The Story of Gardens in Europe
Source Text

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This source text was written for EGHN by Ed Bennis, Head of Centre for Landscape Research, Manchester Metropolitan University.

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1. Gardens of the Ancients

The story of the garden begins with the most ancient civilizations-Egypt, Persia, Greece and Rome. The garden has played an important role in defining social and economic history, along with a symbolic role as a vision of paradise. In Judeo-Christian traditions, Adam and Eve were expelled from Eden, a garden that symbolised paradise. The Persian garden, later adopted by Islam, was a physical representation of Paradise, a state of blessedness according to the Koran. In fact, the words paradise and park were the same in ancient Persian. Xenophon wrote of Cyrus the Great, 'The Persian king is zealously cared for, so that he may find gardens wherever he goes. Their name is Paradise, and they are full of things fair and good that the earth can bring forth'.

These early gardens, usually formal in layout, contained plants that provided shade, shelter, ornament, medicine and food. Important plants have always been cultivated from the earliest periods; fruit, nuts, grains, vegetables and herbs were an integral part of life. As well as the managed garden, there were usually large areas of woodland near to towns that were used for hunting game animals. It would be inaccurate to think of a garden as simply a collection of plants; for the wealthy, gardens were places of rest and pleasure, places for entertainment-games, music, dining and dancing. They were literally used as an extension of the house, an outdoor room. It seems that even the poorest households would have some plants, usually herbs, even if they were grown in pots. In ancient Egypt, plants played a major role in the economy along with their use in religious ceremonies. In Thebes, now Luxor, there were over 450 gardens and great water reservoirs, often referred to as sacred pools. We credit the Romans for separating utility and ornament; the vegetable garden and orchard were removed from the ornamental gardens and planted on the outskirts of town-essentially, early market gardens and allotments.

There is an amazing similarity between the gardens of ancient civilizations and those of today. Usually surrounded by buildings or walls, gardens were normally enclosed to protect important plants that were used for food and medicine. In the Roman garden, the peristyle garden or outdoor room was decorated with tables, fountains, murals and scented plants. Cicero wrote of the gardener, 'He [the topiarius or gardener] has so enveloped everything in ivy, not only the foundation walls of the villa, but also the spaces between columns of the promenade, that I declare the Greek statues seem to be in business as landscape gardeners, and to be advertising their ivy.'[1] Wilhelmina Jashemski, an American archaeologist, excavated many of the gardens at Pompeii and Herculanium; she explains the role of the garden: 'The garden was intimately related to many aspects of their lives-to their architecture, both public and private, painting, sculpture, aesthetic expression, horticulture, economics, religion, work, recreation, and city planning.'[2]

Our gardens today owe many of their ideas to the earliest civilisations for their form, use and even the plants we grow. Many plants were introduced to northern Europe by the Romans including bay [Laurus nobilis], rosemary, thyme, lavender, horse chestnut, and chestnut. There is another side, or scale that is often missed, and that is the design and use of public spaces as the forerunner to our public parks and city squares. These played an important part from processional routes in ancient Egypt, to open air markets in ancient Rome-these were places for the people to gather, meet, socialise, trade and barter. These spaces fulfilled basic human needs, not unlike our town parks and spaces of today.

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[1] Cicero, *Epistulae ad Quintum fratm,* 54BC, 3.1.5

[2] Jashemski, W *The Gardens of Pompeii* 1993, introduction

1 Gardens of the Ancients *continued*

The Spring of David. Dead Sea.
This ancient spring in a barren, rocky landscape shows the problems that the ancient gardeners in the Middle East faced. Water and shade were scarce: places of green plant growth were highly valued.

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The House of the Faun, Pompeii:
Destroyed in August 79AD, this was the home of a wealthy household; it has two peristyle gardens *[gardens surrounded by a covered walk]*. It also had two atriums acting as reception areas with small pools that collected the water from the roof. This house was over 200 years old when it was destroyed, but it shows how the wealthy incorporated gardens into their homes.

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The Temple of Luxor, Egypt: There was a grand processional route connecting the Temple of Luxor to the Temple of Karnak, approximately 2 kilometres away. We assume that the route was shaded by palm trees and scented with flowers. This was a space for everyone, but as you entered the temple, only the most important people would be allowed into the holiest areas.

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House of Venus, Pompeii: A mural on the wall of the peristyle garden depicts a fountain, with wild birds. The background view is of the surrounding countryside-even city dwellers dreamt of the idea of living in the countryside. The painting shows a wilder landscape, contrasting with the formal garden that it is in. A low trellis fence separates the wild garden from the formal area, but it also gives greater depth to the scene.

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Laurus nobilis: The 'noble laurel' or bay tree has been in Britain since the Roman period. It was woven to form a crown for the emperor or for the victor in ancient games, although the Emperor might have one made of gold. It is still seen as a symbol of victory and was often used as building decorations, or in the crest of powerful families. Today, its best known use is as a herb in Italian cooking.

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2. The Persian Garden

Ancient Persia is composed of the modern countries of Iran, Iraq and Syria; from here, came one of the most enduring garden forms ever created. Created in a harsh environment with little water, the gardens responded with enclosed, sheltered spaces and the sparing use of water. These gardens were formal and geometric in style which reflected the Persian interest in geometry and mathematics. Native plants were used for ornament as well as function-food and medicines; many of these plants, or their hybridised versions, can now be found in gardens throughout Europe.[1] While the Persian garden lasted until the 7-8th century, it took on a new meaning with the spread of Islam. Islam adopted the garden form, but it imbued it with meaning and symbolism. "Persian culture was absorbed by Islam and continued without apparent interruption. The garden proved itself able to comprehend and absorb the two opposing ways of thought of religious extremist and logical philosopher. To the one it remained the paradise of the Koran; 'For them [the good] the Gardens of Eden, under whose shade shall rivers flow'; to the other a place for contemplation and conversation, where the body and spirit were in repose and the mind liberated from preconceptions.'[2]

Our modern word paradise is derived from the Greek *paradeisos*, which in turn comes from the word *pairidaeza*, which pre-dates the Persian language. The meaning of *pairidaeza* is an enclosure or park. Paradise was the promised reward for the faithful, a state of blessedness. Physical and temporal rewards are described in the Koran (47:15) 'Such is the Paradise which the righteous have been promised: therein shall flow rivers of water undefiled, and rivers of milk forever fresh; rivers of wine delectable to those that drink it, and rivers of clarified honey. There shall they eat of every fruit, and receive forgiveness from their Lord.'
Paradise promised plentiful fruits and water, the essential needs for life, while more earthly pleasures were promised for those that reached the true paradise of the Koran for they would rest on 'gold weft couches' and feast on wine, fruits and the flesh of fowl served by 'eternal youths and large eyed maidens'.

