sup> Much more detail including the avenue is shown on the map of Peamore in a book of *Maps of Estates* of 1793, in the *Survey or Particulars of Peamore Lands Late of Henry Hippisley Coxe Esq. decd.* (1797) and on the Tithe Map of 1839.<sup>18</sup> (Figures 3 and 4) Although a strongly outlined area of planting with walks extending to the south-east below the mansion is indicated on the 1793 map, the much greater detail of Tithe Map shows

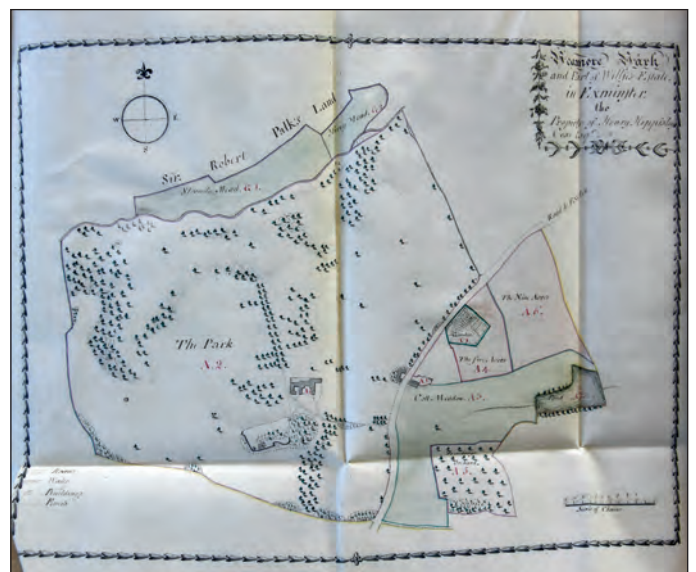


Figure 3. *A Book Containing Maps of Lands, in the Parishes of Exminster and Alpbington, in the County of Devon, The Property of Henry Hippisley Coxe Esq. Robt Cartwright Copied 1793. SHC DD/HI/521/1, South West Heritage Trust. The Rock is the area below the mansion.*



Figure 4. Tithe Map Exminster, Robert Dymond, 1839. South West Heritage Trust. <https://www.devon.gov.uk/historicenvironment/tithe-map/exminster/>.

a small formal garden adjacent to the house with tree planting and a fence immediately surrounding the Rock which suggest a design intended to create a clear distinction between the ‘polite’ pleasure grounds immediately surrounding the mansion and the sublime, naturalistic characteristics of the gardens in the quarry. Although it is not known how much of the detail shown on the Tithe Map existed earlier in the nineteenth century, the maps, contemporary descriptions and paintings evidence the existence of a sophisticated picturesque landscape having already been developed by the latter half of the eighteenth century.

On his return from a journey into west and north Devon in 1792, the Reverend John Swete stopped at Peamore and wrote in his travel journal:

... the chief beauty of Peamore lies in the undulating form of its grounds, rising and falling in the regular alternation of hills and dales – in its woods, groves and trees – and in a Quarry, which surrounded by a thicket of high towering, Oaks, beech &c is one of the grandest and most romantic objects in the Country.<sup>19</sup>

Rev. Richard Polwhele too in his *History of Devonshire* 1793 noted:

It is one of the most pleasant seats in the neighbourhood of Exeter. The boldness of a romantic Rock, which, at a little distance from the villa, suddenly breaks upon the sight, incrustated with white moss, and shaded with a

long sweeping vest of ivy; the venerable forest trees, particularly beech, in many of the grounds, and the park so beautiful in itself from its little undulating hills and dales, and so delightful from its command of prospect, at one time the most variegated and extensive, at another the most distinct and picturesque. Such charms are, doubtless, sufficient to recommend Peamore to the observation of every traveller of taste.<sup>20</sup>

The picturesque qualities of the landscape are also revealed in the paintings by Francis Towne (1739-1816), John White Abbott (1763-1851) and William Payne (1760-1830), the earliest from 1775.

