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Eden

Tim Smit

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TIM SMIT



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prologue

...and the sky monkeys came down from heaven

The mists hung heavy, rising as if from the moist dark earth itself, enveloping the lush tropical vegetation in a ghostly embrace. The rumour of a breeze whispered through the treetops, stirring pulpy leaves and feathery fronds into a languid Mexican wave that rippled gently down into the valley below. The air was thick with the rich perfume that islands make when approached from the sea, bearing the promise of leisured plenty. From the cliff above me a wall of water sheeted down, broke into a thousand spitting eddies on the granite boulders that blocked its path down the hillside, finally easing into a luxuriant palm-fringed pool rimmed by a beach of the purest white sand.

Far below, in another country, a forest clearing revealed gardens of abundance and a glimpse of the rusting corrugated-iron roof of a bamboo house. The shirt stuck to my back and the sweat dripped from my chin. As if by magic a melancholy lament floated down from above, its plangent notes weaving a spell which filled this gigantic space with emotion. High, high above, no larger than an ant, a kilted giant played the Cornish pipes from a basket of steel, reached by the flimsiest of filigree steps strung from the roof. His every breath became a rising celebration of the

passion of life. Down below a stillness settled on the throng drawn to this special place. Our numbers grew soundlessly. No cynics here; all doubts put aside, we felt humbled, small, human and fragile in the face of a moment we will remember for ever.

None of the Great and Good, no fancy Dans, no civic dignitaries, no pop-star endorsements, no fireworks, feasts or binges. We had promised ourselves this, a pause for reflection, without performance. A reel of intricate intensity from the piper drew our attention upwards once more. And then we saw them. The sky monkeys.

On ropes they hung, two of them, swaying in the translucent eaves. Behind them, in the early morning sunlight, a kaleidoscopic shadowplay, a stained-glass window of hexagons, the open roof vents like the flower petals of lilies reflected on to cliff walls the colour of gunmetal. Slowly, as the pipes soared, they descended, inch by inch, for what seemed like an eternity. We craned our necks and whispered to each other in excited anticipation. Even the construction crew, who thought they'd seen everything, gave up all pretence of professional detachment. We were one family waiting... for what? Men bearing gifts?

And then they were among us and the tension broke and we roared and we clapped and we dug one another in the ribs. The gift the sky monkeys had brought was a certificate saying that the job was done, and the project manager, his face alive with emotion, solemnly took it and on behalf of the builders said a few words about what it meant to him and his team, and we cheered to the rafters once more. Then he handed the gift to the leader of our team. No one had done more than her to bring about this special moment. Those endless hours, days, weeks, months and years of meetings that lasted long into the night, persuading the boys in suits to take courage in the face of doubt, now seemed to melt away. She spoke for all of us in saying that this wasn't an ending but a new beginning, and that this place was for everyone

and that we were all one team, which was why we had succeeded. The tears welled in the project manager's eyes and we whooped once more.

Then from out of the crowd stepped the bishop. We had asked him to say a few words of blessing. He understood instinctively that his particular religion was not the point. He made a joke about his amazement at being the only member of 'the Chain Gang' present, and said that this was the first time in his life that he'd been the best-dressed person in a crowd. Then the tone changed, everyone fell silent, and there was a great sense of stillness: 'As we stand in this new Eden, made like the first out of chaos, we give thanks for the vision, energy and enthusiasm which have made it one of the wonders of the world. We give you thanks for all those who have contributed to it in any way and we pray that it may be a place of enjoyment and a place of education; a place where we recall our responsibility, the power we have to destroy as well as create and in which we remember our own creatureliness. So as we stand in Eden, a symbol of hope and new possibilities, in the name of God we bless this place and all that's in it and ask that it may be a blessing and a joy to all those who come here. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ Our Lord.'

I haven't the comfort of being religious, but of one thing I am sure. No one was untouched by that moment. As I looked around our fabulous team I noticed the horticultural crew in a group together – for day after scorching day, night after endless night, they'd been out here in the heat, stretching every sinew to prepare for this moment. They had done what everyone had said was impossible, they had created earth, they had propagated and planted countless thousands of living things. Now they were so tired they were running on empty. And then there was the building crew, who had fought against everything nature could throw at them to move millions of tons of muck, to lay miles of foundations, to forge structures on an unprecedented scale,

pioneering with the delicacy of jewellers the use of materials never before employed in this manner. All of us, in our own way, had turned our Eden into a collective act of redemption. We really had done the best we could; for the moment, we had nothing left to give. There were tears and hugs as we broke into smaller groups to take one final look at our kingdom.