'The basic design of the paradise garden is very simple. It is an idealized form of the pattern of irrigation, in which water is shown symbolically and physically as the source of life.'iii . The core of the garden is the chahar bagh, a garden divided into four parts representing water, fire, earth and air. A central fountain represented order. It is usually rectangular or hexagonal and made of marble or stone and would feed water into channels or rills that divided the garden into its four parts. A chadar, or water chute, allowed water to cascade into basins or channels on lower terraces. Strictly geometric in form and mirror image either side of the axis, the garden layout reflects the advance understanding of mathematics, which in turn is a reflection of the intellect and Divine Order. The garden provided a variety of shaded and scented areas as well as spectacular views, principally internally. Water was a recurrent theme as it represented purity and the source of life. Flowing water indicated the passage of time, while overflowing basins showed that paradise had an abundance of water.

Unlike western art, there were no representations of animals or people in the garden. The impact of the Persian garden is paramount within western gardens as evident through the form and layout of gardens in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance; however, the idea of paradise as a religious symbol became lost within western culture.

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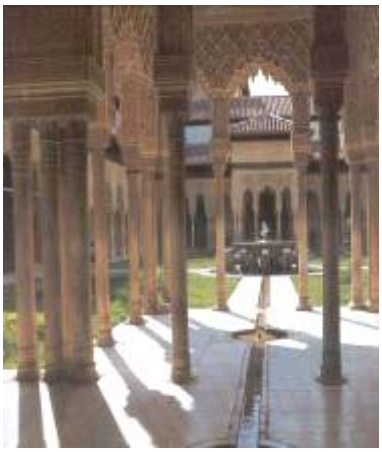
[1] Plants included: **Bulbs:** narcissi, tulip, scilla, grape hyacinth, cyclamen, anemone, crown imperial & fritellarias **Herbaceous:** pinks, carnations, violets, primrose, iris, larkspur, wallflowers, poppies, hollyhocks; **Shrub & trees:** jasmine, lilac, cherry, almond, pomegranate, fig, apple, pear, peach, cedar, poplars, oak, maple, willow, ash, sweet myrtle

[2] Jellicoe, Sir Geoffrey *The Landscape of Man* Thames and Hudson 1975

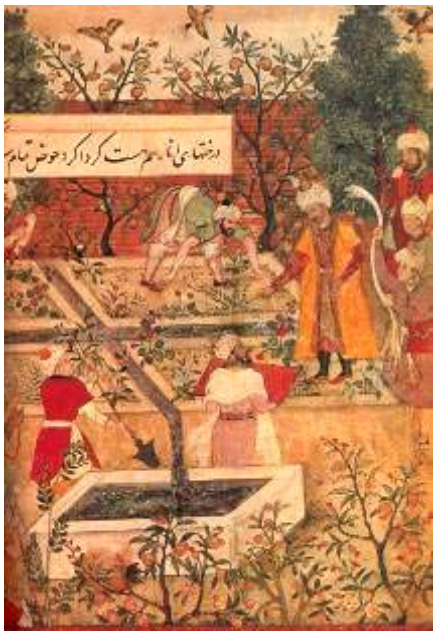
2. The Persian Garden *continued*



Court of the Lions, Alhambra, Spain: The traditional Islamic layout of the garden is seen with the central fountain and the rills of water dividing the court into four areas. Originally, the court would have been richly planted with flowers and citrus trees for scent and shade.

This is the only known example in the Islamic world where animals have been used in the decoration, and the reason has never been discovered. All faces of the building are richly ornamented with geometric patterns.

© M Sheldon



Babur in the Garden of Fidelity: Emperor Babur personally directs work in the garden as two men stretch cord while others plant the garden. The channels of water divide the planting area into four areas and the cascade empties into a basin.

He referred to water in his garden and his respect for order and geometry, *'formerly its course was zig-zag and irregular; I had it made straight so the place became very beautiful'*.

©V&A Images/Victoria and Albert Museum

Bahia Palace, Marrakech, Morocco: Many courtyards exist within the Islamic world, but few retain the lush planting that provides shade and perfume within the garden. This example was built in the late 19th century.

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3. The Chinese Garden

As with the Persian garden, it is often difficult to relate the Chinese garden to western Europe, although there has been a fashion for Chinese artefacts, particularly porcelain and furniture, for centuries. There is also confusion between the Chinese and Japanese garden, of which the latter has its basis within the Chinese garden. There is a philosophical base to both: The Japanese garden takes its inspiration from nature as does the Chinese garden, however, it is influenced by various beliefs such as Shintoism, Hinduism, Taoism, and Buddhism, often over-lapping each other. It is the Daoist love of nature combined with the Confucian emphasis on rites and duties that forms the philosophical foundation of the Chinese garden.[1] Buddhism came to China in the 5th century and reinforced the principle of Man's spirituality connected to nature.

The Golden Age of Gardens was in the Song dynasty (1127-1279) where nature was abstracted and embellished with the principle features of water and rocks. These were enhanced with plants and animals, particularly birds. None of these gardens are left, except as references in literature, However, we are left with incredible examples of both imperial gardens and the private garden-mostly from the early Qing dynasty (17-18th centuries). Lian Tao refers to the gardens as 'graceful and refined and close to the subtle harmony of wilderness. The gardens were originally built by gentlemen scholars, the rich and ranked classes of a feudal society. There are two different types of private garden; one was the simple scholar's retreat for self-cultivation, such as the Suzhou gardens. They were built…to provide a refuge from the tension of society. The other type tended towards a more ostentatious and elaborate display of wealth' and in the style of the Imperial parks.[2] In contrast the imperial gardens were grand affairs suitable for holding large events for the court, yet they also had smaller, more intimate gardens for the royal family to relax within.

Multiple pavilions form the spatial structure of the private gardens with rocks and water providing the detail; there is a surprisingly limited use of plants. They are generally used as a backdrop, almost like a theatre curtain, or as sculptural elements that often reflect the seasons. Features are ascribed poetic names such as 'The Pavilion in the Lotus Breezes', The Hall of Distant Fragrances' or 'The Fragrant Isle'. Their very names induce a feeling of understanding and relaxation, an escape from worldly pressures, as well as the links between gardens and the arts including painting, calligraphy, music and poetry.

Both garden types adopted 'the technique of imitating and symbolism in order to recreate natural landscapes in a limited space'. Private gardens sought to 'present the feeling of greatness through small details'.[3] Often the details were representative of famous landscape scenes, reproduced abstractly with limestone rocks and highly managed native plants. What becomes immediately apparent within the gardens of Suzhou is that in every direction there is a different view, a different landscape scene. Arranged as such, it becomes impossible to understand how large the garden actually is, as it becomes an endless series of spaces. Argument has been ongoing for many years as to whether or not the Chinese garden was an influence on the 18th century English Landscape Garden. Certainly the scale is different, as are the details; but the idea of nature and ever changing scenes is a prime constituent of the English landscape.

