

WINTER 2018

# TALLISTON

T I M E S

## MAPPING THE *Impossible*

We focus on the charting the labyrinth of  
the house and gardens in our *winter edition*



NEWS & EVENTS FROM OUR MAGICAL HOUSE & GARDENS

# TALLISTON

T I M E S

## Winter 2017-2018

21<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER – 21<sup>ST</sup> MARCH

### JANUARY

#### INVITATION TO VIEW BY CANDLELIGHT

*Last Sunday of the month*

28<sup>th</sup> January, 25<sup>th</sup> February, 25<sup>th</sup> March

Explore the house and gardens by candlelight  
in our new dark tours.

Fifteen places per tour @ 16:50.

[www.invitationtoview.co.uk](http://www.invitationtoview.co.uk)

### MARCH

#### THE THIRD SENSE OF TALLISTON: TASTE

*Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> March*

Definitely the tour for the foodies, this workshop will explore a smorgasbord of flavours as we take a journey of food around the world and through the ages.

<http://tallistonhq.wixsite.com/talliston/the-six-senses>

#### TEA WITH OSCAR WILDE

*Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> April*

Join the playwright and author for his witty chit-chat show set in our candlelit Victorian Watchtower.

<http://tallistonhq.wixsite.com/talliston/oscar-wilde>



PHOTOGRAPHY: GAVIN CONLAN

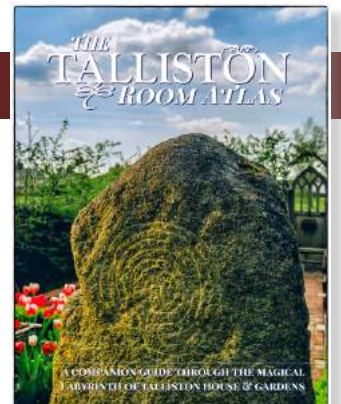
## Welcome to the *winter edition* of our quarterly house bulletin

With the creation of the image-led *Book of Days* and *The Room Atlas*, last year we were focused most definitely on the visual side of the house and gardens. This year however, we have been keen to get the project mapped. In this issue we are hearing from the architect behind the hand-drawn plans of the property, while another artist has been sketching a completely different set of maps. For those with an interest in cartography, these articles sure to prove fascinating insights in just how we undertook the task to chart the labyrinth of this house and gardens.

### The Talliston Room Atlas

*Premium 36-page, magazine format  
companion guide to the house*

Packed with stunning photography by Gavin Conlan, charting each location of the project.  
Available now from [WWW.FOLKSY.COM](http://WWW.FOLKSY.COM).



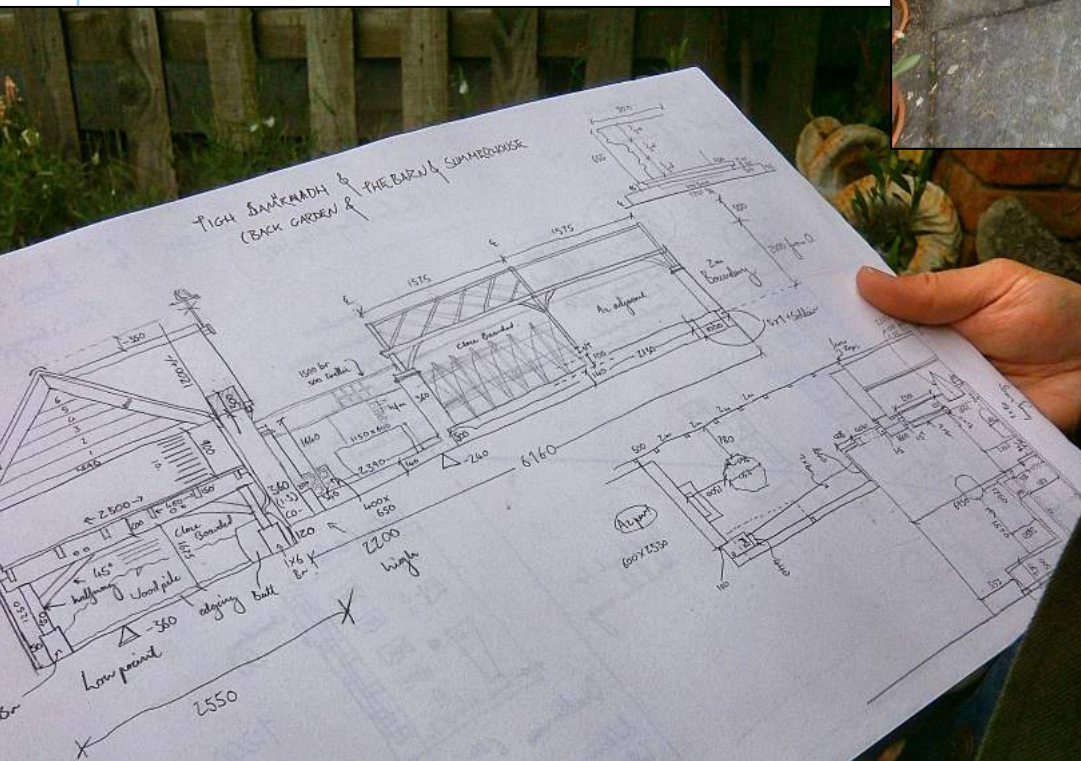
ALL EVENTS ARE PRIVATE AND AVAILABLE ONLY TO FRIENDS OF TALLISTON.  
IF YOU ARE NOT A FRIEND, PLEASE UNSUBSCRIBE. THANK YOU.

