



**CHESHIRE
GARDENS TRUST**

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Newsletter

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Some future events:

- * Visit to Dorothy Clive Gardens-14th May
- * Open garden visits June
- * Mostyn Hall, Flintshire-11th July
- * Hannah Bennett Sculpture Garden-20th Aug



On March 17th 2018 members and friends of Cheshire Gardens Trust met at The Quaker Meeting House in Manchester to hear a presentation by Marcus Chilton-Jones, curator of the new, fifth, RHS garden, being constructed at Worsley in Salford.

Ed Bennis introduced Marcus, who began his working life as a National Trust apprentice and has worked at Trentham and Dorothy Clive Gardens. The new garden lies between Worsley and Boothstown, accessed from the Leigh Road. It is bordered by the Bridgewater Canal to the south. The M62 runs close by to the west. Covering 154 acres, it is not the largest RHS garden but still a

good size. The canal gives the garden its name, the canal itself being named after its commissioner, the third Duke of Bridgewater.

Francis Egerton, (1736-1803) who became the third Duke of Bridgewater, had the canal built to serve his coal mines in Lancashire. He was fabulously wealthy. On his death, the duke having no heir, the estate passed to his nephew, later the Duke of Sutherland. When this duke died in 1833 his estates passed to his two sons. The elder son inherited Trentham and the younger, another Francis Egerton, (1800-1857), later Lord Ellesmere, was left the RHS garden site.

Lord Francis employed the architect Edward Blore

to build him a grand Gothic house, Worsley New Hall. The Hall had extensive gardens, sloping down towards the canal, and formal terraces, designed by William Nesfield, were constructed in front of it. The house's heyday from the 1840s, came to an end in WWI when it was used as a Red Cross military hospital. The Ellesmeres never returned to the house. The estate was sold in the 1920s and the house pulled down in 1948.

After the estate was sold the garden area was used for various purposes, including a nursery and garden centre, a nuclear bunker (built in 1951), a rifle range, a scout camp and an area for police dog training. This mixed use over many years has left its mark but several buildings remain.

The gardener's cottage, surrounded by a large kitchen garden, has an interesting history of its own. One of the gardeners, William Upjohn, joined the gardening team in 1870 and retired in 1914, after 40 years service. He was allowed to stay in the cottage after the estate was sold, until his death in 1939 aged 96.



The bothy and chimney

The RHS wish to develop the garden in a heritage context and therefore have the task of deciding what and what not, to keep. Structures include the bunker, a bothy dating from the 1880s, 11.3 acres of walled garden with fluted walls, the Nesfield terraces, potting sheds, an ice house, entrance gates (see below) and the picturesque gardener's cottage.

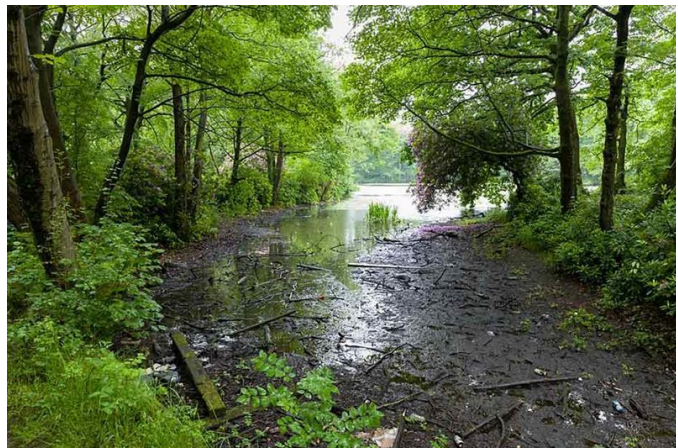


Beech woodland

There are hundreds of trees on the site, many around 180 years old, including a mixed beech and larch woodland, extensive orchards, ancient oak, chestnut and yew, as well as more recent conifers. Not all of these trees are desirable. The plan is to deal with the unwanted trees first, before the nesting season and then tackle the structures. Pigs are being brought in to assist with the clearance once the trees have been taken away.



Tom Stewart Smith has designed the master plan for the garden, focussing on the large walled garden as its hub (see above). A huge glasshouse is planned on the site of the house itself. The two hubs will be linked through Middlewood, where the scouts had their camp.



The lake viewed through woodland

There was a large lake (see above) at the base of the formal terraces but it is now very silted up.

The plan is to restore the whole lake and add another large body of water near the proposed new visitor centre.

The walled garden has a complex structure with 5ft outer walls and 12ft heated inner ones in the centre where the vineries were situated. The walls themselves are in varying conditions. Being a heritage site the walls will have to be repaired in the approved manner.