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[1] Jellicoe, Goode & Lancaster *The Oxford Companion to Gardens* Oxford University Press, 1986 p111
[2] Tao, Lian *The Design of Public Parks in China* 2004; This was an MA thesis at Manchester Metropolitan University and was published in China.
[3] Lou, Qingxi *Chinese Gardens* China International Press 2003

3.The Chinese Garden *continued*

'Master of the Nets' Garden, Suzhou, China: A large panel painting at the entrance to this garden shows the composition of the pavilions and gardens. Everything is orientated around the central water feature.

© E Bennis

'Master of the Nets Garden', Suzhou, China: The garden is a sequence of views, restful and dramatic, that are designed for contemplation.

© E Bennis

'Humble Administrators Garden', Suzhou, China: Bird cages are hung along the walk.

Happy Singing & Cheerful Talk
'The birds are singing, the flowers are smiling, and the fish are diving. This is a dialogue between people and nature, and brings the joy of autumn.'

© E Bennis

'Humble Administrators Garden', Suzhou, China: Views are framed and become constantly changing as one approaches the entrance. The rocks represent distant mountains while the gravels often portray water.

'Humble Administrators Garden', Suzhou, China: A pavilion on the waters edge giving the illusion of a boat.

'Dark clouds have not dispersed on an autumn day…. Let's keep the wilted lotus leaves and listen to the rain falling upon them.'
Tang poem by Li Shangyin

© E Bennis

4. The Medieval Garden and Landscape

It was the monastic communities of the Catholic Church that carried the idea of garden forward after the fall of Rome [410]. These were essentially self-supporting communities with large land holdings as well as extensive trade routes. The Dark Ages were neither dark nor as backward as evidence shows that the garden existed at all levels of society-it was an important part of everyday life, as it always had been-utilitarian for the poor, but functional and beautiful for the wealthy.

Earliest references to gardens came in 795 when a set of regulations for the administrative regions under Charlemagne listed 73 plants and fruit trees that had to be grown in each region. Plants and their products were exchanged and formed and important part of international trade, as well as the local economy. Gardens tended to be simple and geometric. Our understanding of the period is principally through woodcuts and later paintings found in numerous books of hours, such as *Roman de la Rose*. These showed the garden as a setting for events, often as allegories for religious stories. Although early western gardens adopted much of their structure from the Roman and Persian cultures, they never developed as a symbolic representation of religious ideals as they had under Islam.

The problems of the Medieval gardener seem little changed to modern times. Wilafred Strabo in his poem *Liber de Cultura Hortorum*, also known as *Hortulus*, refers to the problems of killing nettles and asks 'Quid Facerem?'-'What shall I do?' He is the first to identify the raised planting bed-a common feature of the middle ages that lasts into the 18th century. Most of his writings deal with the cultivation of herbs and vegetables. Flowers had utilitarian purposes-poppy for opium; lily for snakebite and corns; iris for starch. Many plants had been introduced during the Roman period, and later introductions came during the Crusades. Flowers were used for decorations and as chaplets for the clergy, as had the priests in ancient Egypt and Rome. Flowers were also used as symbols such as the white lily for the Virgin Mary, while the rose symbolised the blood of Christ.

As well as individual gardens, the medieval town developed as a place of open spaces, ponds, streams, orchards and gardens. Certainly by the 12th century patterns had developed which can still be traced in many high streets. Houses, often close to the street, had long gardens behind them for growing fruit and vegetables as well as keeping animals. For the wealthy, gardens were used as much for pleasure as for function-games, reading, dining, and even holding court. There was a consistency of garden features and form that could be found across Europe, indicating that ideas of style, taste and technology were freely exchanged. The gardens, normally rectangular and enclosed, are often called the *Hortus Conclusus.* The wealthy used stone or brick for walls, while trellis, wattle, or picket fences would be substituted by the less well off. Plants were ornamental and functional providing medicines, food and flowers for scent and decoration. Many plants had multiple uses. Notable features were the Mount-originally a mound to view the surrounding countryside, and the turf seat-an area of raised soil covered in wild flowers and grasses. This is also a time when we start to see the introduction of the lawn as a garden feature, filled with wild flowers, unlike the grass lawns of today. This was the 'flowery mead' referred to in this poem, 'Chaucer'. (Geoffrey Chaucer's writings describes life in 14thcentury England.)

I hear the crowing cock, I hear the note
Of lark and linnet, and from every page
Rise odours of ploughed field or flowery mead.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1885)

4. The Medieval Garden and Landscape *continued*

Wild flowers from Galilee: In the 12th century Crusaders, who had travelled to the Holy Land to fight the Turks, first introduced plants like this tulip *, [Tulipa polycroma],* to Western Europe.

© E Bennis

Roman de la Rose, 15th Century: One of the most famous images of a garden from a Book of Hours. Note the division between the two sections of the garden, the fountain, plantings, the materials, and use of the garden. Water from the fountain ran outside the walls for the less fortunate.

© The British Library

Queen Eleanor's Garden, Winchester: This is a reconstructed medieval garden with a fountain and a rill (a small channel of water) that often flowed beyond the walls to provide water for those less fortunate. The garden also contains trellis work which provided shade, but also gave a structure for climbing plants such as roses and honeysuckle. The lawn is full of lawn-daisies, something the modern gardener would get rid of!

Image by kind permission of Hampshire County Council

Mosteiro dos Jeronimos, Lisbon, Portugal: The cloister, an enclosed garden with a covered walk surrounding it, is based on the Roman peristyle garden; this was a standard pattern throughout Europe with little variation. This cloister was elaborate in its decoration and Maria Gothein has described it as one of the finest cloister courts in the world. A fountain sat as 'the centre piece of an island, which was connected by bridges by four others. All of these were in the same pond which had the shape of a star. The high perpendicular banks were covered with tiles, and the islands were laid out as gardens.'*

*Gothein, M L *The History of Garden Art* , Dent, London 1925 (1913) Vol I p315

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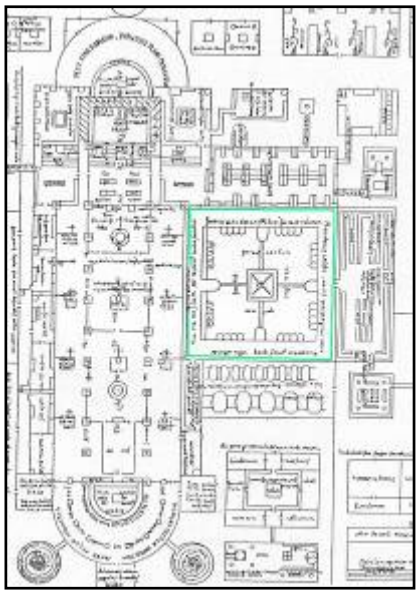


Monastery at St. Gall (detail): this plan of around 900 AD is likely to be a 'model' plan rather than a real place and is laid out on the rules of the Benedictine Order. It would have been surrounded by farm land, with more delicate and rare plants to the interior spaces. The great central cloister *(outlined in green)* shows a central fountain and the garden divided into four squares. There are special gardens adjacent to the hospital and the school, both laid out as peristyle gardens. The cemetery is adjacent to the hospital and shows a practical use as it has fruit trees growing in it. No doubt the ground would have been covered with useful herbs as well.