We had built the largest conservatories the world had ever seen. The greatest challenge now was to prove that it was all worthwhile. As I watched the first visitor walk open-mouthed into our great green cathedral, and as small groups became hundreds and then thousands followed on behind, I thought to myself, the truly special thing about Eden is not what you see, although that is awesome enough; it is the spirit that brought so many 'ordinary' people together, to add up to so much more than the sum of their parts. That was the real reason for hope. If we could do this, what could happen if even more were harnessed together? We'd built a magnificent Living Theatre, but the world is really the stage.

The story I'm going to tell is of both a mission and an adventure. It is a personal view of events, and of people I feel intensely proud to have been able to call colleagues and friends. I make no apology for some of the boring bits about how we got from A to B. Only by understanding crushing boredom can one delight in the relief from it! Neither do I make any apology for being optimistic about the future.

I am.

chapter 1

the whole opera

Have you ever stood in a bar like I have and heard yourself holding forth yet again about what you'd really like to do with your life? The pipe dream comes alive for a happy hour or two, but does it fade by morning, leaving that growing sense of self-hatred as you realize you haven't got what it takes to do the interesting or brave thing? If you're a successful barrister, or financier, or teacher, and that's what you always wanted to do, fine, be happy. But suppose what you really wanted was to be a boat-builder or an explorer or a bug collector instead? How many times have you heard friends, even very 'successful' friends, in despair at what they've made of their lives? As my grandmother used to say, 'When you're on your deathbed make sure you can say I'm glad I did, rather than I wish I had.'

Early on in my life I realized that I was fundamentally lazy, and if I was to achieve anything I would have to develop tactics to trick myself into action. The tactic I came up with was lying. I lied all the time. Not in a fantastical way; I didn't claim to be the heir to the Ford fortune or the hundred-metre champion. But anything I really wished had happened, I would pretend it had in order to make it so. For example, when I was eighteen I was much taken with a girl and wanted to impress her. I found myself telling

her I was a diver. From the moment the words were out, I had to become one. I immediately booked a two-week course in Plymouth in midwinter and the wish became a reality. It's a great, if stressful, technique, of questionable morality; I like to think of it not as lying but as telling future truths.

I don't know if I am typical, but I have always busked my way through life in this manner. You can get quite a long way on quick wits and taking pleasure in good company. If you're honest with yourself, however, you know that an easy facility with words and a gift for argument are no substitute for real thought and feelings. There comes a quiet moment when you have no audience except the harshest critic of them all: yourself.

Heligan changed me. In restoring the Lost Gardens I learned the meaning of work. I began to understand the processes by which ideas are turned into action. No one has a monopoly on dreams, but only a rare few discover the alchemist's art of making them real. Making things real demands a commitment that goes way beyond what a busker can give; it requires a single-mindedness and determination to succeed that persuade others as much by the force of your conviction as by the idea itself. Bankers and investors always talk from the outset of the need to establish an exit strategy, a way out when things go wrong. This may be why Britain is not the easiest country in the world in which to turn dreams into reality. In my view, if you really believe in something you should allow yourself only one exit strategy – death. It concentrates the mind most wonderfully. If those around you trust you, they will draw comfort from your conviction. If they don't, you deserve to fail.

Two ideas are central to this philosophy: Tinkerbell Theory and Last Man Standing. In *Peter Pan*, Tinkerbell is a fairy who exists only if people believe in her. I know that if enough people can be made to believe in something it will happen. Last Man Standing, on the other hand, is a polite way of saying that you intend to

turn being an awkward bugger into an art form. In other words, you won't take no for an answer. The footnote to this is that bankers, lawyers, civil servants, investors or volunteers will have mastered the art of saying 'no' in many different ways long before you have even begun to make your pitch. Assuming that they are professionally competent, what makes people say yes when it's easier to say no is often the difference between an ordinary day at the office and a life-affirming experience that inspires the imagination. We are all human.

In 1987 I decided to change the course of my life. I moved to Cornwall with my wife and young family to get away from London and a profession, the music business, which demanded that I regularly got into aeroplanes – something which I was increasingly finding myself unable to do unless under the influence of alcohol. The intention was to build a recording studio at the farmhouse we had bought where I would compose film and television music, making it unnecessary to go on the road accompanying artists. John Nelson, a local builder, came to renovate our house and we became friends. When I was invited to explore an old estate in the company of its new owner I jumped at the opportunity. This was partly because at the time I was interested in setting up a rare breeds farm and this sounded like the ideal location, and partly out of romantic curiosity.