A section of the wall

There is plenty of rubbish on the site including arsenic from Victorian sprays, asbestos and plastics but there is also good stone to be salvaged. In addition there are plenty of pernicious weeds, such as Japanese knotweed, *Equisetum* and Himalayan balsam which will all need to be removed.

Visitors will enter the site from Leigh Road and drive to the car park. They will then filter through a brand new visitor centre. This building, designed by Stephen Hodder, will be carbon neutral, having a green energy system and a green roof. The interior is designed to be full of light with the roof supported on tree like columns.

New glasshouses will be built by a local firm, where the old glasshouses stood. The eastern end will have a Mediterranean feel, the west will be Asiatic. There will also be a kitchen garden with medicinal plants and herbs as well as vegetables.

Near the gardener's cottage the orchard will be replanted but in an informal arrangement, not the more conventional grid. The planting will contain 36 local apple varieties and a North West collection of stoned fruit. The kitchen garden around the cottage will be restored.

The RHS wish to involve the local community in the garden and areas will be developed for this purpose under the banner "grow". It is hoped this section will have an educational and therapeutic ethos and that members of the local community will use this area for their

own growing projects.

It is rare that the RHS can staff a garden from scratch. There will be 149 staff and it is hoped that half of these will be local. However, some posts will need specialist skills and it is unlikely that these could be found locally. At present there are 31 full time staff and 20 apprentices.

The RHS hope for 70-80 thousand visitors on opening, rising to three quarters of a million by 2028. It is hoped that, in time, the garden can be accessed from the canal but this is not yet a high priority.



Plan of the new garden

Ed closed the session remarking that it was positive to have a new garden at a time when parks and gardens are in danger due to lack of funding. We are lucky to live near enough to watch the progress of this exciting venture.

For more information see the RHS website www.rhs.org.uk/gardens/bridgewater

And Salford University's website for more of the history

<http://www.salford.ac.uk/library/archives/worsley/history>

Jenny Wood

Photos and images courtesy of Marcus Chilton-Jones and the RHS



Hellebores: passion or addiction?

CGT members met at Astbury Village Hall in January 2018 to listen to a fascinating talk on hellebores given by Mike Byford of Hazles Cross Farm Nursery. The talk was guaranteed to make you want to visit his nursery in Kingsley near Stoke-on-Trent armed with a credit card.



Tina Theis with Mike Byford at his nursery

The genus *Helleborus* comprises approximately 20 species of herbaceous or evergreen flowering plants in the family Ranunculaceae (buttercup family). They are distributed throughout Europe and Asia with the greatest concentration in the Balkans, although there is an atypical species *H. thibetanus* in Western China and another *H. vesicarius* found on the border between Turkey and Syria.

The flowers have five petal-like sepals surrounding a ring of small, cup-like nectaries which are actually 'petals' modified to hold nectar. The sepals do not fall as petals would but remain on the plant, sometimes for many months.

Hellebores are split into two basic groups caulescent (with stems), such as *H. foetidus* and *H. argutifolius* and acaulescent (without stems), such as *H. orientalis*, *H. niger*, *H. viridus* and *H. atrorubens*.



Beautiful double primrose yellow hybrid with red blotching

Hellebores were all the rage in the 1850s with a lot of breeding done in Germany but then fell out of fashion and the stock disappeared. In the 20th century there was interest in the study of the wild species with new shapes and forms of hellebores developed by Helen Ballard and Elizabeth Strangman.

Mike, a biologist and former lecturer, started collecting hellebores over 30 years ago after seeing some white, delicately patterned flowers in the winter garden of a stately home. He investigated the work of Elizabeth Strangman, Helen Ballard and plant hunter Will McLewin in their study of the wild species and the development of a range of garden hybrids. As a result of his research Mike has spent considerable time and money travelling throughout Europe to see species hellebores in their native habitat. The seed he collected was grown on and led to a Plant Heritage National Collection of all known *Helleborus* species.



Pale double hybrid with feint veining

Mike's research and knowledge of genetics enabled him to further develop the work of Helen Ballard and Elizabeth Strangman leading to the introduction of Hazles Cross Hybrids which he bred to be outward facing to shed water. Mike's plants are grown in pots on raised benches in polytunnels due to problems with high rainfall if grown outside in the ground.

The basic forms of hellebores are single, double and semi-double. There is no red colour found in hellebores only green, yellow and purple. Colour and pattern variations occur based on these basic colours.

General cultivation. Hellebores need a rich, free draining soil as deep as possible. A good potting mixture for plants is a rich compost, such as John Innes 3 or peat substitute, with additional

grit. It is better to keep hellebores slightly dry rather than very wet especially during the dormant season in summer.

Propagation methods.

Seed. Hellebores freely cross pollinate to produce fertile offspring. Seed should be fresh and not dried out. Sow immediately in well drained compost and keep lightly moist otherwise the seed becomes dormant. It takes 3-5 years from seed to flowering with variation of colours in the same seed pod, therefore hellebores need to be bought when they are in flower.