5. Tudor and Stuart Gardens (UK)

The form of the garden of the late Middle Ages carried forth under Henry VII, the first of the Tudor kings. Perhaps the greatest change is that gardens became much larger and more open to the surrounding parkland and countryside, as well as more elaborate; the defensive walls and moats vanished. Strong geometric shapes provided the pattern; the formality of earlier periods continued. Old ideas such as the mount became a viewing place for the garden, rather than a defensive feature, while the labyrinth became a maze for entertainment. Great houses were built and surrounded by agricultural estates, essentially large farms; this era signalled the start of the English Country House. Both technology and politics had a major impact on the garden. New technology meant new building techniques and materials. This allowed for much larger buildings, but also an extensive use of glass as it became much cheaper. Suddenly houses had much larger windows, and cheaper glass meant the development of horticultural techniques, principally the development of the greenhouse, and later the conservatory. Plants that not been grown, or were too difficult, could now flourish.

Under Henry VIII, horticulture developed as an important industry, along with advancement in techniques such as grafting. The accounts of Hampton Court give an indication of the scale of works and the lavish sums spent on the gardens. Hampton Court, originally started by Cardinal Wolsey in 1514, and was given to the king in 1529. Henry embellished the gardens with clipped shrubs, carved and gilded beasts, a mount built with 256,000 bricks and planted with '12000 quicksets [hawthorn] to hold the soil', and, an arbour and two story banqueting house with 48 windows on top of the mount. In 1533, Henry Blankstone received £30 for painting 96 poles and 960 yards of wooden rails around the flower garden. Henry was particularly fond of decorated striped poles painted in green and white with heraldic animals carved in wood at the top.

There are familiar features that embellished the gardens such as fountains, raised planting beds and statues. A particular Tudor garden feature is the knot garden where plants were clipped and entwined together almost as a knot. Between these low hedges would be flowers such as violets, primroses, pinks and mint. Topiary, plants trimmed into geometric forms, would decorate the gravel walks. There were gardens for specific purposes such as a nut garden, or a pond garden for fish. Orchards would often have ornamental planting, and even topiary.

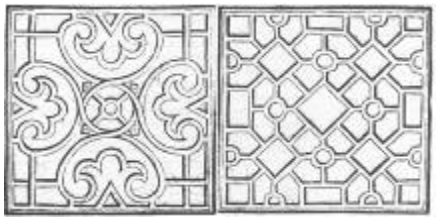
Under Elizabeth I plants were imported from India, America, the Canaries and other parts of the world. Many of the new varieties had been brought to England with the influx of the Huguenot's from the 1570s. They were particularly interested in flowers and developed floral societies that were dedicated to specific flowers and established systems related to colour, shape and proportions of the flowers. By the mid-1640s, there were over 4000 plants listed in *Theatrum Botanicum*, a four fold increase in less than fifty years.

5. Tudor and Stuart Gardens *continued*

Hampton Court, London: While there are remains of the original buildings, there is little if anything left of the original garden layout. Most was destroyed through later renovations, particularly under William of Orange at the end of the 17th century.

© E Bennis

Paradisi in Solo, Paradisus Terrestris 1629 : This is one of the earliest books to deal with plants in terms of ornament and enjoyment. John Parkinson used the new technology of the printing press to promote his theories. This went beyond previous books which were mostly 'herbals' that described the cultivation and use of plants.



Knots from *Country Hous-wifes* Garden: 16th century patterns became so complicated that they were termed knots. Wolsey's garden at Hampton Court had 'knots so enknotted it cannot be expressed'. Patterns were usually defined by edging of santolina, box, thrift, or some form of low and clipped evergreen. Flowers would spill over the edges. Knots appear to have become a fashion accessory in many modern gardens today.

The Tradescant Garden, London. A recreated knot garden, opened in 1983. It only includes plants that would have been available to 16th and 17th century gardeners.

© 'Museum of Garden History'.

6.The Renaissance Garden

The Renaissance marked a turning point where the development of arts, sciences, trade and political stability allowed man to question his/her relationship with the world. It was an inquiry that placed man as the central focus and the idea of *uomo universale* or the universal man. Italy was the birthplace of the Renaissance, and its gardens are the purest in their concept and form. The sources of Renaissance garden and park layout are vested in the traditions of the Greco-Roman period. Specifically, the ideas of the Villa Urbana drive the development of the detailed garden form and layout, while the Villa Rustica is the key reference for the parkland landscapes of the 16th centuries and later the romanticised English landscape of the 18th century.

Renaissance gardens in Italy developed from the basic medieval form of enclosure and pattern that was protective and inward looking, gardens became open to the outside word. Leon Alberti wrote that a villa 'should provide views to enjoy all of the Pleasures and Convenience of Air, Sun and fine prospects…I would have it stand pretty high, but upon so easy an Ascent that it should hardly be perceptible to those that go to it, till they find themselves at the top, and the large prospect opens itself to their view'. His ideas were exemplified in the Villa Lante (1564-1580s) which is considered to be the most faithful of the Renaissance gardens. The plan shows Vignola's masterpiece, logical and ordered, as a formal garden with two casinos overlooking a water parterre. The whole is balanced by the woodland or bosco. In contrast to the subtlety of Villa Lante, is the exuberance of the Villa d'Este (post 1550) where its lavish water gardens were one of the great wonders of the age. Both villas were entered via the gardens; architecture was subordinate to the gardens. After an ascent through a series of garden rooms, the highest point provided views of the surrounding countryside, or what is referred to as the borrowed landscape. Often ignored, was the development of new urban spaces such as the Piazza dei Campidoglio (1544) designed by Michelangelo, the forerunner of the Baroque urban square.