# UNCHARTED *TERRITORIES*

*How do you map a house that exists in thirteen different locations across the world and throughout time? Architect Sam Davey, over to you...*

**E**ARLY IN 2016 we contacted Sam Davey to ask if he knew any architects that might be happy to faithfully represent Talliston and its gardens. Recently qualified, a supporter of the house and with an eye for drawing places linked to stories, naturally he proffered his own services. Here's Sam's own account of his initial encounters with Talliston, and charting the house and gardens:

'I first met John and Marcus at the house in 2013 while studying and working in London. I was six years along a path to become an architect, having already completed parts I and II of the process. Having moved back to the capital after a two-year break at Oxford Brookes I was back and looking for meaningful distraction. Among other things I found the Post-Apocalyptic Book Club of which John was already a member. The book club was full of extraordinary people and John was no exception. His dystopian A-Men trilogy brought him to the group, but in addition to being a science fiction writer he also lived in an extraordinary house. John soon told me more and I was quickly intrigued, not least because my time in Oxford had



culminated in an MA researching a method of collaborative storytelling to imagine architectural spaces. Part of this dissertation was based on the previous year's specialisation which had me writing a short story featuring a couple who had converted their own 1930s ex-council semi – and here was someone actually building it for real. I was spellbound. When I discovered Talliston volunteering days that spring, I jumped at the chance to become involved.





### SHARING THE DREAM

Having remained in contact with John, I was very happy to be invited up early and travelled with him on the Friday, seeing the house for first time on the evening of the 24th of May 2013. Inside I was warmly greeted by Marcus and was given the tour- John's descriptions and the website doing little justice to the sense of depth and magic that had already been woven into the house. I was treated to an exceptional meal in the Mead Hall, sleeping that night in the Room of Dreams (and having the best night's sleep in a long while).

A hard day's work followed among a team of seventeen, and I was further impressed by the commitment and belief the project commanded having already myself been swept into giving it my best. I got caught up in detailing the timber mouldings to the shelving in the Haunted Bedroom. Though this meant I wasn't able to demonstrate much in the way of visible progress that day, I was happy to at least been part of making Talliston what it was and becoming a team of like-minded and fascinating people who shared the dream. Though work commitments meant that I had to leave before the weekend was over, I knew I'd found a place I'd be returning to for as long as it stood.

### PLANS

While my own journey kept me away for a few more years I was at least able to provide a design for the Talliston Shield Project supporting the house in a small way during some of its darker days. I'm now proud to have my emblem

emblazoned by Marcus' artistic skill within the room I helped realise and in some little way keep it going when failure seemed so close. Thus it was I watched the subsequent end of the project from afar, feeling some little amazement and then folly in doubting that John and Marcus could have done what they had so brazenly promised to deliver three years earlier.

By now I had fully qualified as an architect, (ARB and RIBA) I was living and working in the West Midlands having met and moved in with a fellow Morris dancer. The day job had me designing houses far more mundane than Talliston, social homes for the deserving but profit drivers for those who already had too much. While the concept of dwelling and the value of personal meaning we take from our homes was my discipline, my day-job was not, and is not providing that. And so on the road to a different style of practice, I use my work outside of the office, my art and unusual architectural projects as the motive that keep my drive and focus on mapping and helping to create other places of magic.