Propagation at Hazles Cross nursery

Division. Large clumps can be divided, preferably in June-August, but it can take 1-3 years for the plant to recover and flower.

Tissue culture. There is a demand for mass produced hellebores particularly in the USA and Japan. Plants are sent to Vietnam for

micropropagation thus flooding the market and putting traditional plant breeders out of business.



H. torquatus/serbicur

Pests and diseases.

Diseases such as botrytis can occur if the plants are kept too wet and too humid. Good air flow is essential. Other diseases can occur such as Black Spot (burn affected leaves), Rhizome rot and Black Death. If plants are affected by the latter they should be isolated and burnt.

For further information see Mike's website

www.hazlescrosfarmnursery.co.uk

Articles have appeared in Derbyshire Life, The Daily Telegraph and recently in "The English Garden"

Heather Turner

Photos courtesy of Mike Byford and Ed Bennis, on a visit to Mike's nursery

The Heritage Gardens of Ireland

CGT members gathered at Barnton Memorial Hall on a Saturday afternoon to hear a talk by John Edmondson on his personal experience of visiting gardens in Ireland and sharing his botanical knowledge.

There are many gardens in Ireland, some having been lost and some in varying states of restoration, but a number have retained their original features. Many are on a large scale as landowners bought their land cheaply and built grand houses. This caused political problems between the landowners and local people. Mount Congreve outside Waterford was given as an example of an estate which is now government owned with a house that is preserved but not developed.

The landscapes designed in the 18th and 19th centuries had features similar to many in England

but there is no indication that the more well known British landscape designers were involved. It is interesting to learn that there are a good number of plants which are only found in Ireland and not in England, Wales or Scotland, such as *Sisyrinchium bermudiana* (see below) from Newfoundland, *Erica erigena* in County Mayo and *Arbutus unedo* (Killarney strawberry tree).



On his trips to Ireland, John enjoyed visits to a variety of gardens and he gave us a lovely tour of them with illustrations and comments. He advised visitors to have a good map to find the gardens, and not to rely on a satnav! Among the gardens John has visited are:

Mount Stewart, Co. Down (below)

This garden was created by Lady Londonderry in 1922. It is owned by the National Trust and is a large garden with both formal and lakeside areas.



Mount Usher, Co. Wicklow

The garden is in a valley on the banks of a river with pools and weirs and 19th century woodland. A replica garden was created at Chelsea.

Mount Congreve, Waterford

On a north facing slope of the River Suir this garden was inspired by Rothschild's garden and features choice rhododendrons and magnolias, one named 'Ambrose Congreve'. There is a conservatory and a huge walled garden which houses a private horticultural operation.

Rowallane, Co. Down

This is now owned by the National Trust but was the creation of a plantsman, Hugh Armytage Moore. There are informal areas but the walled garden is formal and handsome. A *Narcissus x hybridus* named 'Rowallane' was developed here.

Florence Court, Enniskillen (below)

On the border of Northern Ireland in the west, this garden is owned by the National Trust and is half restored. There is a massive walled garden but



also a wilderness area. A special variety of the Irish yew (*Taxus baccata* 'Fastigiata') is to be found here.

Castle Ward, Co. Down

When the grand house was built, there was a difference of opinion between the owners, Bernard Ward and his wife Lady Anne. As a consequence, half of the house has been built in a classical style and the opposite side facing the lake is of a gothic style (as seen on TV).

Annesley Gardens and Castlewellsan Arboretum, Co. Down

These gardens are well worth a visit as the landscape and views are spectacular and there is a collection of rare trees.



Inacullin Garinish Island, Co. Cork (above)

There is a short boat ride to the island from which there is a stunning view of the mountains. The gardens are quirky, Arts and Crafts, designed by Harold Peto in 1910. There are many rhododendrons and exotic plants and it is possible to visit the house.



Yew avenue, Woodstock Gardens

Woodstock gardens, Inistioge, Co. Kilkenny

An interesting garden with a replica conservatory of one built by the ironmaster Richard Turner (1798-1881) who built the Palm House at Kew.

Other features include the Yew Avenue and the Monkey Puzzle Walk.

Birr Castle, Co. Offaly

This large historic estate is bang in the middle of the country where it is less windy, which accounts for the hot air balloons operating here. There is a gothic mansion and also an historic telescope which the third Earl of Rosse housed in a gothic building to match the castle in the 18th century.

Talbot Botanic Gardens, Malahide Castle, Dublin

This garden specialises in temperate plants with many having been brought from Tasmania by Lord Milo Talbot in the mid twentieth century.

