

Frederick Ashton, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Benjamin Britten and Yehudi Menuhin. Harold Craxton died in 1971 and to commemorate his memory the Harold Craxton Memorial Trust was created and 'Atelier' is now used as a studio for classical and jazz musicians.¹⁵ The garden today still retains its secluded feel and much of its original layout. The pond is now infilled but its stone surrounds are kept in store. The Kew pedestal sundial now stands on top of the infilled pond. The majority of the stone paving around the garden is still as it was when constructed by Swinstead, as is the semi-circular stone seat and the stone terrace wall at the rear of the garden. Jane Craxton told me that 'certainly nothing has been added but the garden has suffered from periodic neglect so some paving is not in such good shape'. They hope to repair the semi-circular stone seat, which has some damage from tree roots behind it, next year, money permitting.

LEATE, LONDON & THE LEVANT

By David Marsh

Nicholas Leate is not exactly a household name, even to historians of Jacobean England, despite his being one of the most prominent London merchants of the period. But he ought to be. An advisor to the Privy Council, Leate also took a major part in civic life in the City, including being the driving force behind the laying out of Moorfields. He had a stake in every major overseas trading company, which gave him a network of agents across Europe and the Islamic world, with both John Gerard and John Parkinson citing him as a source of new plants. His story, combining national and local politics with commercial and botanic interests, serves as a good example of how garden history fits into the wider social and cultural context (*fig. 47*).

Leate (sometimes Leat, Leet or Lete) was not a Londoner by birth, but came from Derbyshire. His sister married the son of Edward Osborne, one of London's wealthiest commercial elite,¹ and probably as a result Nicholas was apprenticed in 1577 to one of Osborne's business colleagues, Thomas Campbell, Warden of the Ironmongers' Company, who was later knighted and became Lord Mayor in 1609. Living in Campbell's house Leate would have met his master's business partners and family, and started to form the network of acquaintance and friendship that would support him through his own career. Apart from Campbell's two sons, both of whom became Masters of the Ironmongers and Lord Mayor, prominent amongst them was Richard Staper, whose daughter Joane Leate was to marry soon after he received his freedom in around 1584. Richard Staper also happened to be Edward Osborne's brother-in-law and the two of them were the leading figures in the chartering of the Turkey Company in 1581.

This was a highly significant step in the economic growth of England. Until then almost all English trade with the Eastern Mediterranean and Ottoman Empire had been conducted overland through Venice and controlled by Venetian merchants. It was only in 1553 that Anthony Jenkinson, a member of the Mercers, received permission to trade independently, but his efforts were not followed up until 1578 when a group of Turkey merchants including Osborne and Staper financed William Harborne to travel to Constantinople, to try and negotiate permission from the Sultan Murat III for English ships to trade in Ottoman ports. Following diplomatic interventions from Elizabeth I this permission was granted in 1580. She then appointed Harborne her ambassador, although on condition that it cost her nothing and that all expenses were covered by the Turkey Company. It was an early example of the linkage between trade and

¹⁵ www.craxtonmemorialtrust.org.uk;
<http://www.craxtonstudios.org.uk/html/history.htm>, accessed 3 September 2019.

¹ Osborne was Lord Mayor in 1584, a founder member of several prominent City companies and the ancestor of Charles II's chief minister Thomas Osborne, later Earl of Danby and Duke of Leeds.



47. Nicholas Leate, line engraving by John Payne, early seventeenth century
(© NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY, LONDON)

political influence, both at home and abroad. It paid off in this case because Harborne played a key role in preventing the Ottoman Empire from supporting Spain in the war with England that was taking place at the time. Both he and his successor acted both as Elizabeth's ambassador and as agent for the Turkey Company merchants. They gained permission to establish trading bases in the major Ottoman commercial centres of Constantinople, Smyrna and Alexandria, with headquarters at Aleppo (*fig. 48*).

So Leate's new family connections tied him into the most lucrative trading opportunities available, and once he had completed his apprenticeship and set up trading on his own account, he began to turn this to his advantage. He became a member of both the Venice and Turkey Companies and then, in 1592 when they merged, he joined the ranks of the new combined Levant Company. He also began his rise through the ranks of the Ironmongers' Company.

Such information inevitably comes from surviving institutional records, and we have no personal archive of any sort to draw upon, but even if he didn't leave a written record other people did.

The first of these was John Gerard, whose *Herball. Or Generall Historie of Plantes* (commonly referred to simply as Gerard's *Herbal*) was published in 1597 (*fig. 49*). It contains an almost chance remark that he went botanising with Leate where 'walking in the fields next unto the theatre' in Finsbury Fields they found a double buttercup. But the links between the two went back a considerable way before that.

Gerard sent his servant William Marshal as a ship's surgeon to collect plants through the Mediterranean on a ship called the *Hercules*. Because of their monopoly this must have been a ship associated with the Levant Company and Leate is known to have had a financial interest in a ship in the same name. Gerard doesn't say when Marshal went on his voyage but in 1587 a ship called *Hercules* made the return voyage from London to Tripoli in modern Lebanon, which served as

the port for Aleppo, and did the same in 1588 when on its arrival back it was declared to be the richest ship ever to land in England.

By the time Gerard published the *Herbal* in 1597 Leate had already given him several new plants and of course there may well have been more which did not survive or which were not necessarily noted in Leate's name. It may be that Gerard only noted the most unusual: certainly the language he uses implies that. Amongst them (*fig. 50*):

The swollen Colewoorte of al others is the strangest, which I received from a worshipfull marchant of London master Nicholas Lete, who brought the seeds thereof out of France; who is greatly in love with rare and faire flowers and plants, for which he doth carefully send into Syria, having a servant there at Aleppo and in many other countries; for the which my selfe and likewise the whole land are much bound unto.