### DRAWN BACK

When John rang and I was pleased to hear from him, hoping that we'd meet up again soon. Presumably I was the only architect he knew and he was asking for recommendations. I had no qualms in putting myself forward- I knew the project and had already spent some years learning the magic that had built Talliston. Who better in the country to make its record? And so on Friday 3rd of June 2016, I made my second pilgrimage to the house – the first time I'd seen it since completion of the project – naturally very excited that I had come back to survey and draw one of the UK's imaginative creations.

The survey was completed with tape measure and notebook, photos and good eye for what to include. The

*Detail of the side elevation from the architectural plans*



rough notes were then taken back home and translated, over a period of many months, into a full set of plans and elevations using CAD drawing software. I felt that these would allow John the greatest ease with which to make the final product as my vector-based lines would be scalable and editable should I need to add information. This was prudent as indeed I had to add the dovecote only recently in a minor oversight. I was also conscious that the future team of the Trust might value a digital resource from which I could extract data and help them run the home.

Once ready, floors hatched, planks scribed, I then took the digital work and using a drawing board replicated them by hand to a scale of 1:500. Using

pen and ink, pencil, set-square and rule I faithfully represented the house and gardens in a medium more befitting the hand-woven nature of the place. Once ready these drawings were then scanned and using more software I then edited them together to fill one sheet, as per a typical application for permission any architect might make. Shadows were added at this stage to add depth. Talliston's logo, my own, a hand-drawn oaken timeline, location plan and scale bar followed to complete the technical and official record represented. The compass rose is a rendition of the ceiling rose for the Palazzo De Ombre. Other secrets in the drawing remain to be discovered upon closer inspection!

After many months the work was finished and at John's invitation my partner and I travelled back to Talliston on Saturday 14th of October to show him and Marcus the work. He was happy, there were niggles to iron out and practical matters to sort but the end of the road was in sight.

Making these plans felt like something I had to do, Talliston draws that kind of energy from its encounters and I'm proud again to have added to the house, knowing that a faithful record of the building and its garden has been made. On a similar note, to me *Talliston: The Stranger's Guide* novel is the culmination of two decades of work and is the web that ties the house and its family together. The plans of Talliston help to illustrate part of that journey, but it is also my hope that in the future I might get to perhaps map some of the other locations and journeys described in that tale.