Towne was known in London as a landscape painter but in Exeter as a drawing master, his biographer, Richard Stephens, has noted: ‘it was probably not uncommon for Towne’s pupils to be, or to become, his commissioning clients. Certainly, pupils and clients were drawn from the same families and Exeter social circles, and many of Towne’s on-the-spot sketches were no doubt made in the company of his pupils, at his pupils’ suggestion, or on their property’.<sup>21</sup> Towne’s views at Peamore mostly date to 1775 and 1778 with some further paintings 1786-90. The first and perhaps one of the most significant is *A View of the Arch in Peamore Park looking towards the House*, Francis Towne, drawn on the spot August the 17th 1775. Recto inscription ‘Francis Towne 1776’ (Figure 5). Although this view echoes popular picturesque views of ruinous arches (Towne did many of Italian



Figure 5. *A View of the Arch in Peamore Park looking towards the House*, Francis Towne, 1775-6; verso 'No3, / A View of the Arch in Peamore Park / looking towards the House, drawn / on the spot August the 17th. 1775 / by Francis Towne.' Watercolour and ink. Photo by Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery 1953P400, licensed under CCO.

scenes), the arch here appearing unfinished to the right where the ground is much lower than to the left, a gate can be seen through the arch and the gables of the mansion are visible above the stepped half of the arch to the right, however, intriguingly there appear to be reasonably substantial buildings on the top of the bank to the left. There are no buildings depicted at this point on any of the maps. Today steps lead from the right (east) bank up and continue over the arch with yet more steps rising towards a substantial freestanding stone doorway in the area of the buildings in Towne's view. The doorway has most likely been reused from another building, local lore claims that an arch came from the old Exeter prison, but which Exeter gaol was not specified, though a late eighteenth or early nineteenth century date would be consistent with the building of replacement gaols in the city, and it is likely that Samuel Kekewich would have known of the replacement gaols.<sup>22</sup>

The sublime character of the quarry was captured in the views by Towne, Abbott and William Payne, the latter with figures suggesting it was still being worked, whilst one by Towne also included figures taking a leisurely stroll and admiring the 'natural' landscape (Figures 6 and see front cover). More of Towne's views, and those of his pupils, taken from the park

demonstrate that it was experienced as a designed landscape with expansive and varied views embracing city scape to estuary: towards Exeter, to the Exe estuary, towards the Powderham (built between 1771 and 1774) and Haldon ('Lawrence Tower', built 1788) belvederes, and the 1878 description noted that the Wellington Monument and the Blackdown Hills could also be seen.<sup>23</sup> Such a view can still be enjoyed (Figure 7). Extant views by Towne after 1789 seem to be largely studies of trees, suggesting that he visited less



Figure 6. *Quarry at Peamore*, William Payne, 1790? watercolour, West Country Studies Library, P&D44817, Payne vol. 2 no. 27. South West Heritage Trust.



Figure 7. View from the Park to the west of the mansion looking north-north-east over the mansion, towards Exeter and the Blackdown Hills beyond. © Author.

after Samuel Strode leased Peamore, although there are views by John White Abbott of 1799 and others between 1808 and 1815.<sup>24</sup>

In 1793 Peamore Park comprised 163 acres and the 1797 survey noted that in addition to the mansion house and outhouses there were ‘Best Garden, Courtlages Green, Grove and Bowling Green, Mount.’ The Quarry Close is noted as 5 acres, 2 roods 24 perches and valued at £14 4s, and Wind mill Close 15 acres 2 roods 8 perches valued at £11 13s 3d, Great Pond 2 acres; Nursery by Great Pond 34 perches.<sup>25</sup> The relatively flat ground to the immediate south and east of the mansion would have been suitable for a bowling green, although the linking of ‘Grove and Bowling Green’ might indicate that it was located as a destination in the park as were other features. The mention of a Mount is interesting and may refer to a vestige of an earlier garden even though the house and its immediate surroundings sit in the base of a bowl which is not an obvious location for a mount and there is nothing on the 1793 map that might suggest such a feature; like the Bowling Green, it might have been situated elsewhere in the park to provide a vantage point to overlook part of the garden or further afield. The Tithe map shows two small circles in the woodland to the far west, one to the north and one to the south which are likely to mark the Bathing Pit Bottom and the Old Windmill as shown on the OS map of 1889. To the east of the mansion across a pasture and screened from it



Figure 8. *Trees at Peamore Park, Exeter*, John White Abbott, 1799, watercolour, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge PD.42-190 Photograph copyright © The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

with a little planting, were the farm buildings which straddled the Exeter to Plymouth turnpike road, with the irregular polygonal kitchen garden shown in some detail; also, Peamore Cottage, a substantial house at some stage used as the dower house, with large orchard to the south. Farther to the east was the

Pond edged to the north and south with trees. Views by Towne and Abbott substantiate the clearly defined broad walks around the water indicating that it was very much a feature of the garden experience. (Figure 8) The framing of the view from the mansion towards the Pond and a painting from the 1970s taken from the Pond towards the mansion suggest that at one time there was greater intervisibility between the two which is now obscured by tree cover (Figure 9).