The identity of Leate's agent is uncertain. It is known from a handwritten note by William Cecil of c.1582 that there were already two English agents in Aleppo, but I suspect it is more likely that Leate and any other individual 'collectors' would have used their personal factors for non-company business. Another note in the Cecil papers at Hatfield dated 1600 contains a list of Levant merchants 'with their servants at this present; as also the names of all such their children and servants as have died and been buried in the dominions of Turkey and Venice for the space of 12 years that the said trade of the Levant began by Englishmen.' It includes Richard Staper who had seven people 'on the other side of the Streights', including two of his own sons. Staper is also noted as having lost another son Thomas, Leate's brother-in-law, plus 14 other servants in the previous 12 years. The list also included:

Nicholas Leate's 5 (Servants at present: John Francklin, Anthony Berket, John Gale, Thoby Manstedge, William Smith. and 3 who had died including 2 who were his apprentices...
Servants deceased : Edward Davis, Thomas Davis, John Skinner.)²

There are no records of what plant

2. 'Cecil Papers: June 1600, 21-30', *Calendar of the Cecil Papers in Hatfield House, Volume 10: 1600 (1904)*, pp.191-21.



48. 'Aleppo Een Vermaerde Stadt in Syrien', engraving
In Olfert Dapper, *Naukeurige beschryving van gantsch Syrie, en Palestyn of Heilige Lant...*
Verrijkt met lantkaerten en afbeeldingen... in koper gesneden, published 1677
(© THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY OF JERUSALEM & THE JEWISH NATIONAL & UNIVERSITY LIBRARY)

material was sent back to Leate apart from comments by Gerard in his *Herbal*. In addition to the Colewort, Leate was responsible for the introduction of the Roman or red beetroot (*fig. 51*) which Gerard says was:

..brought to me from beyond the seas by that courteous merchant master Lete before remembered, the which has leaves very great and red of colour, as is all the rest of the plant, as well the roots, stalkes and flowers, full of a perfect purple juice tending to rednesse: the middle ribbe of which leaves are for the most part very broad and thicke like the middle part of the cabbage leaf, which is equally in goodness with the leaves of cabbage being boiled. It grew with me in 1596 to the height of 8 cubits and did bring forth his rough and uneven seeds very plentifully.

There was also a yellow gillyflower: 'The which a worshipful marchant of London Master Nicholas Lete procured from Poland and gave me thereof for my garden which before that time was never seene or heard of in these countries' (*fig. 52*). Leate was also a member of the Eastland Company which traded with the Baltic and inland from there, including Poland. However, I suspect the yellow gillyflower was not Polish but suffers the same misnomer as French and African marigolds, which also arrived in Britain in the late sixteenth century. Their names derive not from their place of origin but the last ports the ship bringing them called at, or perhaps what the captain or crew remembered. It is much more likely that they actually came overland via Poland from the eastern Mediterranean to avoid pirates and rival powers on the sea route. It is known that the Levant Company used this route in both directions for both goods and people; indeed when William Harborne went to Constantinople he went overland via Poland.

By the early-mid 1590s, while the *Herbal* was being prepared, Leate was clearly on friendly terms with Gerard and, although there is no documentary evidence, the assumption must surely be that he would have at least been introduced to Gerard's friends and botanic acquaintances. These would have included not only William Cecil himself but members of the Privy Council including Sir Francis Walsingham who was also known to

be a keen gardener.

In some ways more important horticulturally than the court elite, Gerard was until 1597 on friendly terms with the Flemish and Dutch communities in London, which were centred around the Lime Street area of the city. They were, by and large, well established and although they maintained strong connections with the Low Countries, were becoming quite well integrated, developing equally strong roots in London. Prominent among them were the Cole (Cool or Coel) family – who included Jacob Cole sometimes called Ortelianus, the nephew of Abraham Ortelius the cartographer; the Van Meterens, one of whom was the Dutch Consul and postmaster and thus controlled a whole international network of communication and distribution, and the Garrets, who were apothecaries. A later arrival was the Flemish botanist Matthias Lobel (sometimes De Lobell or L'Obel), who ended up supervising the Hackney garden of Lord Zouche and who fell out with Gerard (as probably did others in sympathy) over the errors in the *Herbal*. Carolus Clusius, the keeper of the Imperial Gardens in Vienna and the founder of Leiden, and the greatest botanist of his day, also visited London four times.

This Lime Street community was also well connected within the wider intellectual establishment. Amongst their known friends were the historian William Camden, the poet Edmund Spencer, the author and historian Richard Hakluyt, and the Queen's apothecary Hugh Morgan, whilst the Garrets at least were acquainted with the explorers Francis Drake, Walter Raleigh and Thomas Cavendish.

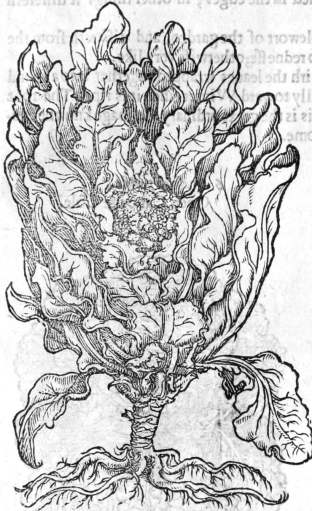
Leate lived quite close by on Threadneedle Street and was definitely on good terms with Matthias L'Obel and is mentioned in the extended version of his *Stirpa Adversaria Nova* of 1605 for the introduction of 'Narcissus Luteus vernus D Lete facie [appearance of] *Narcissus autumnal lutiae fine* [but in the end] *Colchico-Narcissi Botanicorum*' (*fig. 53*). The entry also adds that this was just one of many other rare bulbs sent from Constantinople in particular, although



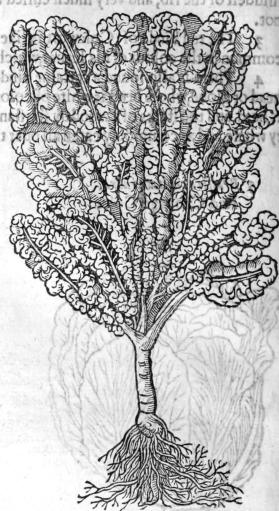
49. John Gerard, line engraving by John Payne, 1633
(© NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY, LONDON)

8 The double crispe or curled Colewort agreeth with the last before described in euery respect, onely it differeth in the leaues, which are so intricately curled, and so thick set ouer with other small cut leaues, that it is hard to see any part of the leafe it selfe, except ye take and put aside some of those jagges and ragged leaues with your hand.

9 *Brassica florida.*
Cole-Florie.



10 *Brassica Tophosa.*
Swollen Colewort.