Powerscourt, Co. Wicklow

A very grand, formal garden with a lake, statues and fountain and lovely woodland planting beyond. The views are stunning looking towards Sugarloaf Mountain and the Wicklow Hills. Tragically, the house was ruined by a fire some years ago.

The National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin (see top of next column)

The gardens were founded in 1797 and plants were brought here by plant hunters, such as Sir Joseph Dalton Hooker. The extravagant curvilinear glasshouse was built by Richard Turner. The historic structure has been modernised but is very interesting inside with climatic zones. Outside there is a mill race with aquatic plants. The gardens are an important centre for the



conservation and propagation of plants. There is a book on the history of the gardens 'The Brightest Jewel' by Charles Nelson and Eileen McCracken.

John was thanked for giving such an interesting talk which gave everyone an enticing incentive to make a visit to Ireland and its wonderful gardens. It was even suggested that a CGT trip might be an idea to consider if there is a member who would be willing to arrange it!

Janet Horne

Photos John Edmonson and Internet public domain

References

'The Wild Plants of the Burren and Aran Islands' and 'The Wild and Garden Plants of Ireland', both by Charles Wilson. For further information on all the gardens of Ireland visit <https://www.gardenvisit.com/gardens/in/ireland> or <https://www.ireland.com/en-gb/what-is-available/attractions-built-heritage/gardens/>

Bluebells in Cheshire



In late April/early May, you'll still have a chance to sample some of the delightful bluebell woods in Cheshire.

Tushingam Hall, near Whitchurch, SY13 4QP. On Sunday 29th April 2pm-5pm the bluebell wood will be open in aid of The Hospice of the Good

Shepherd. £5 entry includes tea and scone.

Other gardens with bluebell walks or a good display of bluebells are:

Rode Hall, Scholars Green, ST7 3QP, 28th April – 7th May 11am- 4pm, £5

Arley Hall, CW9 6NA, 28th & 29th April, 6th and 7th May, Guided estate and bluebell walks, 11am & 2pm, £5

Adlington Hall, SK10 4LF open 22nd, 29th April, 6th, 13th May, house and gardens £9, gardens £6

Bluebell Cottage Gardens, Dutton, WA4 4HP £3.50, RHS members free, open Wednesday – Sunday 10am-5pm

Dunham Massey, WA14 4SJ, gardens open every day 10.30-5, £8.95, National Trust Members free

Framley, Neston, CH64 2US open 7th May 10.30 4pm £4, National Gardens Scheme

Combermere Abbey SY13 4AN 29th April 1-5pm bluebell walk & open gardens £5

Grot-spot to Grotto

Visitors to Marbury Country Park had long wondered about the inaccessible muddy hollow near the remains of the icehouse. Some people referred to it as a cock-fighting pit. CGT's Barbara Moth thought that it was more likely to have been a grotto. However, the 1910 OS Second Edition Map, surveyed 1877, marked the site as a well. The map also showed a path running from the lime avenues through Big Wood to a summerhouse. This path continued from the summerhouse, past a pond and through the hollow, to join the path along the edge of Budworth Mere.

Towards the end of 2017 the ranger and volunteers at Marbury began to investigate the site of the well and the summerhouse. The removal of undergrowth and soil close to two small sandstone posts, 0.5 m. high, revealed the beginning of a path that led down to a series of sandstone steps into the quagmire.



Excavation in the hollow involved heavy work removing loads of mud, dead timber and debris to reach the hard surface about half a metre down.

Stonework, which surrounded an ornamental 'well', was uncovered. The 'well' was a small pool about 30 cm. deep with a man-made base and front edge.

Small sandstone blocks supported the bank above. Water trickled from the sandstone blocks down into the pool, which should have drained via an underground pipe into the mere.

Two limestone 'seating areas' on the perimeter of the hollow were also uncovered. The excavation work had confirmed that it was a grotto and not a cock-fighting pit.

Several years ago a local resident reported having been in the summerhouse before WW2, but

wartime troop activities in the park had removed most of the structure. Accumulated soil, grass and brambles were cleared, exposing the concrete and brick foundations of a small L-shaped building (see below).



There were also the remains of a hearth. Artefacts retrieved included bricks, floor tiles, ridge tiles, slates, an iron door latch, lead and diamond-shaped window glass.

These foundations seem to correspond to a glass plate (c 1920-30) – see below, that was found amongst other photographs of Marbury.



James Hugh Smith-Barry inherited the Marbury estate in 1837 and shortly after his marriage to Elizabeth Shawcross Jackson in 1841, he consulted leading landscape gardener William Andrews Nesfield. It seems likely that the grotto and summerhouse were part of Nesfield's overall garden design.

In order to make the grotto more accessible to visitors, a wooden handrail has been fixed on the



steps and a new drain has been installed to prevent water collecting in the area. Friends of Anderton and Marbury provided small pebbles to cover the base of the area.