The detailed 1839 Tithe Map confirms a well-established pleasure ground, the park laid out with walks, and possibly drives, through the park, woodland, and pasture extending across the road to the east to encompass the Pond with a boat house, the farm and kitchen gardens. The whole composition including both the ornamental and productive elements of the estate is evocative of a *ferme ornée*. The pleasure ground to the south of the mansion took advantage of the topography of the Rock to create a Picturesque feature. A long straight terrace with a low stone parapet stretched along the northern edge to the west of the freestanding doorway, paths snaked in and around the whole Rock area including on the brink of the quarry and there is current evidence of at least those along the terrace have been stone lined. The relatively flat area to the south of the balustraded terrace on the Rock appears to be laid out in Gardenesque style with island beds of circular, diamond, crescent, and trefoil shape (Figure 10). The remainder of the Rock was wooded. Later planting appears to have been typically Victorian including rhododendron and some palms. A distinct circle was marked at the western edge of the Rock south of the terrace and just below the crags suggesting a building or viewpoint, most likely the site of 'the Summer House, timber built and thatched, with a floor partly composed of the knuckle-bones of fallow deer' (also present on the 1888 OS map) described in the 1948 sale particulars (but not mentioned in the 1878 newspaper article).<sup>26</sup> This would have had a view across the ornamental planting with the quarry face as a dramatic backdrop. A further small circle is shown on the edge of woodland across the pasture to the west from which there would have been views across the estate towards the east and the estuary.

The various developments in the nineteenth century can be identified from analysis of the Tithe Map, together with a newspaper article of 1878 describing the park and pleasure grounds and the 1889 OS map. These included the building of the Keeper's Lodge to the north connected to a drive that meandered through Peamore Wood, further paths snaking



Figure 9. A view from Peamore Pond looking towards the mansion with the boathouse to the right, by Adrian Symons, oil pastels, c. 1977. By kind permission of Adrian Symons.



Figure 10. Tithe Map Exminster, Robert Dymond, 1839. South West Heritage Trust. <<https://www.devon.gov.uk/historicenvironment/tithe-map/exminster/>> Detail showing the garden laid out in the Rock, the archway straddling the entrance from the lawn below the mansion.

through the woodland on high ground to the west with a rustic summerhouse and panoramic views to Exeter; the upper drive to the service court now crossed the main drive taking a direct route across the field to the farm thus not interfering with the movement of the family or guests.<sup>27</sup> There were some alterations to the layout of buildings to the west of the mansion, definition of terraces in the rising ground to the south west of the mansion, a laurel maze in the spur of woodland to the south of the Rock and the construction of the rustic Maud's Bridge over the Exeter road which might have connected with a path to the Pond and certainly connected with Days Pottle Lane, the most direct route to the Church of St Martin of Tour in Exminster. A boat house was marked beside the Pond. In the walled garden there were more buildings to the north-east corner.

The description of the landscape given in the *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette Daily Telegrams* for Tuesday 30

July 1878 announcing that the eighth annual Fete of the Exeter Working-Men's Conservative Union was to held at Peamore on the following bank holiday Monday, noted that 'its historic associations in connection with the siege of Exeter; its delightful picturesqueness of situation and extensive prospect in every direction, give Peamore a special attractiveness for holiday-making people that certainly could not be surpassed.'<sup>28</sup> It details the views, the amount of timber including in the plantations of chestnuts planted some forty-five years previously, ornamental planting, 'a splendid natural fernery' in the Rock and 'an extensive range of productive greenhouses and gardens.'<sup>29</sup> It commented on the 'many beautiful pea-fowl strutting about – another distinctive feature of Peamore – their brilliant feathers glistening in the sunlight.' These were also noted in 1936 when the gardens were opened to the public in aid of Devon Nursing Association as lending 'a somewhat bizarre touch to the landscape', and when the estate was sold in 1948 'a number of Peafowl on the Property which will pass with the Freehold to the Purchaser.'<sup>30</sup>