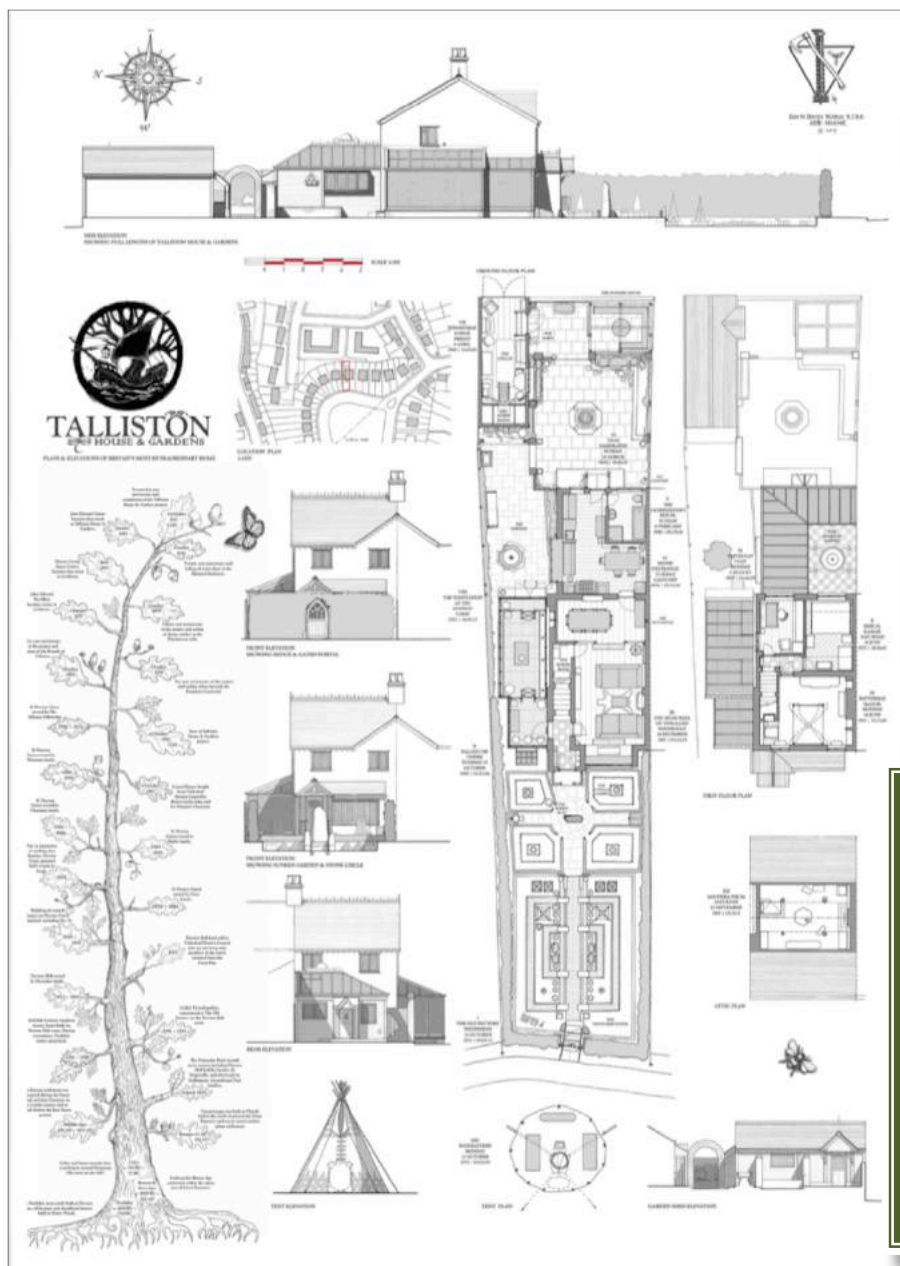
Sam Davey, November 2017,  
Birmingham.



FIND US ON  
FOLKSY.CO.UK

### THE TALLISTON PLANS

For your copy of Talliston's architectural plans, please follow the General Store link on the Talliston site to our Folksy shop. Do note that the drawings are large at A0 (84 x 115cm) and will come rolled in a tube (£25) or folded (£22.50).



# The Perils of Research

*Our artistic patron, Linda Stratmann, finishes her Francis Doughty Victorian fiction series discovering all about vintage penny-farthings*

SOME AUTHORS DISLIKE RESEARCH, AND DO as little as possible, while others, like me, positively enjoy it, and often don't know when to stop; however there are some things I can't do for myself. The eighth book in the

Frances Doughty mysteries, *Murder at the Bayswater Bicycle Club*, due to be published in March 2018, was inspired by my husband Gary's keenness on cycling. In 1882, however, the year in which the book is set, the bicycle of choice was what we nowadays call a penny-farthing. Now I have never ridden a bicycle except for a stationary one, and a penny-farthing is way out of my league. My research began with reading histories of the bicycle, and cycling magazines published in the 1880s, and I then studied YouTube where enthusiasts demonstrated how to ride a penny-farthing. So far so good, but how would I ever find out what it actually felt like? And that's where Gary came in. I asked him if he would try riding a penny-farthing and let me know.

Let's just say he was hesitant. After all, even for an experienced rider the prospect is somewhat daunting. As the illustrations make very clear, when you stand next to one, the saddle is at shoulder height. How on earth does one get on? Or get off without injury? It's a long way down if you fall. Finding one that was not an untouchable museum piece and could actually be ridden was not easy, but we did hear of a vintage bicycle fair not far from us, where I would at least have a good chance to examine some machines close up. 'And maybe there will be one you can have a ride on!' I enthused. 'There might not be,' said Gary hopefully.

The fair was everything I could have wished, vintage bicycles galore, and would you believe it, some full-size replicas that the owners were happy to allow visitors to try for themselves. The challenge was on. I insisted, so Gary reluctantly braced himself, saying something like 'I suppose I'd better do it.' An experienced rider was on hand to steady the high-wheeler and show nervous adventurers how to mount it. I must admit I was a little worried as Gary approached the machine, but then off he went, at first with the instructor's steadying hand on the frame and then, at last, riding solo. When he returned, I asked the big question 'What was it like?'



