

PRESS RELEASE – URGENT

GILBERT WHITE'S HOUSE & GARDENS *AND* THE OATES COLLECTION
High Street, Selborne, Alton, GU34 3JH



**Heritage Lottery gives £46,500 for new Gilbert White exhibition
David Bellamy & Alan Titchmarsh launch New Garden Tour and Plans for Gilbert White's
House & Gardens & The Oates Collection**

On 26th April 2010, David Bellamy and Alan Titchmarsh with other Patrons and supporters of Gilbert White's House and Gardens and the Oates Collection, were welcomed by the Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire, Dame Mary Fagan, and the Trustees, at a reception in Selborne to officially open the Gilbert White Garden Tour.

The Garden Tour based on White's journals and drawings of the original by Hieronymus Grimm was formally opened by local gardener and writer Alan Titchmarsh, who summed up his passion for White saying 'Gilbert White was the ultimate naturalist – curious and observant, patient and thoughtful with a great ability for setting down what he saw in a readable and infectious style. Some of his theories might have been superseded by scientific research but his engaging facility as a chronicler of the natural world will never fade.'

David Bellamy, the well-known botanist and broadcaster, also welcomed the visitors to Gilbert White's House having spent the day with a school visiting the Field Studies Centre. He reiterated the importance of White locally, nationally and internationally. Plans for the update of the Museum dedicated to Gilbert White, to Captain Lawrence Oates, a member of Scott's Antarctic Exploration team of 1910–12, and to Frank Oates, the early African explorer, were on show.

"Gilbert White and Lawrence Oates are men whose time for recognition has come" said Trustee Chairman, Dr Rosemary Irwin. "Both are important figures in the development of man's relationship with the natural world, at a time when this is being understood as crucial. White is the man who invented the scientific process of careful observation and recording, while Oates was a member of the expedition that laid the foundations for the science of climate change."

White's relevance to the modern day world was demonstrated this week when both BBC South and Meridian TV ran items in their evening news programmes reporting on Gilbert White's records of the impact on Hampshire of the eruption of the Laki volcano in Iceland in June 1783. White vividly described the sun as "particularly lurid and blood-coloured at rising and setting".

During the evening a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund for £46,500 to improve the Gilbert White Exhibition was also announced. "We are immensely grateful for this award", said Dr Irwin, "It will enable us to make a start on a major overhaul of Gilbert White's House and will enormously improve the visitor experience." Later this year, an appeal for over £1m will be launched to complete new exhibitions for both White and Oates, to

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develop currently derelict parts of the site – including White's own brew house, and his stable yard, and to provide improved facilities and educational courses at the House.

“White and Oates should be properly commemorated. Our aim is to make The House – and the extraordinary pioneers it celebrates – a centre for discovery which opens doors to a new and deeper understanding of the natural world. It should be a major place of pilgrimage to anyone interested in the development of modern science” said Dr Irwin.

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Notes:

- 1 Contact:
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- 2 Gilbert White's House & Garden is an Independent Charitable Trust and Accredited Museum.
- 3 We would be very happy to accommodate any media enquiries or to accommodate filming at the house at any time. Please make contact on the above number or email address.
- 4 The balloon launches are subject to weather conditions being favourable. Please check our website that will be updated throughout this time with latest news.
www.gilbertwhiteshouse.org.uk

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