The Kekewich family appear to have been keen horticulturists: Samuel Trehawke Kekewich was President of the Devon and Exeter Gardeners' Association in 1838 and Trehawke Kekewich in 1910.<sup>31</sup> On 30 July 1829 at the 'First Exhibition of fruits, flowers, and vegetables' of the Devon and Exeter Botanical and Horticultural Society Mr Williamson of Peamore was awarded for plums, also at the September show for celery and curled parsley in the culinary vegetables section and livestock prizes for Mr Drew.<sup>32</sup> Three years later prizes were won for fruit including 'a *Pine Apple* not to be cut', vegetables and livestock.<sup>33</sup> They participated in local hunts; in 1823 the keep for dogs and puppies was £15 13 shillings 6 pence with the half year wages for the gamekeeper being £21, whilst the wages for the gardener were £13.<sup>34</sup> Tennis courts were built in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century, in 1923 the King of Sweden, Gustav V, who was a keen tennis player was a visitor and he planted a Cypress tree (Figure 11).<sup>35</sup>

Although there were changes during the nineteenth and first part of the twentieth centuries, the Kekewich do not appear to have significantly changed the essential character of the late eighteenth – early nineteenth century design. But who was responsible for that design and what were the influences? First the local topography undoubtedly lent itself to a Picturesque approach, its aesthetic qualities recognized by its owners, renowned painters and writers on gardens. The Kekewich were a sociable



Figure 11. Peamore House, from the south-east. The drive runs between the mown and the higher unmown fields. The cedar on the far right is the one planted by the King of Sweden in 1923. © Author.

family with wide familial, social, business and political connections; they entertained at Peamore and visited other estates, for example in 1823 they journeyed to London, Sarsden (Oxfordshire), North Aston (Oxfordshire), Shortgrove (?Hertfordshire), Cornwall, Sidmouth, and Eggesford.<sup>36</sup> So it is not surprising that they had connections with other estates in the South West and elsewhere, including some where the owners had employed the foremost landscape designers of the time, notably Humphry Repton and his younger son, George Stanley. The extent to which either of the Reptons might have had a hand in the design of improvements at Peamore in the early nineteenth century is largely conjectural, but some points are worth considering.

Humphry Repton was commissioned by Henry Hippisley Coxe for improvements to the Ston Easton estate in Somerset. Repton visited in November 1792 and presented a Red Book with his trademark before and after watercolours of his proposals in March 1793; this was the first of his commissions in the west country.<sup>37</sup> Humphry Repton's visit to Ston Easton in November 1792 was the same month he visited Catchfrench (owned by Sir Francis Glanville whose family had purchased it in 1716 from the Kekewich) and Port Eliot (Lord Eliot) in Cornwall, with Red Books for both presented in February/March 1793.<sup>38</sup> Both Cornwall commissions were for friends of the Prime Minister William Pitt the Younger for whom Repton was also working.<sup>39</sup> In the same year Repton presented a Red Book for another Cornwall estate, Trewarthenick for Francis Gregor, and paid his first visit to Antony for Reginald Pole Carew.<sup>40</sup> Peamore would have been a convenient stop on his journey between Somerset and Cornwall and it was not uncommon for Repton to stay at the homes of his clients, although at this time it was tenanted by the



Figure 12. Rev. John Swete, Peamore, *Picturesque Sketches in Devon*, vol. 1, 1792, p. 229. DHC 564M/F1/226-30, South West Heritage Trust.