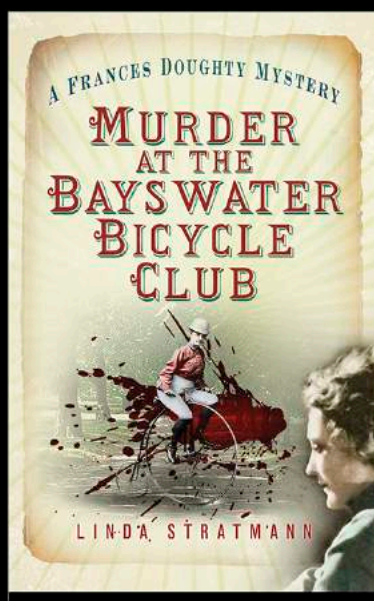
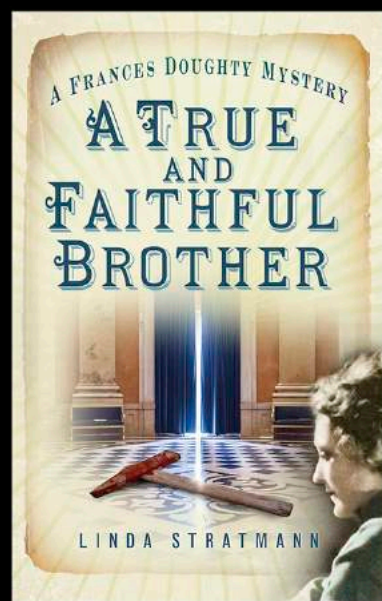
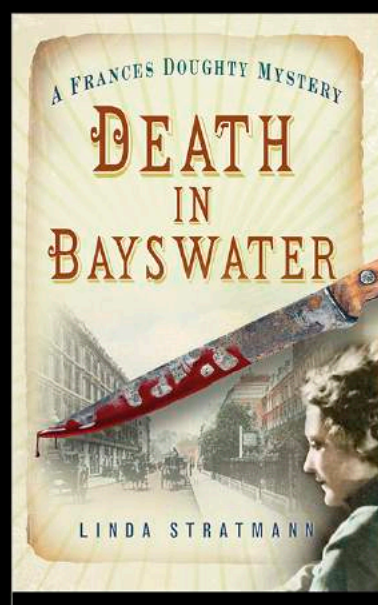
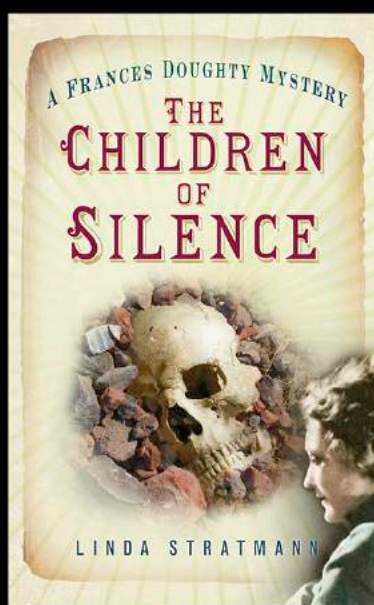
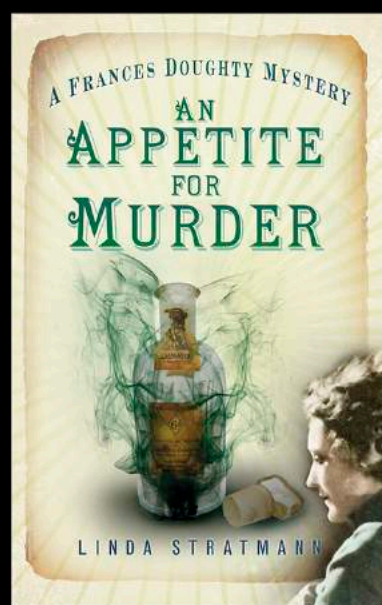
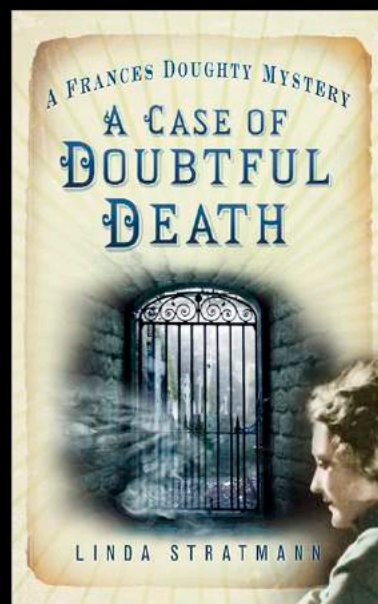
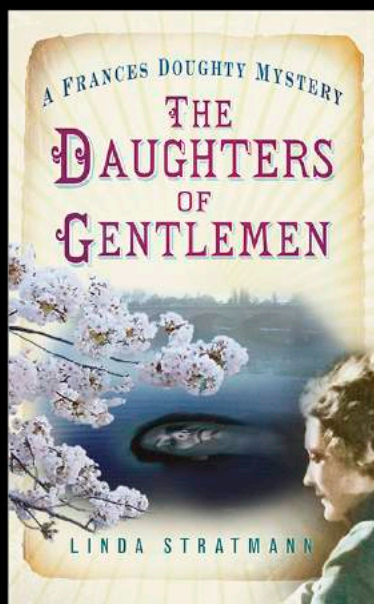
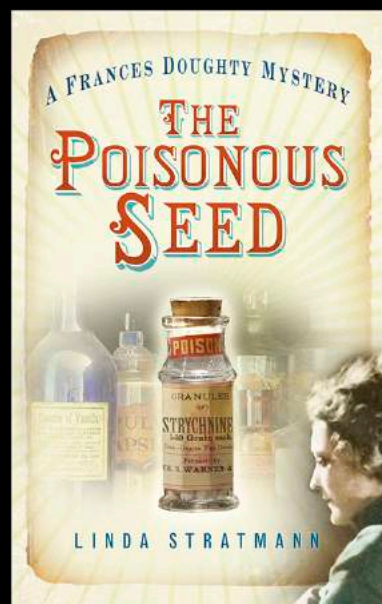
He smiled blissfully. 'It was wonderful! An incredible sensation! Quite different from riding a modern bicycle. It's like you're flying or floating through the air!' I made some notes to include this observation in my book. 'I'm going to go for some proper lessons,' he went on, 'and I'm thinking of buying one.' And that was how it started.