Renaissance gardens in France moved from Italian humanist style to mannerist, and then baroque; the focus shifted from man being part of the universe, to one of being the centre of the universe. Vaux-le-Vicomte (1661) by André Le Nôtre demonstrates the skilful use of views, levels and reflections but most importantly man's domination of both nature and other men. 'Vaux is the paradigm of the French garden. Designed to be admired from the chateau that symbolises the authority of the chatelain, its layout around a single vista offers the spectator the sense of rigorous unity and symmetry which both subordinates and embellishes the work of nature.'[1] No garden can impress more fully than Versailles by Le Nôtre; its scale is overwhelming, it's excess beyond belief. All that could be seen belonged to the king, Louis XIV. But there were hints at the human need for a more informal life as seen in the surrounding woodlands and Marie Antoinette's farm.

Renaissance gardens in England date from the death of Charles II (1685) which brought Mary, heir presumptive to James II, to the throne. Mary had married William of Orange in Holland where they had remodelled the palace and gardens of Het Loo which became the model for their post-1688 plans for Kensington Palace and Hampton Court. This is the time of great wealth and power for the crown and it is demonstrated in the new buildings by Sir Christopher Wren at Hampton Court and the new gardens. These gardens were places for pageants and entertainment of the court, but they were also used to display the new and often curious varieties of plants as plant production was an emerging industry. This was a different form to their French counterparts, moderately less formal and smaller, but the basis was clearly a demonstration of the monarch's power.

[1] Valéry, Marie-Françoise *Gardens in France* Taschen, Köln 1997

6. The Renaissance Garden *continued*

Piazza del Campidoglio, Rome 1536-46:

Ed Bacon, chief planner for Philadelphia, said that the Piazza dei Campidoglio was a space of 'unity and coherence' and that it 'herald the arrival of the Baroque'.

Villa d'Este, Tivoli, Italy 1550 - 1580's:

by Pirro Ligorio,

'No garden in the world is more exuberant than the great water-garden of the Villa d'Este at Tivoli...no poor man, and no uneducated man, could create this paradise'

Christopher Thacker

Villa Lante, Viterbo, Italy, 1560-80:

'The purity of thought that Vignola sometimes achieved seems to be beyond the intellectual decline, already apparent in Rome. The Villa Lante is the perfect thing of the imagination…'

Shepherd & Jellicoe *Italian Gardens of the Renaissance,* 1925

Vaux-le-Vicomte, France, 1661:

'The château [Vaux], raised on a platform surrounded by moats, is integrated…into a perfectly proportioned whole, with gardens framed in trees descending the gently sloping site to the valley of Anqueil. Water is carefully disposed in basis to catch reflections; subtle use is made of changing levels.'

Jellicoe, Goode & Lancaster Oxford Companion to Gardens Oxford University Press, 1986, p581

Het Loo Palace near Apeldoorn, Holland, 1684:

This garden lies at a cross-roads of design-a mixture of Renaissance and Baroque, as well as French. It is truly removed from the Humanist gardens of the Italian Renaissance.

The Privy Garden, Hampton Court, London:

The extensive and highly detailed parterres were in place for a short time. William and Mary retained the earlier Tudor part of Hampton Court in part due to Mary's sudden death in 1694 and William's ill health.

7. The English Garden Style

The 18th century in England encompassed the most complex period in the theory of gardens and landscape. Conflicting theories, new technology, political alliances and the debate on taste - the beautiful, the sublime and the picturesque - provide a rich heritage far beyond the popular landscape of Lancelot 'Capability' Brown, the best known 'landscape improver' of the time. Lavish, formal gardens as the ones at Hampton Court had been developed at almost every country house; however, their lifespan was remarkably short. By the 1730s, there was a clear move away from the formal garden. In part this was influenced by poets such as Milton, but also the Arcadian landscape paintings of Lorrain and Poussin. More pragmatically, Sir Nicholas Pevsner[1] attributes this to the reasonableness of the English - the formal garden was expensive to maintain, produced little and was boring as they were the same throughout the year. The garden and landscape of this period may be considered to be the only truly original English art form.

Joseph Addison criticised the formal garden when he wrote 'Our British gardeners, instead of humouring Nature, love to deviate from it as much as possible. Our trees rise in Cones, Globes and Pyramids. We see the marks of the scissars *[sic]* upon every Plant and Bush.'[2] Not all agreed with Addison, but the transition from formal to the new natural style lasted several decades. Horace Walpole credits William Kent as the founder of the English landscape style: 'At that moment appeared Kent, painter enough to taste the charms of landscape, bold and opinionative enough to dare and to dictate, and born with a genius enough to strike out a great system from the twilight of imperfect essays. He leaped the fence, and saw that all nature was a garden.' Walpole explained the impact of the newest invention, the Ha-Ha wall: 'But the capital stoke, the leading step to all that followed, was [I believe the first thought was Bridgman's] the destruction of walls for boundaries, and the invention of fosses - an attempt then deemed so astonishing, that the common people called them Ha! Ha!s to express their surprise at finding a sudden and unexpected check to their walk.' [3]

By the 1750s, the new style was firmly established by its most famous practitioner, 'Capability' Brown - he was known as Capability as he told his clients that their estates had great capabilities. Brown completed over 100 landscapes, although many others are attributed to him or are in the style of Brown. His landscapes are in the 'beautiful' style, which refers to the curving and sinuous line reflecting the forms found in nature. His landscapes are composed of four elements: water, trees, sky and earth, and were often deemed to be more beautifully composed than nature itself. Brown worked for the King and was given apartments at Hampton Court. Dorothy More describes a conversation she had with him in 1782: 'Never was such delicious weather! I passed two hours in the garden the other day as if it had been April with Mr Brown. He illustrates everything he says about gardening by some literary or grammatical allusion. He told me he compared his art to literary composition. "Now *there*," said he, pointing a finger, "I make a comma, and there," pointing to another spot, "where a more decided turn is proper, I make a colon; at another part, where an interruption is desirable to break the view, a parenthesis; now a full stop, and then I begin another subject".' [4]

Brown's landscapes were more than beautiful scenes; they provided timber and coppice, cover for game (grouse and pheasant), fish from the lakes and grazing for deer, sheep and cattle. These productive, economic landscapes developed in part from the influence of the Grand Tour where nature combined with classical architecture and ruins. Not all agreed with Brown's imitation of nature. Sir William Chambers referred to the new style where the gardens were little different from common fields and that nature needed the assistance of art. Yet, the Brownian landscape dominated and its principles were copied throughout the world.