Strodes. Both Port Eliot and Catchfrench have quarry gardens, the former known as the Craggs, where Lord Eliot had already been busy creating pleasure gardens before Repton arrived.<sup>41</sup> At Catchfrench the quarry was, like Peamore, close to the house, and Repton advised the owners that ‘This quarry will furnish an endless source of amusement if conducted with the same taste and skill which are displayed in the rock scenery of Port Eliot.’<sup>42</sup> The rim and interior were carefully planted and a rock tunnel with arched entrance was built into the Quarry garden remarkably similar to the entrance into the Rock at Peamore; however, there is nothing in the Catchfrench Red Book mentioning this feature, so whether it already existed or was a much later addition is unclear.<sup>43</sup>

In 1795 Humphry Repton had presented a Red Book for improvements to the landscape at Sarsden, Oxfordshire, to John Langston (d.1812) (or his father, James d. 1795).<sup>44</sup> Later from around 1817 George Stanley Repton began working at Sarsden providing plans for both buildings and the landscape. He was commissioned by James Haughton Langston whose sister, Agatha Maria Sophia, became the first wife of Samuel Trehawke Kekewich in April 1820.<sup>45</sup> She would have been familiar with the work of both Humphry and George Stanley Repton,

probably knowing both men, it would therefore have been natural to invite George Stanley to advise on alterations at Peamore, and possibly even before her husband inherited the estate in 1822. It is reasonable to speculate too that it was through this connection that George Stanley Repton was introduced to other Devon landowners either before or around the time he left John Nash (1752-1835) to set up his own practice in 1820, because he was commissioned by Edmund Pollexfen Bastard to remodel Kitley House, followed by George Stanley Cary at Follaton House in 1823-4.<sup>46</sup> Edmund Pollexfen Bastard and Samuel Trehawke Kekewich were also co-directors of a West Country insurance company and later both were High Sheriffs of Devon (1834 and 1835).<sup>47</sup>

George Stanley Repton (1786-1858) is credited with the proposed alterations and additions to Peamore House. One set of unsigned and undated drawings for the house, gateway and a tea house were unexecuted, and are held in the Hippisley Coxe papers at Somerset Heritage Centre; if for Peamore why are they in the Hippisley Coxe rather than the Kekewich papers and might they suggest a commission prior to the 1797 estate sale?<sup>48</sup> Those for a gateway and tea house may be unrelated to Peamore as both are classical in style and the *Estimate for Freestone for Gateway* notes two



lodges whereas only one was built at Peamore.<sup>49</sup> If Henry Hippisley Coxe had originally commissioned some proposals, G S Repton (1786-1858) would only have been seven years old in 1793, but his brother John Adey (1775-1860) had been assisting his father including the designs in the Red Book for Port Eliot presented in 1792. John Adey had worked with architect William Wilkins from 1789, was apprenticed to John Nash in 1796 and tended to design in what he called 'Queen Elizabeth Gothic'.<sup>50</sup> So might the drawings in the Hippisley Coxe papers be by John Adey Repton rather than his younger brother? Hugh Meller suggests they were commissioned by Samuel Kekewich, which would mean they were made before his death in 1822.<sup>51</sup> A further set of drawings held in the RIBA archives are dated 1825 (as are those for Kitley in similar Elizabethan style), although the 'before' drawings appear to have a date of 1815 (when George Stanley Repton was still working with John Nash). This suggests that there might have been several iterations of the commissioning process over a number of years, interrupted by the sale of the estate in 1797 and the death of Samuel Kekewich in 1822.<sup>52</sup> Rosemary Yallop noted that Repton's scheme at Peamore 'resembles his work at Kitley in that the layout and exterior were made more symmetrical and transformed into a uniform 'Elizabethan Mansion-Gothic'.<sup>53</sup>

Alterations in the landscape at Peamore coterminous with George Stanley Repton's likely involvement included a repositioned drive, the entrance gaining more stature with a new lodge and gateway, both possibly designed by G S Repton, although not on the scale suggested by his extant drawings. The original entrance from the south-east gave an immediate view of the house, as shown in Swete's watercolour of Peamore in 1794, which 'was taken near the road leading into the house just within the gate of entrance in the front of a noble and magnificent grove of elms'.<sup>54</sup> (Figure 13) The new entrance was further north and had a wide splay to the road with planted island similar to the design adopted by Humphry Repton at Antony where the entrance was set back from the road by a triangle of grass. A 'Pair of Handsome Wrought-Iron Gates' were still present in 1948 and the pillars survive today.<sup>55</sup> The single storey lodge with small vegetable garden comprised sitting room, kitchen and two bedrooms, by the mid-twentieth century the occupants were still reliant on oil lamps for lighting and an outside 'Elsan' closet.<sup>56</sup> The repositioned drive created anticipation and surprise consistent with Picturesque theory, only

revealing the mansion when cresting a slight hill, creating a 'burst' view. Another device advocated by Humphry Repton and others was that service traffic should not use the same approach as the family and visitors; in his Red Book for Catchfrench he noted:

... it is absolutely necessary ... that the road for heavy carriages to the offices should be distinct from the coach roads or approaches to the house, especially as by this management the latter may become by walks about the place.<sup>57</sup>

Other design elements are reminiscent of Humphry Repton's work. The tree planting stretching south from the entrance along the road boundary performs several functions: it screens the house and the drive from both the road and the farm buildings on the opposite side of the road, it also enhances the park and provides a framing of the longer view from the house to the east across pasture that incorporated the ornate chimneys of Peamore Cottage. At Catchfrench, Humphry Repton had proposed a 'view frame' from the house looking toward an eye-catcher farm across the valley, which 'he achieved by cutting a gentle bowl-shaped valley to the west of the house, using the spoil to raise the ground level by the dwelling'.<sup>58</sup> In the 1820s a short stretch of the road, part of the Exeter to Plymouth turnpike, was repositioned slightly further to the west, which is likely to account for the changes between the 1793 and 1839 maps such that the buildings on the mansion side of the road were united with other farm buildings to the east. This may have been an opportunity to make other landscape improvements.<sup>59</sup> On the 1839 Tithe map, immediately south of the farm buildings the road was drawn with dotted rather than firm line, suggesting that there was no hard boundary visible from the house for this stretch of road, so might the road have been sunk, or there have been a ha-ha, so that the view would have been unbroken across the road? Repton, like 'Capability' Brown, often made slight changes to the landform to disguise the surface of a road whilst not removing the view of passing carriages and people which animated the landscape. Later changes to the main road, including the dualling and recontouring of the ground have changed this aspect of the landscape.

There is no evidence that Humphry Repton visited Peamore or made any suggestions for the landscape, but the various Hippisley Coxe and Kekewich connections with other estates where he and his younger son worked, suggest there might have been some degree of influence. Further, the detail on the Tithe map and in a newspaper article of 1878 that

mentions the planting of timber at Peamore some forty-five years earlier lends considerable credence to the hypothesis that Samuel Trehawke and Agatha Kekewich were making significant improvements to the landscape during the 1820s and 30s possibly with input from G S Repton and certainly taking account of prevailing landscape design principles.<sup>60</sup>

## Conclusion

Peamore's historic house immediately surrounded by formal pleasure grounds extending into the sublime environment of the Rock together with its park threaded with meandering walks and drives providing considerable variety: through pasture and

woodland, around the Pond, encompassing orchard, kitchen garden and farm, enlivened with features like the bathing pit, summerhouses and expansive views; all contribute to an extensive designed Picturesque landscape. Its aesthetic qualities were recognized by renowned painters and garden writers. The familial and other connections with estates which had significant designed landscapes, together with the involvement of George Stanley Repton and potentially the influence of his father, created a landscape whose accomplished design and aesthetic can substantially still be experienced.

With thanks to Dr Clare Greener, Barbara Moul and Sandra Dean.