Explanatory panels will soon be positioned close to the grotto and the summerhouse. The volunteers have now decided to turn their attention to Marbury Lodge, which was a cottage on Marbury Lane near the canal bridge. Postcards dated in the 1920s show a tollgate with sandstone

gateposts next to the cottage. The building was demolished, probably in the 1960s, but volunteers hope to uncover the foundations of the cottage and possibly remains of the gateposts. Exploring the surrounding garden area may also add to details about Marbury's history. More information about the 'History of Marbury Hall and Parkland' can be found at www.marburyhall.com

Text and photos Mary Jeeves

Collecting in the clouds

In January I took my own advice and had my own "grand day out" in London visiting RHS Lindley Library's "Collecting in the clouds" exhibition, which featured four planthunters collecting in China in the 20th century, all making very different contributions to our plant collections today.

Planthunting in China was relatively unknown until the early 1800s, when botanical agents working for the East India Company, such as naturalist John Reeves, were able to make investigations. He returned with illustrations and specimens and created great excitement within horticultural circles. The Horticultural Society sent plant collectors, but the Opium Wars and political disruption put the area out of bounds and it was not until the 1900s that it became accessible.

Probably the most familiar of the planthunters are Frank Kingdon Ward and George Forrest. Between them they bought back tens of thousands of specimens in seed and plant form, contributing much to our plant kingdom.



George Forrest 1873-1932. After gold prospecting in Australia, Forrest joined the herbarium at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh. His first plant collecting expedition was to China, sponsored by A.K. Bulley of Bees Nursery. He returned on 6 more expeditions despite tensions in the area. He employed large numbers of collectors in the field (see top of next column), unlike Kingdon-Ward.



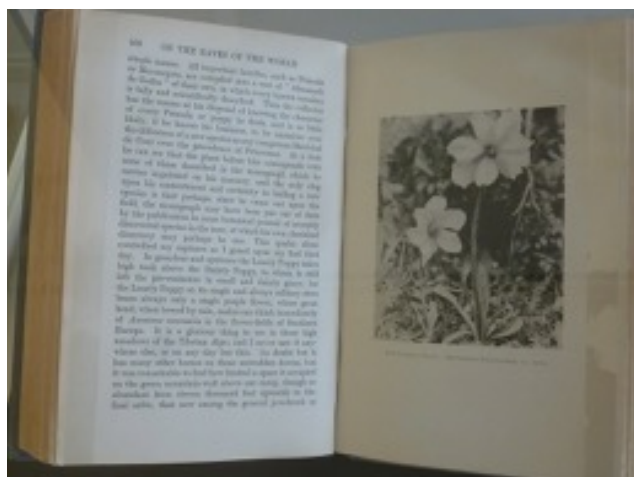
George Forrest's team, including lead collector Zhao Chengzhang (sixth from left) and presses full of blotting paper and specimens

Frank Kingdon-Ward 1885-1958 was the longest serving professional planthunter, with more than 20 expeditions over 50 years. His father was a professional botanist and Kingdon-Ward followed in his footsteps, reading Natural Sciences at Cambridge. A.K. Bulley employed him to collect hardy plants from Yunnan and Tibet, yielding over 200 species and providing ample material for his most famous book "Land of the Blue Poppy". He usually travelled with just a couple of aides, though in 1924 his group swelled to 23 men, 2 dogs and 1 sheep.



Rhododendron wardii was discovered by Forrest and Farrer in Yunnan, but subsequently introduced by Kingdon-Ward.

Reg Farrer (1880-1920) and William Purdom unfortunately were not as long lived. Reg Farrer was also known as the ‘Prince of Alpine Gardeners’. He collected in the Alps as a young man. In 1914 he had his first trip to China. Enlisting Kew trained William Purdom to go with him to Gansu (then Kansu) province in Northern China in search of alpinines. He describes the dangers and beauty of the expeditions in “On the Eaves of the World” – see below and “The Rainbow Bridge”, which was published posthumously. Unfortunately, because he was so shortlived, and was collecting just before World War One, few of his introductions survive.



William Purdom (1880-1921) followed his father into gardening, working for several nurseries before joining the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew in 1908. From 1909 he spent 3 years leading an expedition along China’s Yellow River under the sponsorship of Veitch Nurseries and Arnold Arboretum, Boston. In 1914 he joined Farrer on his expedition to Gansu. Purdom was of tremendous benefit being Chinese speaking, getting on well with the local people and being a very practical soul, but he was perhaps overshadowed by Farrer. At the end of the expedition he joined the Chinese Forest Service, but died six years later.



William Purdom

Planthunting, especially in China, was not for the fainthearted. Expeditions were arduous, in difficult terrain and planthunters were away from home for a long time. The weather could be appalling and planthunters often lost their whole collection. The locals were not always friendly and the planthunters often had some incredible escapes.