9 Cole flore, or after some Colieflore, hath many large leaues sleightly indented about the edges, of a whitish Greene colour, narrower and sharper pointed than Cabbage: in the midst of which leaues riseth vp a great white head of hard floures closely thrust together, with a root full of stringes, in other parts like to the Coleworts

10 The swollen Colewort of all other is the strangest, which I receiued of a worshipful merchant of London master *Nicholas Lete*, who brought the seed thereof out of France, who is greatly in loue with rare and faire floures and plants, for which he doth carefully send into Syria, hauing a seruant there at Aleppo, and in many other countries, for the which my selfe and likewise the whole land are much bound vnto him. This goodly Colewort hath many leaues of a blew with greene or of the colour of Wood, punched or swollen vp about the edges as it were a piece of leather wet and broiled on a gridiron, in such strange fort that I cannot with words describe it to the full. The floures grow at the top of the stalkes, of a bleake yellow colour. The root is thicke and strong like to the other kindes of Coleworts.

11 Sauoy Cole is also numbred among the headed Coleworts or Cabbages. The leaues are great and large, very like to those of the great Cabbage, which turne themselves vpwards as though they would embrace one another to make a loued Cabbage, but when they come to the shutting vp they stand at a stay, and rather shew themselves wider open, than shut any neerer together, in other respects it is like vnto the Cabbage.

12 The curled Sauoy Cole in euery respect is like the precedent, sauing that the leaues here doe somewhat curl or crispe about the middle of the plant: which plant if it be opened in the Spring time, as sometimes it is, it sendeth forth branched stalkes, with many small white floures at the top, which being past, there follow long cods and seeds like the common or first kinde described.

13 This kinde of Colewort hath very large leaues deeply jagged euen to the middle rib, in face resembling gear and ranke parsley. It hath a great and thicke stalke of three cubits high, whereupon doe grow floures, cods, and seed like the other Cole-worts.

14 The

50. '10. The Swollen Colewort of all other is the strangest, which I received of a worshipful merchant of London master Nicholas Lete...',

Extract from John Gerard's *HERBALL* or *GENERALL Historie of Plants*,

Gathered by John Gerard of London (Master in *CHIRURGERIE*)

Very much Enlarged and Amended by Thomas Johnson, Citizen and Apothecarye of London (1636 EDITION)

(COURTESY WELLCOME COLLECTION)

318

Of the Historie of Plants.

L. 13. 2.

1 *Cabochum rotundum.*
Round rape Cole.



2 *Barallia.* White Beets.



3 They sowe and fourth when the other Colours dyedendred they are kind, and the colour of the flowers, as Muske Melons and Cucumbers are.

4 *The Name.*
They are called in Latine, *Cabochum*, and *Tapezallia*, bearing for their stalks, as it were Rapes and Turneps, participating of two plants, the Colewort and Turnep, whereof they tooke their names.

5 These being sowne for downe of the kinde of these plants, but are accounted for delicate meats, contending with the Cabbage Cole in goodnesse and pleasant taste.

CHAP. 42. Of Beets.

1 The common white Beet hath great broad leaves, smooth, and plain, from which rife thicke erected or chanfe- red stalks the flowers grow along the flaks clustering together in thape like little flars, which being pale, there issued round & venen prickly seed. The root is thicke, hard and great.

2 *The Description.*

3 *The Name.*
The Grecians have named it *βητα*, the Latines, *Beta*; the Germans, *Sparagut*; the Spaniards, *Ajaca*; the French, *de la Betterre*; and the Italians, *la Betterra*. It is firmer and sweeter than the other Beets, and is used in many dishes, as in the Italian, French, and German, and is also used in the Levant, where it is called *la Betterra*, and is used in the same manner as the other Beets.

4 *The Nature.*
The white Beets are in moisture and heate temperate, but the other kinde are dry, and all of them are bitter: so that the white Beet is a cold and moist pot-herb, which hath foyned with it a certain fat and viscous quality, by reason whereof it cleanseth and draweth flegme out of the nothrills.

5 Being sowne in it is boyled, it quickly cleanseth both the belly, and provoketh to the urine, especially being taken with the broth whereof it is fodder: it is nourisheth little or nothing, and it is not so wholesome as Lettuce.

6 The juice conveyed up into the nothrills doth gently draw forth flegme, and purgeth the head.

7 The great and beautiful Beet, last described may be sown in Winter for a salad herb, with vine- gre, oyle, and salt, and is not only pleasant to the taste, but also delightfull to the eye.

8 The greater Beet or Roman Beet, boyled and eaten with oyle, vinegar and pepper, is a most excellent and delicate salad: but when mingled with the small and beautiful root (which is to be sown in the same manner as the other Beets), it is used in the same manner as the other Beets, and is also used in the same manner as the other Beets.

9 Many evokes, who notwithstanding have had the view thereof, and are assured that it is both good and wholesome, will make thereof many and divers dishes, both faire and good.

319

Of the Historie of Plants.

L. 13. 2.

1 There is another fort like in thape and proportion to the former, having that the leaves of this be fringed with red here and there continually, which fetcheth forth the difference.

2 There is likewise another fort herof, that was brought unto me from beyond the seas, by that courteous Merchant master Lete, before remembrance of me, which is called in Latine, *Letea*, and in the French, *la Betterre*, and in the Italian, *la Betterra*, and in the German, *Sparagut*. It is of a colour as all the rest of the plants well sown, as flaks, and flowers, full of a vertice purple yeas tending to redness: the middle rib on which leaves are for the most part very broad and thicke, like the middle part of the Cabbage leaves, which is equal in goodnesse with the leaves of Cabbage being boyled. It grew with me 1594, to the height of eight foot, and was very plentifully with which plants natured for to play and sport herof, for it was altogether of one colour and lower, doth bring forth plants of many and variable colours, as the wor- thippfull Gentleman master *John Norden* can very well tell: unto whom I gave some of the seeds thereof, which his garden brought forth many other or beautiful colour.

3 *The Plant.*
The Beet is sowne in gardens it loveth to grow in a moist and fertile ground. 4 The ordinary white Beet grows wilde upon the sea-coast of Te- nce and divers others places by the Sea, for this is a different kind as some would haue it. 5 The fittest time to sow it is in the spring in flourth and is green all Summer long, and likewise in Winter, and bringeth forth his seed the next year following.