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[1] Pevsner, N *The Englishness of English Art* Praeger, New York 1955
[2] Addison, J *The Spectator* London 25 June 1712
[3] Walpole, H *The History of Modern Taste in Gardening* Ursus Press, New York 1995 (1750-1770) pp42-43
[4] Stroud, D *Capability Brown* Faber, London 1975 (1955)

7. The English Garden Style *continued*

'Landscape with the ashes of Phocion' 1648

Nicolas Poussin (1593/4 - 1665)

Romanticised paintings, often depicting scenes from mythology and antiquity, provided visual ideal for the new Arcadian landscapes.

http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/walker/collections/17c/poussin.asp

Studley Royal Garden, N Yorkshire, UK:

John Aisleby's garden [built 1722-1742] is in the transitional period between the formal gardens of the 17th century and the new gardens of the 18th century. There was a return to classicism in buildings and reference to the romanticised paintings of Poussin, Lorrain and Rosa. Younger landowners were influenced by the Grand Tour, particularly the architecture of Italy and Greece.

Painshill Park, Surrey, UK: View of ruined abbey and vineyard.

Visiting other peoples' gardens, reading about them or looking at pictures was popular in the 18th century.

Barratt and Gilpin, 1772

Castle Howard, N. Yorkshire, UK:

Horace Walpole wrote: 'Nobody had told me that I should at one view see a palace, a town, a fortified city, temples on high places, woods worthy of each being a metropolis of the Druids, the noblest lawn on earth fenced by half the horizon, and a mausoleum that would tempt one to be buried alive'.

8. The Victorian Garden

Although the 18th century developed a clear style of landscape, by the end of the century there were major changes resulting from new technology, and the move from an agrarian society to the leading industrial nation of the world. The old landscape style was no longer suited to the problems and opportunities for a new society, one that was becoming increasingly urban based. The 19th century was an era of rapid change and experimentation that resulted in the garden taking on new forms; it moved from being the privilege of the wealthy, to one that would relate to everyone. Widespread publishing of papers and magazines, for example *Gardeners Weekly,* brought information to everyone, and exhibitions such as the Great Exhibition of 1851 made the public more aware of innovation and design. John Claudius Loudon wrote numerous books on gardens for the owners of the new villa gardens as well as the simple terrace house. While the private garden took on a different scale of the past, it used many the same design principles of earlier periods-views, circulation, colour, form etc. The details that Brown swept away such as the terrace and flower beds became popular once again through the work of Humphry Repton. Modest town houses often had a raised walkway as a form of terrace decorated with urns and statues; however, ornament could overwhelm a garden and there was much debate about what constituted good taste.

With the great changes, also came great problems-social, economic and health wise. Improvement in living conditions was promoted by enlightened factory owners and local authorities where a great reforming spirit was used to benefit the working classes. These were the new planned industrial communities. First seen at Robert Owen's New Lanark, these new communities were planned on utopian idealism. Port Sunlight, New Earswick, Bourneville and Salt Aire became model villages that were copied throughout the industrial world. Public parks were perhaps the greatest development during the period. Until then, parks had been royal estates with public access. These new parks started in the industrial cities of the north and set the pattern for the rest of the world. Birkenhead Park by Sir Joseph Paxton is the most important for its design contribution and Central Park in New York by F L Olmstead is closely based on it. There was a growing understanding for the need of good public open space and in 1865 the Commons Preservation Society (CPS) was formed. An early success was saving Epping Forest near London, and eventually, the CPS turned its attention to large towns in England and Wales. The CPS raised public awareness for the need to preserve open space for recreation;[1] sports grounds in parks started to develop in the latter part of the century. The increasing demand for more facilities, including sports, was accommodated by the Parisian Edouard André when he provided for 'a variety of sports and other activities within an elliptical and circular spaces, and fragmentation was prevented by the skill of the whole design.'[2]

Technology had a major effect on gardens, particularly the development of inexpensive glass. Glasshouses and conservatories allowed for growing exotic fruits and plants-peaches, pineapples, orchids, palms etc. and the thousands of bedding plants that were used each year. Cast iron provided the structural strength for the new buildings where newly introduced plants from around the world could be grown safely. Thanks to Nathaniel Ward, by the 1830s, the Wardian case was used to transport plants in sealed glass cases; these were essentially travelling conservatories. The one invention that changed the garden more than anything else was the invention of the lawnmower by Edwin Budding in 1851; within two years, it was being manufactured by Ransoms. Suddenly, the lawn was no longer a secondary feature of the garden, but something that would occupy the gardener forever more in achieving the perfect outdoor green carpet.

[1] Conway, Hazel *Public Parks* Shire Publications, 1996 pp23-24
[2] Ibid., p25

8. The Victorian Garden *continued*

Brighton Pavilion, UK: Recently restored planting shows a rough lawn, more akin to meadow grass, than the lawn we aspire to today. Planting is informal and mixes herbaceous and shrubs together. The design reflects the new interest and taste in floriculture.

© E Bennis

Chatsworth House, UK: 'The park and grounds were swarming with holiday-makers, for it was one of England's great holidays, Whit-Monday. Here were pale faced men and women from the cotton factories of Manchester, dark denizens of the Staffordshire potteries, and the sharp-active looking mechanics of Leeds, Bradford, and Halifax, all brought hither by special trains, and, in the full heyday of the English holiday, rushing through gorgeously-fitted-up rooms of a ducal mansion-admiring the conservatories, rockeries and fountains, or, stretched at full length, discussing their commissariat under the cool shade of oak, elm, and beech trees.'

A day's visit to Chatsworth, from the Gardener, 1867

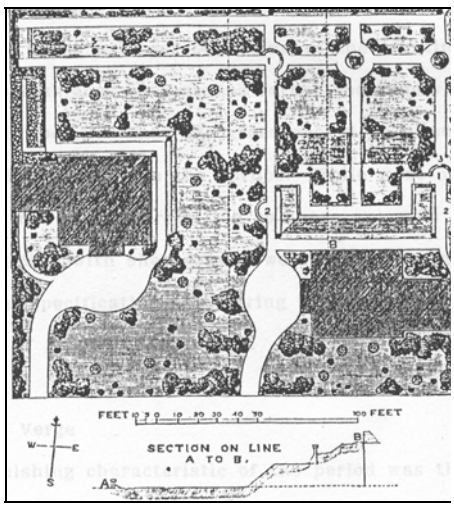
© E Bennis

Eaton Hall, Cheshire, UK: Restored terrace and planting by William Nesfield. The elaborate bedding plants of annuals could have 5-6 changes of plants in a summer season as they had not been hybridised for continuous flowering at this time.

© E Bennis

Birkenhead Park, Cheshire, UK: The ideal of the country estate was transposed to the urban environment. It was richly endowed with structures, memorials and elaborate planting.

© E Bennis



Queen's Park, Chester, UK: Edward Kemp's plan for two adjoining villas. Kemp uses the idea of parkland for the larger areas, particularly to the front of the villas with an 'invisible' wire fence to create to illusion of a larger scale landscape.

The rear garden is laid out formally with walks and ornamental features. There are extreme level changes between the two properties at the rear.