## References

1. Peamore is now in the parish of Shillingford St George. The Church of St Martin of Tour in Exminster was built in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries with restoration in 1841-2 and 1856. Historic England listing <<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1334270>> [Accessed 1/11/2021.]
2. Richard Polwhele, *History of Devonshire* (1793), Volume 2, Kohler and Coombes, Dorking 1977, p. 107-8. <[https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Peamore,\\_Exminster](https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Peamore,_Exminster)> citing Sanders, I.J. *English Baronies: A Study of their Origin and Descent 1086–1327*, Oxford, 1960, p. 106. [Accessed 4/1/2022.]
3. Mary was the daughter of Stephen Northleigh and Margaret Davie daughter of Sir William Davie of Creedy House by his second wife, Abigail Pollexfen of Wembury. Mary Northleigh inherited with her sister substantial property in Devon and Somerset. Mary's cousin, Henry Tuckfield, owned the manors of Shobrooke, Little Fulford, Upper Wootton, Whitley, a moiety of Poltimore, Morchard Bishop (with patronage of the Rectory), Tedburn St Mary and East Raddon, which were later inherited by Richard Hippisley Coxe on the death of Henry Tuckfield's wife in 1807. Edward Kimber, Richard Johnson, *The Baronetage of England: Containing a Genealogical and Historical Account of All the English Baronets Now Existing*, London, 1771, Vol. 1. p. 418-9.
4. *A Brief History of the Hippisley Family* designed and written by Mike Matthews © 2000-2009, <<http://www.boddyparts.co.uk/hippislefamily.htm>> Based on Ivan Fitzroy Hipsley Jones, *Some Notes on the Hipsley Family*, Wessex Press 1952.
5. Ibid. Measuring Worth, real wage or real wealth index. <<https://www.measuringworth.com/calculators/ukcompare/relativevalue.php>> [Accessed 4/1/2022.]
6. Mrs Mary Coxe, widow of John Hippisley Coxe, died in 1771, his heir Richard Hippisley Coxe, who was unmarried, and later Richard's heir and brother Henry lived at Ston Easton; all their sisters were married by 1780, so it is unlikely any of them lived at Peamore. *A Brief History of the Hipsley Family*.
7. SHC, Hippisley Coxe, DD/HI/523, *Survey of Mrs Coxe's estates in Devonshire, in Jointure and settled on Mrs Coxe*.
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13. SHC, DD/KW/1945/50, *Sale Particulars of Various Somerset Properties includes Parts of the Peamore Estate, Nr. Exeter, 1945*.
14. DHC, 9502/2, 1948, *Particulars, Plan and Conditions of Sale of Peamore House in the Parish of Exminster, Devon*. DHC, 950Z/Z1, *Sale Particulars*, 1961, Photocopy.
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16. <<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1165944?section=official-listing>> [Accessed 3/1/2022.]
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19. DHC, 564M/F1/226-30, Swete Diary Volume 1, p. 230.
20. Polwhele, *History of Devonshire* (1793), Volume 2, p. 108.
21. Richards Stephens, <<http://francistowne.ac.uk/collection/essays/pupils-and-copyists/>> [Accessed 27/10/2021.]
22. Pers. Comm. Brian White. There was more than one prison in Exeter. The High Gaol that had been near the East Gate was replaced in 1795 by the new Devon County Gaol built across the Longbrook valley from Northernhay Castle. The City of Exeter Bridewell, originally in the old Southgate, was replaced in 1819 with a new building on the site of the current Rougemont Hotel. The Devon County Prison for Debtors in St Thomas that had existed since 1675 was replaced in 1819, but that building was closed as a prison