On 16 February 1990, within minutes of cutting my way into what was later to become known as the Lost Gardens of Heligan, my life changed for ever. My epiphany came on breaking into the largest of the walled gardens, where we discovered a range of vineries. There, under a shroud of bramble, survived a solitary old vine, snaking in and out of the broken panes of glass the length of the house, defiant against the onslaught of decay. Hanging on a nail in the wall were the vine scissors. Further explorations revealed more walled gardens, a vegetable garden, pleasure grounds; eventually, in the valley below the Big House, we were to

find the remains of a sub-tropical garden, choked to dank submission by self-seeded ash, sycamore and willow. Something inside me told me that this was what I had been waiting for.

Over the next six years John Nelson and I, along with a team of volunteers who would eventually form the backbone of the Heligan staff, restored the gardens to their original condition. Inspired by finding the names of the garden staff scratched in the lime-plaster walls of the Thunderbox Room (the garden toilet), we decided to tell the story of the ordinary men and women who had worked here, rather than simply the usual tale of lords and ladies. One thing led to another. The writing on the wall was dated August 1914, just before the outbreak of the First World War. When we discovered Heligan's workbooks in the Record Office in Barnstaple I pieced together their working practices and read that dread word: 'enlisted'. The next time I came across the majority of these names was on the war memorials at St Ewe, Gorran and Mevagissey. Later still we traced the surviving members of those families and were amazed and moved to find that almost all the names on the wall were still represented in the area. This shaped our response to Heligan considerably. It robbed us of the arrogance of a sense of ownership and replaced it with one of stewardship; this was a stage on which communities had played out their lives for generations until the war altered things for ever. Indeed, one of the most remarkable things that happened at Heligan was that once the restoration was all but complete, and planned husbandry rather than crisis management took over, we found that the staff had slotted into exactly the same roles as they would have done under a Victorian model before the Great War; we even employed exactly the same number of gardeners, twenty-two.

There were two powerful influences on what we achieved at Heligan: Peter Thoday and Philip McMillan Browse. Peter was heavily involved in the popular television series *The Victorian Kitchen Garden*, which had turned him into everybody's favourite

Victorian garden expert. I had invited him to Heligan shortly after finding the gardens, but he thought I was a crank and wouldn't take me seriously. A year later he finally succumbed, and became hugely excited. The reason for his enthusiasm was that although its productive gardens were completely overgrown and the structures had mostly collapsed under the weight of dozens of encroaching mature trees, Heligan hadn't been knocked about, converted or modernized in any way, rendering it capable of complete restoration without compromise. This would make our wonderful place unique in Britain, where productive gardens, deemed to be of no interest to the largely middle-class garden visitor, had generally been neglected. The finest, at Chatsworth and Tatton Park, had been bulldozed to make way for other commercial activities as recently as the early 1980s.

It was Peter who turned to me at the end of his visit and threw down the gauntlet: did we want to create a greatest hits record, or were we brave enough to perform the whole opera? Were we prepared to restore everything to full function and run it exactly as it would have been in the middle of the nineteenth century?

Philip McMillan Browse had been the director of RHS Wisley and before that of the Saratoga Institute in California. A Scillonian by upbringing, he had recently moved to Cornwall to get back to his roots. He had taken up a part-time job as county horticultural adviser and it was in this context that we first met. I asked him for advice. He came, gave some advice, became hooked by the project and got his hands dirty. We then made an honest man of him by inviting him to become our horticultural director. Philip would undertake the research into old varieties of fruit, vegetables and cut flowers that would have been grown in the productive gardens. In Philip, Peter had a ready ally for performing opera.

One of the first issues we had to deal with was a philosophical one. In 1992 I was invited to a conference hosted by the Historic Houses Association in London. I said to the audience that if you

couldn't get drunk, dream or make love in your garden, you might as well tarmac it. What I meant by this rather in-your-face assertion was that Britain had become fixated on heritage, whereby anything old had to be preserved at all costs without much critical evaluation going into the process. Preserving history in aspic, which is tantamount to a fear of the future, held no appeal. For us the interest lay in restoring the gardens to a working condition and establishing which traditional working practices were relevant today and which had genuinely been improved upon since. The irony of the history-in-aspic mentality is, of course, that any head gardener worth his salt would have needed an enquiring mind and would have wanted to experiment all the time both with technology and with newly introduced crop varieties. How else was progress made? How did the primitive Georgian woodstove-heated glasshouse turn into the Crystal Palace?