9. The 'Arts and Crafts' Garden

Ideas for gardens and parks are subject to changing fashions, taste and technology but also to the simple need for change. Reacting to the highly industrialised Victorian taste, there was a search for a new order, one that was based within a simpler world and away from mass produced objects. The garden started to evolve, not as a leader, but as a follower of fashion. It was the work of William Morris and the writings of John Ruskin that instilled a new romanticism within the garden ideal. It was a search for a more natural or vernacular style; it looked backwards for inspiration and found its basis within craftsmanship and the cottage garden style. This is in parallel with the new style of painting of the Pre-Raphaelites who looked to the middle ages as a period of romance and chivalry. It was also a principle which suited the smaller garden, along with the gardens of great estates.

Gardening became an all consuming passion that was often formal in its layout, but cottage style in the use of plants. There were strong architectural elements such as pergolas, summer houses and water channels; hedges of yew or beech were planted as exterior walls and the garden became a series of compartments or outdoor rooms. Entrance points would see the hedges clipped into various architectural fantasies. Stone walls and arches, often rustic with contrasting cut or dressed stone became a fashionable component. Styles were mixed, but there was a strong classical Italian influence, softened by billowing plants.

Not all were in agreement on the new forms, Reginald Blomfield promoted formality and a strong connection to the architecture of the house, while William Robison proposed a garden that was more scenic and natural. Robinson's *The Garden* was incredibly popular and his 'influence in encouraging amateur gardening was more than equalled by his importance as an advocate for the natural style of planting'.[1] Gertrude Jekyll, who approached the garden as an artist, is perhaps the most famous name of the period. She often worked with a younger architect, Sir Edwin Lutyens, and they created over 100 gardens together. A formidable writer and plants woman, she raised many of her specified plants in her own garden at Munstead Wood. Jekyll focused on the form, colour and beauty of her materials. 'Her gardening life was completely dominated by the struggle to order the colours of nature.' [2]

Others such as Thomas Mawson had a major impact in promoting the arts and crafts ideas through his work and particularly in *The Art and Craft of Garden Making*. But Mawson went beyond the garden as there were new social and economic demands. New civic spaces and buildings along with town design were a response to the growing pressures of urban life. Mawson designed new public parks and pedestrian boulevards which were based on the French Beaux-Arts style, a style strong in formality and classicism. Towns would compete with each other for the most impressive buildings and civic spaces that gave a sense of pride to the community. Analogous to this work, was the development of new towns whose ideas were founded in the earlier industrial villages. Britain led the world through the theories of Ebenezer Howard, Patrick Geddes, Patrick Abercrombie and others with the development of garden cities and later the new towns.

Landscape moved out of the garden to become integrated within the daily lives of all. Yet, its basis lay with the qualities and pleasures that were to be found in the garden. Gertrude Jekyll wrote that 'the love of gardening is a seed that once sown never dies, but always grows and grows to an enduring and ever-increasing source of happiness.'[3]

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[1] Hitchmough, Wendy *Arts and Crafts Gardens* V&A Publications, London 2005 p13
[2] Brown, Jane *Gardens of a Golden Afternoon* Lane 1985 p46
[3] Jekyll, Gertrude *Wood and Garden* Longmans, London 1899 p2

9. The 'Arts and Crafts' Garden *continued*

Thornton Manor, Wirral, UK: The gardens by Thomas Mawson show a strong formality but are softened by planting. This was designed for Lord Leverhulme who had developed Port Sunlight.

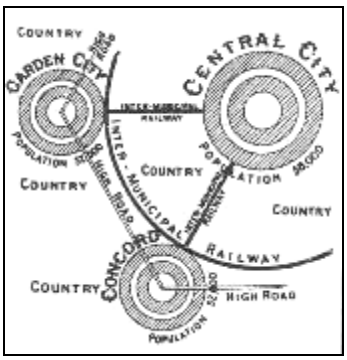
© E Bennis

Thornton Hough, Wirral, UK: The layout, by Mawson, is a model village for Thornton Manor. This was based on romanticised ideas of a medieval village pattern and buildings in a mock Tudor style.

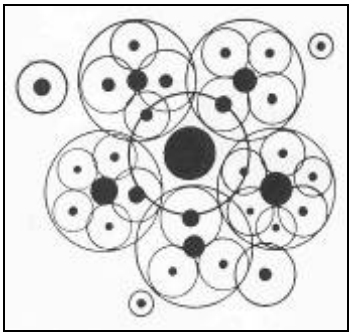
The Art and Craft of Garden Making 1911

Hestercombe, Somerset, UK:
This is one of the finest examples of the collaborative work between Jekyll and Lutyens. Strongly architectural in its composition, the planting softens the geometry and gives near year-round interest. The distant landscape is separated from the garden with a pergola, which in turn provides a series of framed views of that landscape.

© Pauline Rook



Ebenezer Howard's diagram became the pattern for green belts around our rapidly expanding cities, many of which are under threat of modern developments.



Sir Patrick Abercrombie's visionary relationship of concentric cities has its foundations in Ebenezer Howard's theories. It shows a central city surrounded by green belts with smaller satellite towns surrounding the main city. These were the main strategies for the Garden Cities and later for the new towns.

10. Gardens in the Inter War Years

There was more development, change and ideas about the garden in this period of time than any other in history; the garden reflected the fast changing nature of the century but it also offered an escape and retreat from modern life. At the end of the 1st World War there were major changes in the social and economic structure of the country, and, like earlier periods there was a search for something new, a break from the past. The chronology of development is seen clearly in the 1920s through the Exposition des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes of 1925 that signalled a break with the Beaux-Arts movement. The Art Deco exhibition formed a pivotal point in garden design in France, specifically, Gabriel Guévrékian's 'Garden of Water and Light'. The work of the André and Paul Vera in Paris, and Guévrékian's designs at the Villa Noailles at Hyères where the landscape became a translation of cubism on the ground rather than on a wall, placed the landscape as a new art form of the 20th century. It was the technology of new materials of glass, steel and concrete that liberated architectural styles. This was the avant-garde, or cutting-edge, that was influenced heavily by the new ideas in art such as cubism and the Bauhaus in Germany.

Gardens, however, continued to develop on traditional lines and were heavily influenced by the ideas of Gertrude Jekyll who promoted an informal use of plants as well as gardens for children. A number of magazines such as *Ideal Home* and *House and Garden* encouraged home owners to develop their gardens. Magazines and newspapers were targeted to different levels of society and consumer groups, as they are today. Vita Sackville-West's garden at Sissinghurst, started in 1930, expanded Jekyll's ideas of colour themes and the outdoor room; she brought gardens and gardening to the mass public through her garden writings[1]. David Jacques sums up the British attitude to the new ideas: 'The innate conservatism of the British establishment ensured that Modernist design was no more than a waking dream of the intellectual. It took the unreality of war and then reconstruction to make it seem real to the official professions of architecture and landscape architecture, certainly as far as public works and landscapes were concerned. However, when rich men and woman have chosen their own gardens the Modernist Movement has never threatened the tradition to which Gertrude Jekyll, Percy Cane, Russell Page and Lanning Roper belonged'.[2] There was some recognition of the new ideas such as the Caveman Restaurant at Cheddar Gorge by Geoffrey Jellicoe and Russell Page in the 1930s; and, Christopher Tunnard's *Gardens in the Modern Landscape* (1938) is still a milestone in thinking of the period as it addressed not only ideas about gardens, but the larger issue of housing for expanding urban areas.