6 *The Names.*
The Grecians have named it *βητα*, the Latines, *Beta*; the Germans, *Sparagut*; the Spaniards, *Ajaca*; the French, *de la Betterre*; and the Italians, *la Betterra*. It is firmer and sweeter than the other Beets, and is used in many dishes, as in the Italian, French, and German, and is also used in the Levant, where it is called *la Betterra*, and is used in the same manner as the other Beets.

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12 Many evokes, who notwithstanding have had the view thereof, and are assured that it is both good and wholesome, will make thereof many and divers dishes, both faire and good.

51. 'Of Beets [...] 3. There is likewise another sort bereof, that was brought unto me from beyond the seas, by that courteous Merchant master Lete...' Extract from John Gerard's *HERBALL* or *GENERALL Historie of Plants*, Gathered by John Gerard of London (Master in *CHIRURGIE*) Very much Enlarged and Amended by Thomas Johnson, Citizen and Apothecarye of London (1636 EDITION) (COURTESY WELLCOME COLLECTION)

77

¶ The Plantes.

- A The feed of Fleawort boiled in water or infused and the decoction or infusion drunke, purgeth downwards at sixt and cholericke humors, cooleth the heate of the inward parts, hot fevers, burning agues, and such like diseases proceeding of heate, and quencheth drowth and thirst.
- B The feed stamped and boyled in water to the forme of a plaister and applied, takes away all swellings of the joints, especially if you boyle the same with vinegar and oyle of roles and apply it as a cataplasme.
- C The same applied in manner aforesaid unto any burning heate called *S. Antonicæ* fire, or any hot and violent impostume, attwigheth the same and bringeth it to ripeness.
- D The feed of the fleshy leaves of this plant, where any fluxe is, will draw them away, for which cause it tooke the name of *Plantæ*. For which cause I thinke it better to use the feed both of this and of the other, than to use the one from the other.

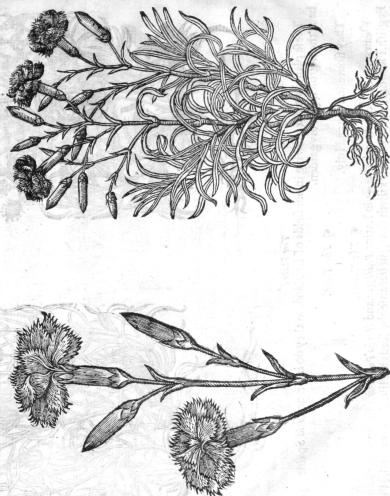
¶ The Danger.

Too much Fleawort feed taken inwardly is hurtfull to mans nature: so that I wish you not to follow the misme of *Galen* and *Diopiscus* in this point, being a medicine rather bringing a malady, than taking away the griefe: remembering the old proverb. A man may buy gold too deere, and the boy is too deere that is sick of thorne.

Diopiscus not to be mentioned now of this inwardly: but on the contrary, *Deffordus*, lib. 6. which is a more moderate and prudent use, and putteth the patient in mind, which choice for poison and there for slowe the symptoms which it causes, and refer you to the foregoing chapter for the remedies. ¶

C H A P. 182. Of Cloue Gilloflowers.

1 *Caryophyllus maxime multiplex.*
The great double Carnation.



¶ The Kinde.

There are at this day under the name of *Caryophyllus* comprehended diuers and sundry sorts of plants of such various colours, and also severall shapes, that a great and large volume would not

not suffice to write of every one at large in particular: considering how infinite they are, and how many yeare every climate, and country bringeth forth new ones, such as have not heretofore been written of: some whereof are called Carnations, others Cloue Gilloflowers, some Sops in wine, some Pagans, or Pagan colour, Hovels, white, blunke, purple, white, double and single. Gilloflowers, as also Gilloflower with yellow flouresh, which a worshipsfull Merchant of London Mr. *Nicholas Zate* procured from Poland, and gave me thereof for my garden, which before that time was neuer seen heretofore in these countries. I likewise there by sundry sorts of pinks comprehended under the name of *Gilloflowers*, as also the feed of the same, which I have before written of. Gilloflowers also hold flowers which we call Sweet-John and Sweet-Williams. And first of the great Carnation and Cloue Gilloflower.

¶ There are very many kinds both of Gilloflowers, pinks, and the like which differ very little in their roots, leaves, seeds or manner of growing, though much in the colour, shape and magnitude of their flowers, whereof some are of one colour, other some of more, and of them some are striped, others spotted, &c. Now I shouding it a thing not for me to intitt upon these accidental differences of plants, having speciaelicke differences enough to treat of, other such as are additit to the feed, and double and triple, and many more, and also of the manner of growing, and of the manner of using them, and of the feed of the same, which I have before written of, I require further satisfaction, let them at the time of the year, to see the garden of *Millicoff*, the-
¶ The wisest of my late deceased friend Mr. *Adolph Teger*, in Westminster, which in the excellence and variety of these delights exceeded all that I have known, also he himselfe shitt he feed exceeded most, if not all of his time, in his care, industry and skill in raising, generating and preferring of these plants and some others, whose life therefore is the more to be lamented by all those that are lovers of plants, I will only give you the figures of some three or four more, whereof one is of the single one, which therefore I have termed a Pink, though in mine opinion vainly, for that it is the same as the other, but for the sake of variety, and to shew the different colour and shape as they vary from them only in the fringed double of the flowers. ¶

2 *Caryophyllus major & minor, rubro & albo variegati.*
The white Carnation and Pageant.



3 *Caryophyllus purpureus profunde laciniatus.*
The blew or deep purple Gilloflower.

again we have to beware taking their origin literally.

Meanwhile Leate was diversifying his business interests, becoming a member of every major trading company including the Barbary Company, which traded with north Africa, the Merchant Adventurers, the Eastland, Muscovy, French and Spanish Companies as well (*fig. 54*). Then in 1599 he became one of backers of Sir James Lancaster's trip to India, subscribing £200 to the costs of the first projected voyage 'for the honour of our native country and for the advancement of trade of merchandise within this realm of England'.

He also moved into civic politics, being elected to the Common Council of the City for Broad Street Ward. So by the end of the century and aged about 40 Leate was taking on responsibilities, seeking advancement and growing in influence in every field of his life.