The past was being sanitized to fit into some lifestyle-magazine myth of organic growing methods and flower gardens looking like chocolate boxes. In fact the Victorian era was completely wrongly associated with wholesomeness. A cursory overview shows that the Victorians sprayed chemicals on everything; the bucolic image of aristocrats and cap-doffing gardeners conferring about the latest plant introduction from the Far East was all very well, but the life expectancy of the working man was half that of his employer.

To cut a long story short, the Heligan experience threw up all sorts of unexpected complications and delights. While John Nelson and his crew renovated all the structures, Philip and his team recovered the soil fertility and in two to three years had a burgeoning productive garden, including wall fruit and exotics in the glasshouses. Our most public triumph was the restoration of the eighteenth-century manure-heated pineapple pit; after years of experimenting with manure heating methods, a new crop of the original varieties of pineapple grown at Heligan was success-

fully fruited. Philip had secured the original varieties of vegetables, fruit and flowers from a rich range of sources. The Henry Doubleday Research Association, based at Ryton near Coventry, is dedicated to conserving heritage seed, and was very generous with its large collection. To fill in the gaps we were reliant on dozens of individuals who were fanatical about one or two varieties and kept their collections alive on allotments.

Then there were the super-collectors such as Mrs Maclean from Dundee, who owned the largest collection of potatoes in the world outside Peru. She too gave freely of what she had, as most true gardeners and horticulturists do. Incredibly, she gave Philip some of her very rare Salad Blue variety, a potato whose flesh remains blue after cooking. We bulked it up, and two years later when tragedy hit her collection we were able to repay the compliment. The tradition of generosity and sharing is based on a very sound principle – stewardship of resources. To have all your eggs in one basket, so to speak, poses an extreme risk.

Once the foundations of the collection had been established, we became increasingly interested in sorting out a philosophy for its future which would define our conservation priorities. Saving something just because it is old is sentimental and of questionable scientific or cultural value. Heritage of itself is worthless without a context. It boiled down to a balancing act, with flavour on the one hand and pest control and cropping levels on the other – though we have to admit to growing a number of low-cropping, disease-riddled varieties on the basis of their consummate flavour, such as Royal Sovereign strawberries – alongside issues such as whether to grow certain varieties for the length of their cropping periods or for their keeping qualities.

One of the great challenges facing the heritage industry concerns its need to balance the conservation of the past with an evaluation of the spirit which brought it into being. This is a problem peculiar to gardens, rather than the built environment.

Periodicity is all very well when restoring a vegetable garden to a specific period, say, but it misses the point; to grow Victorian peas, which are by and large inedible, as opposed to a modern variety full of flavour would be absurd.

The conservation of old vegetable varieties should not be seen as a quaint rural hobby. When giant corporations supply the Western world with ever-narrower ranges of crops in a quest to control the market, a genetic weakness, such as a susceptibility to pest or disease, can have catastrophic results. The cure for the blight that brought Ireland to its knees in the nineteenth century was eventually achieved by reverting to cross-breeding with older potato varieties found in their country of origin, Peru. Today the world's richest nation, the USA, for all its high technology, depends on wild wheat varieties from Ethiopia to breed vigour into its vulnerable breadbasket. One rust attack, at the wrong time with the wrong prevailing winds, could see the mighty USA in terrible food jeopardy. Greater genetic variety would protect against this possibility. Most scientists would accept this intellectually, but the human condition seems to demand denial until things go wrong. 'Something will turn up,' was Mr Micawber's motto. We wouldn't run our families like that, so why the whole species?

The last fifty years have been an object lesson in the continuous overestimation of what science can achieve. Benefits get the headlines; years later, in the small print, one gets the debit side. It is as true of chemical applications against pest and disease as it is of the focus on a small number of high-yielding varieties freely available to growers in the name of greater productivity. This is not to question the value of scientific advances, without which our current global population would have been totally unsupportable. It is simply to suggest that we should not worship at the altar of science without exercising a correspondingly sensible stewardship over the gene-bank. To return to basics: if we think it

important for individuals to grow their own vegetables and fruit, we must bear in mind that most modern, popularly available varieties, being based on industrial crops, have a very short fruiting period, thereby leaving the average domestic grower with a glut. The older, naturally pollinated varieties crop over a far longer period and are ideal for the home grower. What began for us as a discussion about a restoration philosophy for a heritage garden turned into an issue with global ramifications.