What started in the previous century as industrial villages led to the Garden Cities movement through the early 20th century where the landscape would be integrated with the living, working and recreation areas. Letchworth and Welwyn Garden City exemplified the ideas of Howard, Geddes and Abercrombie through the integration of town and country. Industry, housing, commercial, education, sports and recreational facilities were consciously planned for their position and access. Green public spaces and green links through the town and connecting to the surrounding countryside became the first principle of design. The surrounding countryside is in fact the green belt that surrounds many British cities, as well as others around the world. British planning ideas became the model for reform and expansion of urban areas throughout the world. At a more modest scale, British social housing of the inter-war period shows expansive open spaces, connecting greenways, commons and in general, is a smaller version of the garden cities.

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[1] Sackville-West had a *Guardian* column (1947-1961) called *In Your Garden* and published numerous books: *The Land* 1926, *Collected Poems*1933, *The Garden* 1946

[2] Jacques, David *Landscapes and Gardens in Britain 1930-2000* paper for the Garden History Society and the 20th Century Society, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, 27-28 March 1998, p2

10. Gardens in the Inter War Years *continued*

Heereman Garden, Belgium: Designed by Jean Canneel-Claes in 1938, this is one of the few modernist gardens left in existence. It was designed to link the house and garden, and provided views across the countryside-now lost. Peter Shepheard's *Modern Gardens* 1953 has four early B&W photographs of the garden.

Sissinghurst, Kent, UK: Designed by Vita Sackville-West and her husband, the gardens followed on the traditions the outdoor room and colour coordination. This was the ideal garden type that appealed to the majority of the public.

German Pavilion (Barcelona Exhibition) 1927: Designed by Mies van der Rohe. An 'icon of the Modern movement' with its simplicity of form, sense of space and quality of materials (steel, polished stone and glass).

Hilversum, Holland: 20thc development based on British Garden City ideas. The city architect, WM Dudok integrated woodland into the entire city plan and designed many famous Modernist buildings.

11. Later 20th Century: Rebuilding, Art and Environment

Post-war Britain found reconstruction slow, but a key event was the Festival of Britain in 1951 which brought new hope and new ideas, of buildings and garden, to the public. The ideas were fresh, clean and simple and meant for people to enjoy living within the urban environment. The ideas of the landscape architects Frank Clark, Peter Shepheard, Maria Shepard, and Peter Youngman provided a new vision for living which was based on moderated modernist ideas of the 1930s, essentially a tempered English vision. The Festival provided an example of a new scale of urban planning and design, where the outdoor space became as important as the internal spaces of buildings. Peter Shepheard asked what do people remember when they go to Venice; he said that it's not the inside of the building, but the spaces that you walk through that are remembered.[1]

The garden and landscape went through several major directions in the century as urban populations continued to increase. There was the need for re-building industry along with an enormous growth in new housing. Much of the housing was experimental in terms of materials and design ideas such as deck-access housing. These were set in large green open spaces, but most were doomed as they were poorly built and failed to respond to the needs of the people. The green spaces had only a few token trees as budgets had been spent by the time it came to build the landscape. While these generally urban housing areas failed, there was great success in the New Towns which started in 1947; a total of 27 were built. These were politically motivated and were based on the success of the earlier Garden Cities. By the late 1960s there was great concern over environmental issues, as there are today. Warrington, the last of the New Towns, was based on Dutch ideas of living in a more natural landscape; gardens became less controlled and brought a wilder form of nature into them.

The 1960-70s were far from a high point in design of buildings and landscape. It took a new approach of artists within the landscape to challenge and change perceptions. People such as Cristo, Goldsworthy, Finlay and Schwartz developed a holistic and multi-disciplinary approach that merged art and nature in a new garden and landscape. What differentiates the modern landscape from the past is that it is less concerned with visual image for its own sake. It promotes high visual and artistic quality that is sustainable, liveable and meaningful. These ideas have transferred from the often elitist world of art into everyday communities where local people are encouraged to renew their communities through the support of local government initiatives and grants. Such schemes often combine social needs with art and ecological principles; the combination of art and garden has become a vehicle for regeneration of these communities.

Not only has there been a renewal of community areas, but there has been a growth in restoration of historic parks and gardens, and the regeneration of urban areas with new parks and gardens. These have been led by private individuals, charitable trusts and central government. Often considered an economic liability, parks and gardens are a major economic force which contributes over £4 billion per annum to the UK economy. For most people, the home garden is still the central idea of a garden. Magazines and television programmes are awash with makeovers and 'how to do' advice. The plantsman/woman's garden is still popular, but many of the newer ideas hark back to the modernist period about simplicity and lifestyle; the garden as a place for living and enjoying life with family and friends.

[1] Bennis, E Interview with Peter Shepheard Nov 2002

11. Later 20th Century: Rebuilding, Art and Environment *continued.*

Cadbury Factory, Moreton, Wirral, UK: Designed by Geoffrey Jellicoe in 1952, the factory was part of a government imitative to get skilled labour back into work after the Second World War. Jellicoe designed a series of water cascades in concrete which were the basis of the designs he did for Hemel Hempstead New Town some years later.

© E Bennis

Parc de l'Estació del Nord, Barcelona, Spain: An urban regeneration project designed by Andrew Arriola. Beverly Pepper designed the monumental tiled mounds as a reflection of the industrial heritage of the region.

© E Bennis

Landschaftpark Duisburg Nord, Germany: An industrial corridor of approximately 60 miles long has been regenerated by turning industrial sites into new parks. The concept is a new and innovative means of regenerating industrial areas. 17 new parks form the Route of Industrial Culture.

© E Bennis

Hemel Hempstead, UK: the landscape for this new town was designed by Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe. It has a central spine of greenery and water. Jellicoe referred to the shape of the lake as a serpent, and said that should anyone try to take this space away from the people, the serpent would rise up and strike them.

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2. The Persian Garden:

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3. The Chinese Garden:

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- Crisp, Frank *Medieval Gardens* Hacker Art Books, New York 1924

5. Tudor and Stuart Gardens:

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6. The Renaissance Garden:

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