In the new century his upward progress continued. He was elected Warden of the Ironmongers' in 1604 and continued on Common Council. He took charge of the ornamentation of the Royal Exchange with wooden statues painted in oils, which was paid for by fines on those who refused the aldermanic bench.

He was also appointed a senior captain of the Trained Bands of militia, established by Elizabeth in 1572 in the absence of a regular army to defend the City in case of invasion. They practiced and paraded at the Artillery Ground in Bishopsgate. Thereafter he was often referred to as Captain Leate.

Perhaps this role was the driving force behind his next significant endeavour: the creation of the walks at Moorfields, together with plans for a new artillery ground, although the latter did not finally happen until after his death.

The familiar image of Moorfields on the Copperplate Map of the mid-late 1550s shows it as a place of recreation of all kinds, as well as being used for grazing and laundry (*fig. 55*) but it had a terrible reputation as 'a most noisome and offensive place, being a general laystall, a rotten morish ground whereof it first tooke

the name...crossed with deepe stinking ditches and noisome common sewers'. They were 'infectious' and 'loathsome to both sight and scent'.³ Richard Johnson's description went on to claim that the area 'was of former times ever held impossible to be reformed.....'. Impossible that is until in January 1605/6 the Repertories of the Court of Aldermen record four aldermen including Sir Thomas Campbell 'shall confer with Percival a gardener touching the keeping and ordering of Moorfields'. The following October the City Chamberlain was ordered to 'pay to Nicholas Leate Treasurer ...the moneys levied for cleansing the city ditches and for levelling the Moorfields the sum of £400 to be by him disbursed towards the finishing of the said work.' (*fig. 56*) It is the first sign of Leate's involvement with a project that, over time, emerges as being his idea.

The plan was to convert the fields into a series of tree-lined walks perhaps in emulation of those recently laid out at Grays Inn. The City's records do not explicitly spell out how this was to be financed but, reading between the lines, it was initially by 'benevolences', or donations from the wealthiest citizens. This failed to raise sufficient cash, not once but at least 3 times, and the authorities had to resort to using the City's own funds, particularly those of the Bridgemaster.

Johnson is clear who was responsible. 'The new and pleasant walkes were planned & greatly furthered, by Sir Leonard Holliday, in the time of his Mairalty and through the great paynes and industry of Master Nicholas Leate.' It involved the early modern equivalent of sponsored tree planting – the Lord Mayor planting the first and Leate the second, but while Holliday is only mentioned in his office-holding year Leate is present in the official records throughout all the twelve years it took to complete the project in 1618 (*fig. 57*).

But it remained commerce that dominated Leate's life, especially with the expansion of trade routes actively encouraged by the Crown to reduce England's dependence

3. Richard Johnson, *The Pleasant Walkes of Moore-fields*, (London, 1607).

on trade via our potential enemies particularly in Spain. In particular the search for new routes to the fabled wealthy east, avoiding the long sea route past Spain and round Africa, were especially important.

Leate played his part in this. Along with leading members of the Privy Council and other prominent merchants he invested in Henry Hudson's two unsuccessful attempts to find the rumoured North-East Passage to China via a route around the top of Norway and Russia above the Arctic Circle. These failed miserably but the links with Russia for furs etc. was important, so as a member of the Muscovy Company he helped raise cash to give to James I's embassy to Russia in 1618, which was led by Sir Dudley Digges, to lend to the Tsar in order to secure proper trade agreement. Accompanying Digges was John Tradescant, the plant hunter. When the route to China via the North-East Passage was found to be unfeasible, he became a founder member of the North-West Passage Company instead. After three failed expeditions to find a passage in 1612, 1614 and 1615, Leate probably lost his investment. He was involved too in the early colonial ventures in Virginia with the Virginia Company, and sent cuttings from the vine in his garden over to the colony, which encouraged the start of wine-making in the New World. When the East India Company planned a trip to Japan it is clear he was to be a prominent player, just as he also took a leading role in the Company's response to the Amboyna massacre in 1623, particularly trying to prevent reprisals amongst the Dutch community in London among whom he had friends.