- in 1855, having various other uses over the years, the front façade of Cowick Street Motors in Cowick Street is all that remains. St Thomas Bridewell existed from 1637 until it was demolished in 1809. <[http://www.exetermemories.co.uk/em/\\_organisations/prisons-devon-castle.php](http://www.exetermemories.co.uk/em/_organisations/prisons-devon-castle.php)> [Accessed 22/9/2022.]
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  33. *The Gardener's Magazine*, London, 1829, p. 638 and p. 750, <<https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/100528-page/650/mode/1up>> [Accessed 1/11/2021.] The *Gardeners' Chronicle*, 1843, p. 610 and p. 713. <<https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/89862-page/624/mode/1up>> [Accessed 15 February 2022.]
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  35. Photograph, the King of Sweden as the Guest of Sir Trehawke and Lady Kekewich at Peamore, Exeter. The King of Sweden walking through the grounds of Peamore House, Exeter, with Lady Kekewich, 5 November 1923. Image Number 1197465, mauritius images / TopFoto. <[https://www.mauritius-images.com/en/asset/ME-PI-6203166\\_mauritius\\_images\\_bildnummer\\_1197465\\_the-king-of-sweden-as-the-guest-of-sir-trehawke-and-lady-kekewich-%250D%250Athe-king-of-sweden-was-the-guest-of-sir-trehawke-and-lady-kekewich-at-peamore-exeter-the-king-of-sweden-walking-through-the-grounds-of-peamore-house-exeter-with-lady-kekewich-%250D%250A5-november-1923](https://www.mauritius-images.com/en/asset/ME-PI-6203166_mauritius_images_bildnummer_1197465_the-king-of-sweden-as-the-guest-of-sir-trehawke-and-lady-kekewich-%250D%250Athe-king-of-sweden-was-the-guest-of-sir-trehawke-and-lady-kekewich-at-peamore-exeter-the-king-of-sweden-walking-through-the-grounds-of-peamore-house-exeter-with-lady-kekewich-%250D%250A5-november-1923)> [Accessed 9/4/2022.]
  36. DHC, 72M/E/1, *Household Account Book* (1823).
  37. Henry Hippisley Coxe was Sheriff of Somerset in 1789 and was elected M.P. for the county in 1792. He also served in the Somerset militia, rising to the rank of Major by 1795. He married twice, firstly on 26th May 1786 to Sarah Pole, the daughter of Reginald Pole of Stoke Damerel, Devon. Sarah was the great-great-great-granddaughter of Sir John Pole, the older brother of Periam Pole who had married Dorothy Hippisley in 1618. His second wife was Elizabeth Anne Horner of Mells Park on 11th May 1790 in Mells, Somerset. Elizabeth was born in about 1760 and was the daughter of Thomas Horner of Mells Park, Somerset. Thomas Horner made considerable improvements to Mells Park and his scrap books contain ideas for many follies, hot-houses etc., though most were unrealized. Repton was consulted but no record of a commission and Horner was a subscriber to Repton's *Sketches and Hints of Landscape Gardening* (1794). Stephen Daniels, *Humphry Repton Landscape Gardening and the Geography of Georgian England*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1999, p. 265.
  38. Daniels, *Humphry Repton ...*, Gazetteer. Repton's Red Book for Luscombe Castle, about ten miles from Peamore, was presented in 1799.
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  40. The Glanville, Eliot and Gregor families were related by marriage and politics.
  41. Humphry Repton, *Red Book for Port Eliot*, <<https://www.eliotsofporteliot.com/redbook/page-48.html>> [Accessed 18/03/2022.] There is a sketch of the Craggs in the Port Eliot Red Book.
  42. Information given by John and Judy Wilkes, former residents of Catchfrench, and from a talk given by Judy Wilkes available <<https://thegardenstrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Humphry-Repton-at-Catchfrench.pdf>> [Accessed 16/03/2022.]
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  45. <<https://www.parksandgardens.org/places/sarsden-house>> [Accessed 30/4/2023.] Agatha Sophia died 24 September 1836.
  46. Yallop, *The Devon Gardens Trust Journal*, Issue 6, p. 37 and p. 39.
  47. Yallop, *The Devon Gardens Trust Journal*, Issue 6, pp. 36-42, p. 41.
  48. SHC, DD/HI/C/524, Hippisley Coxe, *Peamore House, Exminster Roll of architect's plans (ground plans and elevations), with plan of gateway*, undated.
  49. Ibid.
  50. Humphry Repton and John Nash had first met in 1793 at Stoke Edith where Repton was working for Edward Foley. Daniels, *Humphry Repton ...*, p. 121. From 1795 Humphry Repton and John Nash were working for Paul Cobb Methuen at Corsham Court in Wiltshire. <https://www.parksandgardens.org/places/corsham-court> Accessed 30/4/2023. Daniels, *Humphry Repton ...*, p. 88-9.
  51. Hugh Meller, *The Country Houses of Devon*, Vol. 2, p.764.
  52. SHC, DD/HI/C/524, *Roll of architect's plans*.
  53. Yallop, *The Devon Gardens Trust Journal*, Issue 6, pp. 36-42, p. 40.
  54. DHC, 564M/F1/226-30, Rev. John Swete, *Picturesque Sketches of Devon*, Vol. 1, p. 229.
  55. DHC, 9502/21, Particulars, *Plan and Conditions of Sale of Peamore House*, 1948.
  56. Ibid.
  57. Humphry Repton, *Red Book for Catchfrench*, 1793, cited in article by Judy Wilkes, <<https://thegardenstrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Humphry-Repton-at-Catchfrench.pdf>> [Accessed 10/4/2022.]
  58. Douglas Ellory Pett, *The Parks and Gardens of Cornwall*, (Alison Hodge, Penzance, Cornwall, 1998), p. 223.
  59. DHC, Pope Collection 63/8/3, *Exeter Turnpike Trust Map with Proposed Improvements*, 1825.
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