Gary is now the proud owner of a beautiful custom made penny-farthing, which he has called 'Miss Dauntless'. Readers of my books will know why!

*Linda Stratmann*

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON HER BOOKS, GO TO [WWW.LINDASTRATMANN.COM](http://WWW.LINDASTRATMANN.COM)





# THE FRANCES DOUGHTY MYSTERIES

[www.thehistorypress.co.uk](http://www.thehistorypress.co.uk)





# TEAM TALLISTON

*Join the fun by volunteering at the house & gardens*

We're always on the lookout for people to join our growing team of volunteers. From storytellers and time travellers, to an extra pair of hands in the kitchens, we offer the opportunity to be part of the team that brings magic to visitors, create homemade cakes and snacks for guests to enjoy – or just to be part of the fun at picnics and outdoor events (see below for our 2018 involvement in WoodFest).

We need helpers for weekend and especially weekdays throughout the year. If you'd like to be involved in this magical project, contact us at:

[www.talliston.com](http://www.talliston.com)  
[info@talliston.com](mailto:info@talliston.com) | 07760 171100

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NEXT ISSUE  **SPRING 2018**  21ST MARCH 2018

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## WOODFEST 2018

*7th –9th September 2018  
Hatfield Forest, Essex*

□ Team Talliston met Ian Pease, Estate Manager and Ranger for the National's Trust's Hatfield Forest. This ancient woodland hosts a music and craft festival once per year in early September, and Talliston approached Ian to be involved. We proposed to bring the Navajo



tipi to the festival, create a special grove of wonders involving the creative force of the house and gardens. After seeing the house and talking about our plans, Ian accepted. So, now we have a festival to run!

At this stage, we need to hear from people who can contribute in the following ways:

- Entertainment: Music, story and song.
- Arts & Crafts
- Actors and Players to be part of the event as characters
- Volunteers to help set up, plan and manage making this happen
- Anyone who would like to help design and create the forest grove, bunting, or whatever.

This looks set to be a wonderful opportunity to bring the magic and wonder of the house and gardens to an annual audience!



**WANT TO BE INVOLVED? EMAIL: [INFO@TALLISON.COM](mailto:info@tallison.com)**