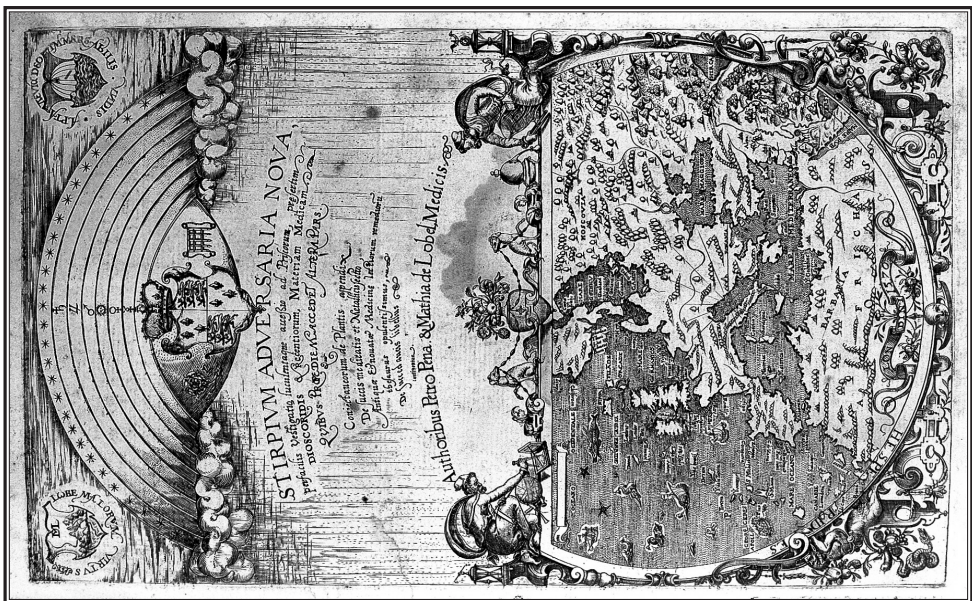
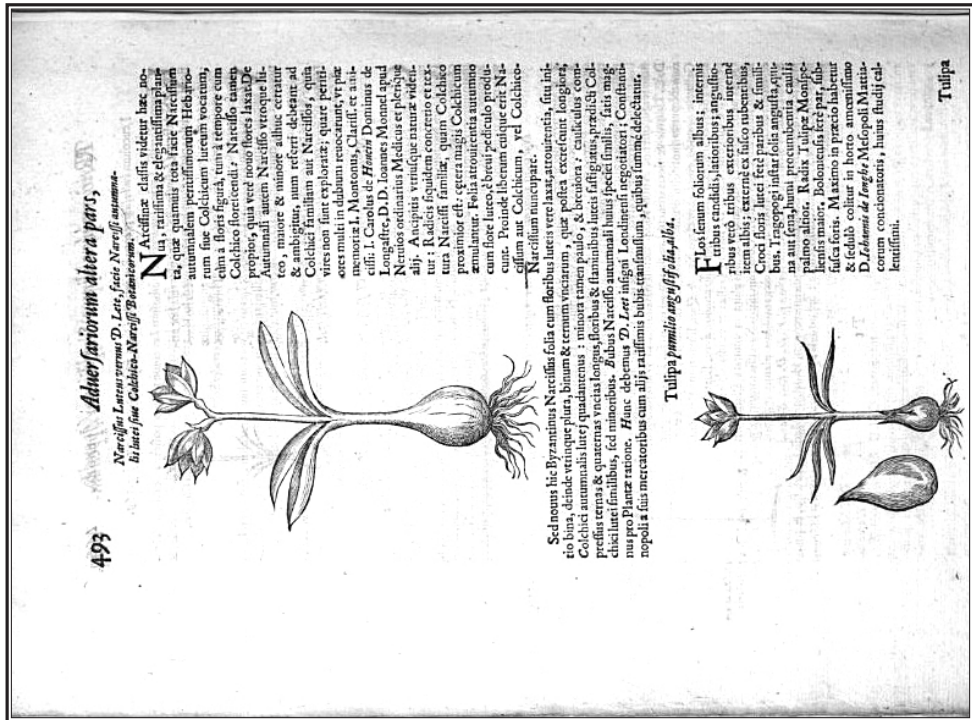
Leate's career also shows how precarious overseas trade could be. He is known to have consulted two prominent astrologers, Simon Forman and Richard Napier, about the fate of several of his ships, and on one occasion at least, in 1613, he seems to have overstretched himself financially as he had to rely on the Lord Mayor and Privy Council to intervene with a group of his creditors.

But of all his activities it is in the Mediterranean where Leate was most active.

He seems to be the leading player for the Levant Company trying to increase trade and improve relations not just with the Ottomans but also with Barbary (Morocco and the north African coast along to Algiers). This was very much in line with state policy, as evidenced by the correspondence between Elizabeth I and the ruler of Morocco about an alliance against the Spanish, and in 1600 the visit by an embassy to London, which was financed by the Barbary Company. There was, however, a downside to Barbary: its pirates who were a constant threat to trade. In 1616, as well as being elected Master of the Ironmongers', Leate was chosen by the Privy Council and the Barbary Company to be one of two merchants as the Lord Admiral Commissioners against pirates, who had to find and fit out a ship 'to take pirates and sea rovers'. In return they 'reserve for themselves $\frac{3}{4}$ of the ships and goods seized'. Two years later he served alongside Francis Bacon and Edward Lord Wooton, John Tradescant's employer at the time, in another joint venture against the pirates. This ended in an unsuccessful naval mission to Algiers (with Tradescant on board) and rows about who should pay, with Leate one of the merchant leaders threatened with imprisonment in the Marshalsea for refusing his contribution.

But while he, like the other merchants, might have been reluctant to cough up money to finance the ships, Leate was more generous with the thousands of Englishmen held captive by the pirates. In 1624 and again in 1626 he offered to put up £1000 of his own money immediately to redeem as many as possible and asked only to be repaid from the money that could be collected if the king authorised briefs (collections) in the country. Both times the offer was accepted, and eventually he was repaid.

Fortunately not all interactions with the Islamic world were piratical, or even hostile or one-sided. Strong diplomatic links were established with the Ottomans and their outlying provinces. Leate suggested the appointment of an English consul in Algiers to act as a go-between with the Bey, who was the

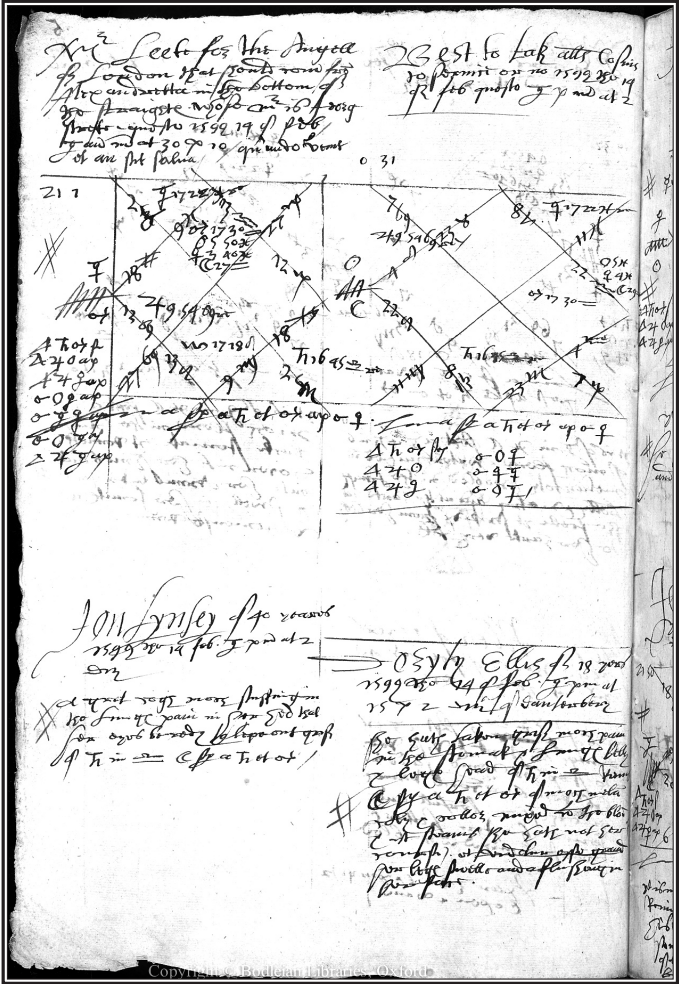


53. Above: '*Narcissus Luteus vernus* D Lete facie *Narcissus autumnal lutiae* fine *Colchico-Narcissi Botanicorum*.

From Matthias L'Obel, *Stirpa Adversaria Nova* (1605 EDITION)