Cornwall's mild climate, bathing as it does in the outer fringe of the Gulf Stream, has created an environment that is unique, supporting anything from moorland sub-tundra flora to the sub-tropical valley gardens – Tresco, Trebah, Glendurgan, Trewithen and of course Heligan itself – for which the county has become internationally famous. It is because of the plant hunters that Britain, and especially Cornwall, is so rich in flora. These intrepid men travelled to the furthest reaches of the known world in the quest for exotica to supply the great new botanical institutions such as the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew. Entrepreneurial nurserymen such as the Veitches made fortunes satisfying the curiosity of the aristocracy, and later of the burgeoning middle classes. Collecting became a status symbol, especially with the introduction of orchids.

Under Philip McMillan Browse's tutelage I was soon looking at the Heligan plants with fresh eyes. *Trachycarpus fortunei* ceased to be just a palm; it had a story, the smell of adventure. Robert Fortune brought it back from the Chusan Islands at the mouth of the Yangtse. He had fought brigands, suffered terrible illness, and finally died shooting duck in a swamp in the middle of nowhere.

Then what of *Drymys winteri*, an unassuming laurel lookalike with daisy cluster flowers? Captain Winter was on Drake's circumnavigation of the globe, his men in a desperate condition from scurvy as they entered the Straits of Magellan at Tierra del Fuego. On the coast they found Indians making a soup from the latex-

like sap of a plant. Winter took a gamble and fed his men a disgusting brew described as tasting like rhubarb to the power of ten, but it worked. He had discovered possibly the most vitamin C-rich plant in the world, and brought it back with him.

The list of stories was endless: David Douglas, who had a fir named after him, and died a horrendous death on Hawaii after falling into a hunter's pit already occupied by a wild bull; Archibald Menzies; De Bougainville; Ernest 'Chinese' Wilson; Père Armand David, the French explorer priest; the Cornish Lobb brothers; Frank Kingdom Ward; these were names to conjure with. I suddenly felt in touch with a spirit of adventure I had never previously associated with plants.

Then I came across Joseph Dalton Hooker, bearded, severe and totally obsessed. His father, William, rose from gardener to become director of the Botanic Gardens in Glasgow and went on to become the first proper director of the Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew; his son caught the bug and eventually also ended up as Director of Kew after years exploring the world hunting plants as well as pursuing other scientific interests. He sent back thousands of specimens from his four-year expedition to the Himalaya (1847–51). Many of these, especially his remarkable collection of rhododendrons, ended up in the gardens of Cornwall, where some of them survive to this day. The seed first went to Kew, and was then distributed to friends and supporters to establish where the plants might thrive. Heligan ended up with nineteen varieties of Hooker rhododendrons because the owners, the Tremayne family, were related by marriage to great friends of Hooker, the Lemons of Carclew, near Truro.

Philip was greatly interested in the biographies of the major Victorian scientist-explorers, especially Hooker, Darwin, Lyell and Huxley. We often talked of their intellectual bravery, and tried to imagine the sense of excitement that must have prevailed in that pre-media age when the general public flocked to hear their

lectures. Philip wanted to know why I hadn't previously found plants interesting. I had skipped all the sciences at school, and I now seriously regretted wanting not to be seen as a nerd. I began reading more widely, and began to understand. The Victorians were working with an amazing canvas of the unexplored and unexplained, and started from a generalist viewpoint. No -ologies or -isms here; the natural world was seen as an integrated whole. Darwin was interested in all living things, as well as geology; *The Origin of Species* is not only a massive philosophical and scientific landmark of a book, it is also a virtuoso polymathic celebration of observation and description. Most important of all, it is holistic.

By 1994 the productive gardens were largely restored, and Heligan was self-supporting. Interestingly, we were welcoming increasing numbers of school groups, drawn by our rather unusual approach to information. At that time all the signs in the garden were written in a conversational, anecdotal style and in big print. We also hosted many guided tours which we treated like theatre, attempting to convey to others our own excitement at the discoveries we were making, as well as explaining the underlying horticultural principles in a way all could understand. There is a wonderful review reprinted on the back of Richard Dawkins's book *The Selfish Gene*, which says, 'I loved this book, it made me feel so damn clever,' or words to that effect. There someone has captured perfectly the act of revelation that is education at its best. We were all hooked on the pleasure our visitors took in having their interest excited – and reaching, in however rudimentary a way, a new understanding of the world around them. I've been there: monochrome to sepia to colour in easy stages.