Of course we have a local interest in all of this. Arthur K Bulley, who sponsored three of these planthunters, also established Ness Botanic Gardens, first as a family home and then open to the public.

Bulley made his money as a cotton broker in Liverpool, but his passion was plants, particularly alpinines. He established Bees Nursery on site and then sponsored planthunters to scout the mountains of China and the Himalayas. The first of these was George Forrest.

Between them they left a fantastic legacy of plants, many named after Forrest, Ward, Bulley or Bees. Some still grace Ness Gardens, such as the *Pieris formosa* ‘Forestii’ grown from seed bought back by Forrest. Other examples are:

- *Rhododendron sinogrande* discovered by Forrest in 1912 in northern Myanmar (then Burma)
- *Rhododendron wardii* (see p.9)



- *Primula bulleyana* (above) introduced by George Forrest and named after Arthur Kilin Bulley of Bees Nurseries

Sue Eldridge
Photos of Collecting in the Clouds, courtesy of RHS Lindley Library

References

‘A Pioneering Plantsman: A.K.Bulley and the Great Plant Hunters’ Brenda McLean
 ‘The Plant Hunters’ Toby Musgrave, Chris Garner, Will Musgrave

Events coming up

The Hying Open Day



**The Monastery of Our Lady of Hying,
Warton nr. Carnforth, Lancs. LA5 9SE
12th May 2-4pm Cost £5.00**

Something special for your diary. The gardens of The Hying (see above) will be open this spring, the only day of the year for a general opening for the public. This is a rare post-war garden designed by Ralph Hancock (1893-1950) and built by his son Bramley in 1952. Hancock is not a name that is immediately recognised, but he certainly deserves to be better known. Originally from Cardiff, he moved to Surrey in 1927 and went to the United States in 1930 to win several awards at the Massachusetts Horticulture Show. This led to the commission for the roof gardens at Rockefeller Center and Radio City in New York (1933-1935). Returning to England, he designed the roof gardens for Derry and Toms department store in London, now known as the Kensington Roof Gardens and part of the Virgin empire.

There were many awards at Chelsea and numerous commissions across the country. The Hying is the last of his gardens for Lord Peel and his family and is heavily influenced by Gertrude Jekyll, William Robinson and the Arts and Crafts movement. There was a court case against the Earl, several builders and Bramley Hancock for over-spending contrary to Defence Regulations; this was still a time of rationing and austerity.

The gardens sit mostly to the rear of the house with the exception of what is known as The Lady Peel garden, a walled garden composed of Cotswold stone with a moon gate (see opposite). The other areas include a complex system of

ponds and rills which fed a small lake, now lost.

There is a rare grouping of azaleas, rhododendrons (see below) and camellias in this limestone garden. Lord Peel imported hundreds of tons of acidic soil to grow these plants. There are orchards, a rose garden (under reconstruction), an avenue of Japanese maples that originally led to an Iris garden, and numerous other features. The gardens are certainly not pristine or of a National Trust standard, but they are loved and cared for by the nuns of the monastery and volunteers.



You can find more about Hancock at www.ralphhancock.com and information on The Hying and his other gardens under Other Gardens. This is a rare opportunity to see these gardens which are normally closed to the public. There will be a talk about the gardens at 2.00 followed by a tour of the gardens, and of course tea, coffee and wonderful homemade cakes!



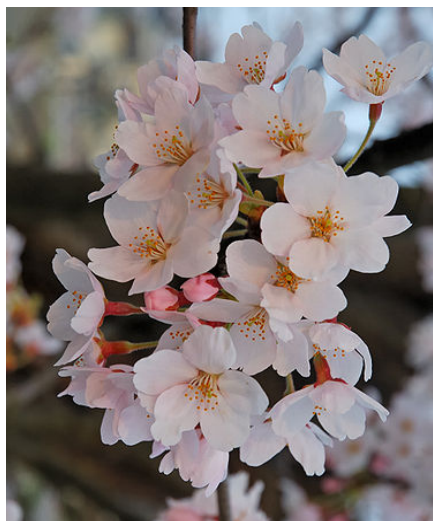
Text and photos Ed Bennis

Staffordshire Events

We've received the following information from Staffordshire Gardens and Parks Trust who have kindly opened up their visits to CGT members.

Keele University Gardens and Park Saturday April 28th 2pm

William Emes laid out a pleasure garden immediately around Keele Hall and enhanced the park by creating a series of lakes and planting trees. In about 1851, Ralph Sneyd, whose family had owned Keele Hall since the sixteenth century, commissioned Anthony Salvin to build the mock-Jacobean Hall, replacing the earlier Tudor house. At about the same time, William Sawrey Gilpin, and William Andrews Nesfield re-modelled the pleasure garden.