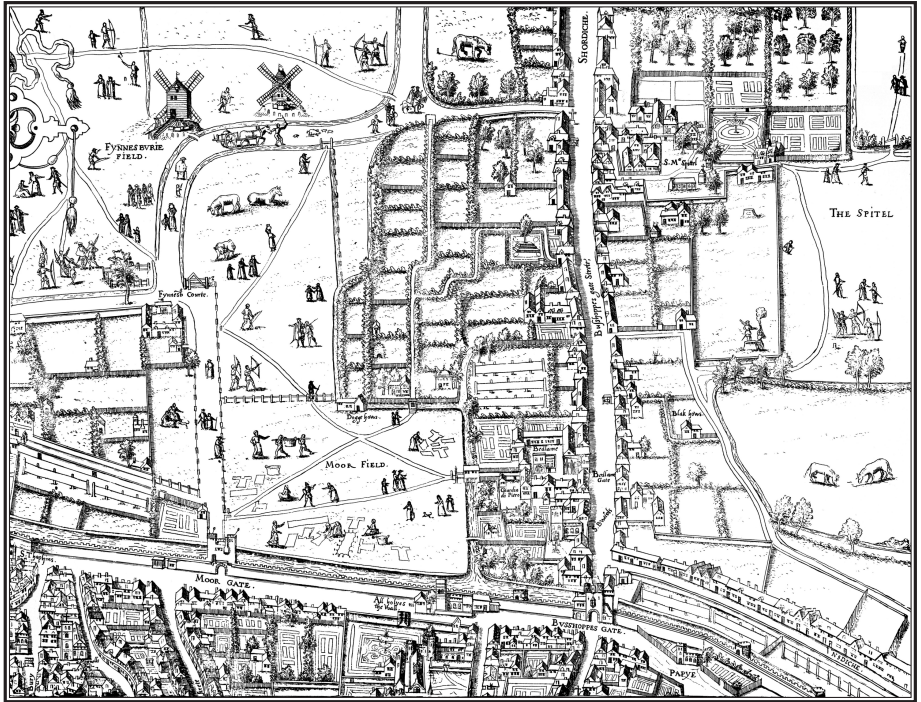
Below: Title page of *Stirpa Adversaria Nova*, when first published in 1570

(COURTESY WELLCOME COLLECTION)



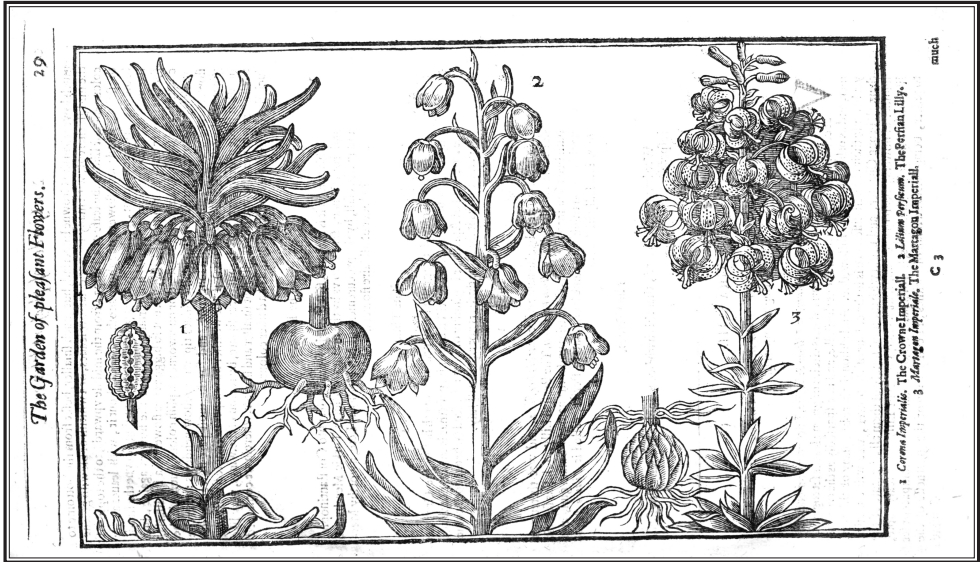
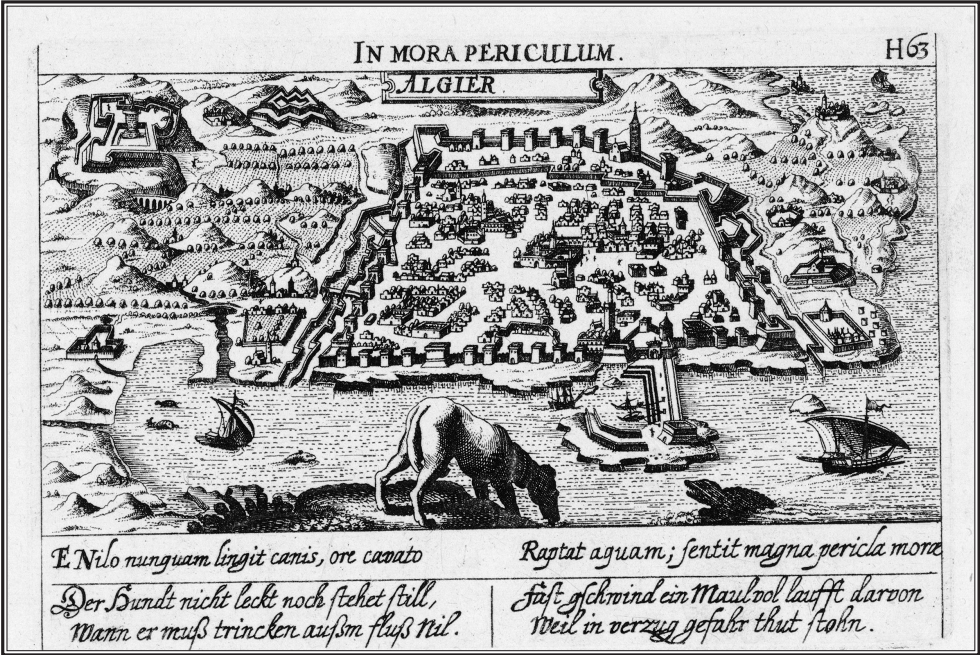
54. From *The Casebooks of Simon Forman and Richard Napier, 1596-1634*
'Mr Leete for the Angell of London that should com from Alexandretta in the bottom of the straights whose master is Jeorg streke. questo 1599 14 of feb / Wednesday 11m at 30 post 10 / when she will come and whether she is safe'
Forman, Vol 4, 6 February 1599 - 1 January 1600. Case 4907: Horary consultation concerning Mr Nicholas Leate (14 February 1599 10:30AM)
(COURTESY OXFORD. BODLEIAN LIBRARIES, MS ASHMOLE 219)