The school groups provided the greatest challenge. Most children find plants about as exciting as watching paint dry, but we soon discovered their collective Achilles heel. Building on my own awakened interest in the derring-do of the plant hunters, we discussed ways we knew we could get them to take notice. The

Roald Dahl approach worked even better than we dared hope. We told a story about poisons and the variously horrible deaths suffered by the victims. We raised the tone by developing a historical context. The Aztecs, for example, used a plant-based drug to paralyse their live human sacrifices, thus keeping them quiescent long enough to have their hearts ripped out, still pumping, to celebrate the summer solstice. Eye-boggling attention was the result.

The children were now ready to find even the humble potato interesting. Actually the productive gardens were very popular, because almost everything they saw they had eaten in one form or another. The truly amazing discovery was how many children had no idea where such simple things as carrots, cabbage or potatoes came from, let alone pineapples and bananas.

We were pushing at an open door. The stories of the great plant hunters, the productive gardens and the plants that changed the world were irresistible in the right hands. Who can be bored by Captain Bligh and the mutiny on the *Bounty*, which leads to the story of breadfruit and why it was being taken from Tahiti to the Caribbean? Or the Duchess of Cinchon dying from malaria in Chile until a priest cured her with the powdered bark of a tree now named after her, *cinchona*, quinine, thus unleashing the imperial age by making it possible at long last for white men to penetrate the dark fastnesses of the hot continents? Without doubt this is the plant that has done most to shape world history.

By influencing the audience we were changing ourselves. Stephen Sondheim, in his excellent musical *Into the Woods*, plays on the differences of perception between adults and children in a reworking of famous fairy stories such as Jack and the Beanstalk and Rapunzel. He points out that what to a child appears totally reasonable is actually morally vacuous. Take Jack, for instance: he climbs a beanstalk and sets about stealing things from a big bloke who has never done him any harm, and eventually kills him. Our

stories, our interpretations, were leading us into similar deep water. After all, our heroes at Kew and elsewhere were actually systematically stealing assets from others and reshaping the world for their own ends. For much of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the great botanic gardens were little more than the economic development arms of the British or Dutch East India Companies.

The great walled flower garden at Heligan contains a large peach house and a series of vineries that once formed half of a mirrored pair on either side of the central doorway into the garden. The other half was still visible in the form of broken brick foundations, a flaking rendered wall and a few shelf brackets. The only trace of the former occupiers was an enormous fig now growing in the open air. The Tremaynes probably did not realize that figs could grow outside very comfortably in Cornwall, and instead copied London fashion. In the spring of 1994 Philip, John and I discussed at length what we should do with the space. We could restore it as a so-called stove house, a typical Victorian conservatory for hothouse plants. This would have been a historically acceptable addition to our collection of productive houses.

We kept coming back, though, to the writings of an antiquary who had visited Heligan in 1824 and had noted approvingly that he had seen a glasshouse filled with 'strange and aromatic plants'. We were convinced that a glasshouse growing a range of the plants that had changed the world would generate great interest as well as being in keeping with the spirit of the place. We spoke of spices, cotton, rice, exotic fruits, rubber, tea and coffee. In little more than an hour we had a list that would not only have more than filled the planned conservatory, it would have filled the whole Northern Garden at Heligan. Obviously we would have to go back to the drawing board.

Suddenly we remembered an expedition that John and I had made down the old Long Drive, formerly the main entrance to

the estate, in search of Dart's Well, which no one had seen for more than seventy years. We found it buried under overgrowth and fallen trees. As we sat having a quiet smoke, happy with our new discovery, we looked down through the trees and became aware of a large stone quarry – called, we found out later, the Dairy Quarry. It had a flat bottom and a terraced northern face, and at the time we had talked excitedly about its potential as a modern Mediterranean garden, with ornate water features and exotic terracing, with a glass roof over one end to contain the fruits of the region. This would be something completely new for Heligan, yet something that the Tremaynes might have been as excited about as I was. Nonetheless, the idea had taken root in my imagination, where it would stay until we could find a pocket deep enough.