For more than sixty years, the University has been planting flowering cherries and is now home to 240 varieties, and a National Collection. This visit is timed to take place when the trees are in bloom. The guide will be Dr. Dave Emley, BEM, formerly of the University's Geology Department, who, since his retirement in 2016, has looked after the University's Arboretum. The visit, for which there is a charge of £6 per person (£8 non-members) will start at the Chapel at 2pm.

Commonwealth and German Military Cemeteries, Broadhurst Green, near Cannock: Saturday 18th May 2pm

The Commonwealth Military Cemetery received its first burial in 1917 and is the last resting place of 97 Commonwealth servicemen and 285 German prisoners-of-war.

A short distance away is the German Military Cemetery, laid out to the design of Professor Diez Brandi, on behalf of the German War Graves Commission. Officially opened in 1967, it contains the graves of 4939 German servicemen. The



Commonwealth Military Cemetery

building complex at the entrance to the cemetery was designed by Harold Doffman and Peter Leach, local architects.

The guided tour, for which there is a charge of £6 per person (£8 non-members), will start at 2pm.

National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas Saturday July 14th 2pm



Armed Forces Memorial

The National Arboretum was the inspiration of David Childs, its first Director, following a visit to the Arlington Cemetery in Washington in 1988. It now covers 150 acres and contains over 30,000 trees and 350 monuments commemorating not only the military services, but also the civil services such as the Fire and Rescue and Ambulance Services. Appropriately, we shall be visiting the Arboretum in the year of the centenary of the final year of World War I and of the formation of The Royal Air Force.

The visit, which will be led by a volunteer tour guide, and for which the charge is £7 (£9 non-members) will begin at 2pm.

Staffordshire Gardens Trust has kindly agreed to charge CGT members at Staffordshire membership rates. If anyone is interested in taking part please contact Brian Sullivan on 01543 684965 or via bryan.sullivan09@gmail.com.

Bryan Sullivan, Staffordshire Gardens and Parks Trust

Events in Cheshire

Open gardens

Heatons, Heaton Moor, Stockport
Sunday 20th May 12 noon to 5pm, £5 for 2

Wilmslow Open Gardens
Saturday 30th June 10.30-4.30

£12 tickets available from gardens on the day

Marple Open Gardens, Stockport, Cheshire
Saturday 7th and Sunday 8th July 11am to 5pm
£6 per day, or both days £10

Gatley Open Gardens (app. 12 gardens), near
Cheadle, Sunday 24th June 11am to 5pm £5 tickets
available from gardens on the day

Oxton Conservation Area, Birkenhead, Wirral
Sunday 13th May 2018 10am to 5pm
£6 in advance or £8 on the day

Caldy Village Open Gardens Wirral
Sunday 27th May 2018 1pm to 6pm

£7.50 on the day or £6 in advance,
See <http://www.opengardens.co.uk>

National Gardens Scheme – new gardens

Cheriton, 34 Congleton Road, Alderley Edge SK9
7AB Sat 26th & Sun 27th May 11am-5pm Adults £5
1 acre garden with fine views

Stretton Old Hall, Tilston, Malpas SY14 7JA
May 20th & July 15th 11am- 5pm Adults £6
5 acre Cheshire countryside garden

Mayfield, Bunbury Heath Tarporley, CW6 9SY
June 2/3, July 7/8 10am-4.30pm Adults £5
Mature garden with wealth of colour

Mill House, Threapwood, Malpas, SY14 7PD
June 3 11am – 4pm Adult £4
A large garden set in the midst of a smallholding
Visit the NGS website www.ngs.org.uk

Combermere Abbey open afternoons
Wednesdays 30th May, 27th June, 26th September
1pm-5pm
See www.combermereabbey.co.uk

A call for French speakers

Society des Parcs et Jardins de Brittany: a call for help from CGT members and friends!

The Trust has been helping to organise a trip to gardens in and around Cheshire for 50 visitors from Brittany 20-23 May. Many of our visitors can speak or certainly understand English, but there are some that could use some help from French speakers as they visit some of the gardens. If you have some time and a reasonable level of French, could you join them at some of the gardens?

- Dimanche 20 mai: Dunham Massey afternoon (there will be two groups as they arrive at Manchester airport from Nantes and Paris)
- Lundi 21 mai: Cholmondeley morning; Biddulph (lunch at a local pub) and Henbury late afternoon; dinner in Knutsford
- Mardi 22 mai: Arley Hall morning; Tatton Park afternoon; dinner at hotel



Emmanuel Villeroy de Galhau and Sylvie de Kermadec at Biddulph (June 2017) preparing for their visit.

- Mercredi 23 mai: Crug Farm nurseries, morning; Bodnant afternoon; dinner in Chester

If you think you are able to help us with any part of this schedule, please contact Ed Bennis on 0776 685 9339.