56. From *Repertories of the Court of Aldermen*, 9 October 1606
'to pay £400 "to Nicholas Leate Treasurer for the moneys levied for cleansing the city ditches and for levelling the Moorfields" so that he could use it "towards the finishing of the said work". Two days later Leate, now described as an Ironmonger was paid £200 "towards the finishing off of the works begun in the Moorefields"
(LONDON METROPOLITAN ARCHIVES, REP 27 F.284V.)



55. Moorfields map made from the Copperplate Map, 1559
(© MUSEUM OF LONDON)

57. Detail from Faithorne and Newcourt 'An Exact Delineation of the Cities of London and Westminster and the suburbs thereof, together with ye Burrough of Southwark', surveyed in 1643-47, published c. 1658
(© TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM)



58. 'Algier', engraving in Daniel Meisner, *Thesaurus Philopoliticus*, published 1626
(© THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY OF JERUSALEM & THE JEWISH NATIONAL & UNIVERSITY LIBRARY)

59. '2: *Lilium persicum*. The Persian lily'.
Detail from John Parkinson, *Paradisi in Sole Paradisus Terrestris. Or a Garden of pleasant Flowers* (1635 EDITION)
(COURTESY WELLCOME COLLECTION)

The Garden of pleasant Flowers.

419



60. 'The double yellow rose which was first procured to be brought to England, by Master Nicholas Lete, a worthy Merchant of London, and great lover of flowers, from Constantinople.' Detail from John Parkinson, *Paradisus in Sole Paradisus Terrestris. Or a Garden of pleasant Flowers* (1635 EDITION) (COURTESY WELLCOME COLLECTION)



61. Portrait of *Nicholas Leate, Esq.*, possibly by Daniel Mytens (c.1590-1648). The painting, inscribed with Leate's name, last two dates of his Mastership and his coat of arms, was presented to the Ironmongers' Company by Leate's sons, Huett and Richard Leate, in 1631 (COURTESY THE IRONMONGERS' COMPANY)

semi-independent governor. In 1625 he was heavily involved in organising an embassy from Algiers to London, and the following year was asked to take care of 'several Turks and Moors' who had been driven onto the western coasts and taken to Plymouth as pirates. They were probably merchants and Leate negotiated their release and return with the Privy Council and Turkey Company. (fig. 58)

It is also clear that Leate was involved in the growing trade with Persia and overland from there to India. Like Thomas Roe who had led the East India Company embassy to India, he is known to have traded in jewels with merchants there. One outcome of this interest in Persia was the mention by John Parkinson in *Paradisi in Sole* of 1629 of the *Lilium persicum* or Persian lily - now *fritillaria persica* - introduced from Persia by none other than Nicholas Leate (fig. 59). The other Persian plant that Parkinson attributes to Leate was a less successful introduction. The Persian Yellow Rose (fig. 60):

...the double yellow-Rose, which first was procured to be brought into England, by Master Nicholas Lete, a worthy Merchant of London and a great lover of flowers, from Constantinople, which (as we hear) was first brought thither from Syria; but perished quickly both with him, and with all other to whom he imparted it: yet afterwards it was sent to Master John de Franqueville, a Merchant also of London, and a great lover of all rare plants, as well as flowers, from which is sprung the greatest store, that is now flourishing in this Kingdome.

By this point Leate would have been in the centre of almost everything in London's civic and commercial life. In August 1626 he had been re-elected Master of the Ironmongers' and a large and impressive portrait was commissioned, which now hangs on the main staircase of Ironmongers' Hall (fig. 61). But he never quite achieved the ultimate accolades of becoming an alderman and thus in time Lord Mayor or gaining a knighthood. This may well have been because he rowed with his fellow directors of both the Levant Company and the East India Company over money. He appears to have advanced yet more money to free slaves out of

his own pocket in the expectation of recompense, which in the end was not forthcoming, and in 1627 he stood down as Deputy Governor of the Levant Company. His relations with the East India Company took a turn for the worst when he bought half a shipload of pepper from them and it turned out much of it was rotten and unsaleable. The case ended up in court and then the Privy Council. In his petition to the Council Leate declared: 'Hee is a lone man and through age grown weak and infirm, the company are many and potent, and that the cause hath depended upon the Board for nere upon 4 years'. It was only in June 1631 when he was on his deathbed that the matter was grudgingly resolved with the East India Company agreeing as a 'favour' to 'an ancient Committee who had done the company good service'.

It was a poignant end to a distinguished and successful commercial and civic life. Leate's political and business legacy was a flourishing trade with, and better understanding of, the Islamic world of the Mediterranean and beyond. Gerard and Parkinson mark him out as a passionate plant collector who introduced several well-known plants to Britain, whilst his determination and civic pride led to the creation of what could reasonably be described as the country's first publicly planned walks, which although sadly diminished and depleted still survive as Finsbury Square and Finsbury Circus.

THE JOURNEY OF WHITAKER WRIGHT'S
MARMOREAL "NAKED LADIES" FROM WITLEY
PARK, SURREY TO YORK HOUSE, TWICKENHAM
By Lowell Clare

A visitor to Twickenham in the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames might well take the opportunity to stroll along the banks of the river. A particularly fortunate person might stumble upon the walled gardens of York House and there discover a dramatic cascade formed of