Ed Bennis

Plant Health Undergraduate studentships

The Royal Society of Biology's Plant Health Undergraduate Studentship Scheme was launched in 2017. It was supported by DEFRA and attracted a great response. Nine summer placements (for summer 2018) are available for the successful students enabling them to work on key policy

challenges with professional plant health researchers.

Applications open on 9th April

See the Royal Society of Biology's website for further information <https://www.rsb.org.uk/get-involved/grants/undergraduate-studentships>

Ruth Brown

THE GARDENS TRUST

Conservation Casework Log

CGT's Barbara Moth has featured in The Gardens Trust news. She is pictured with Alison Allighan, Conservation Casework Manager, who was demonstrating the GT's updated online Conservation Casework Log (comprising over 20,000 cases, dealt with by the GT and CGTs since 2001)

See The Gardens Trust's website for further information

<http://thegardenstrust.org/conservation/conservation-management-plan-project/>



In austerity Britain, people need parks

As part of the Gardens Trust's ongoing involvement in the future of public parks, it seems appropriate to reproduce here GT Trustee David Lambert's letter to The Guardian, 25th December 2017.

"Funding for public parks is being cut off just when they are needed more than ever to combat the stress of surviving in austerity Britain, says the Parks Agency.

The quietly announced news that the Heritage Lottery Fund is closing its Parks for People funding programme comes as a shock. It should be a matter of huge concern, not only to the 90% of families with children who visit their local park at least once a month, but to all who care about the wellbeing of our towns and cities. Since it was set up in 1996, the programme has transformed hundreds of urban parks from no-go areas to thriving community assets, paying not just for repairs to bandstands, lakes, paths, gates and other features but also for new cafes, toilets, play areas and funding for new staff.

Austerity has hit parks departments particularly hard. As a non-statutory service, parks have been in the frontline

of the cuts since 2010, with budgets falling on average by 40% – and in some cases by far more. Newcastle upon Tyne has seen a 90% fall, resulting in unprecedented plans to transfer the city's parks to a charitable trust. Elsewhere, councils such as Knowsley are selling parks for development to fund future maintenance. Users have seen the impact in terms of loss of staff, reduced tidiness and increases in antisocial behaviour. Politicians, of course, have not.

Now the one dedicated source of funding for public parks has been cut off without warning. The HLF will continue to fund parks but in competition with other, elite, forms of heritage – and that will mean less money available. Money aside, the signal this decision gives that parks are marginal, or do not matter, could not be worse timed or further from the truth. Research by the HLF has revealed that by 2020 parks will be in a worse state than they were in the mid-1990s when HLF began its funding.

Good-quality parks are needed more than ever to combat the stress of surviving in austerity Britain, and the loss of Parks for People is another lurch into a spiral of decline which this time could prove terminal for many places."



ICOMOS Survey of Garden and Landscape Heritage Education

Peter Goodchild, of Yorkshire Gardens Trust and the GARLAND Trust, is working with the landscapes and gardens committee of ICOMOS-UK on a survey to identify the range of educational provision currently available in garden and landscape heritage and identify where improvements need to be made.

If you know of any such courses, at any level, including school, adult education, and continuing professional development, Peter would be grateful if you would contact him, at peter.goodchild@yahoo.co.uk It is crucial that we address the loss of such courses as without them, we will have a severe future deficit in skilled gardeners, landscape historians, landscape managers and conservationists, and our parks and gardens will suffer as a result.

Manchester Zoological Gardens – a short-lived venture

Barbara Moth's article on Zoological Gardens in issue 57 reminded me of the hubristic tale of the Manchester Zoological Gardens. Not, as you might think, Belle Vue, which at the time was well outside of Manchester. These were to the north of Manchester. Politics and religion were to be crucial elements in the sorry story of the Zoological Gardens.

In 1830s' Manchester the middle classes were beginning to separate themselves socially from the workers. The Manchester Botanical Gardens, created in what is now the White City Retail Park in Trafford, was definitely middle class.

Not everyone was happy with their elitist approach and within a couple of years a plan began to be formed to set up a rival garden – much better and available to all.

In April 1836 a Prospectus was issued for a rather grand scheme – a Zoological, Botanical and Public Gardens Company combined with a Coliseum and Baths. But, almost immediately there were warnings about a possible down-turn in the economy.

The next thing to do was find a site. Richard Forrest was employed to design the gardens (see below) and he reported back to the Directors that they "had wisely given up all idea of a Botanical Garden". His design was accepted and work on laying out the gardens began.

We are all familiar with budgets for big projects. They start at a reasonable level and as time passes overspends are inevitable. It was the same with the Zoological Gardens. The capital outlay was planned as £13,800; actual expenditure was over £20k. They had only managed to sell shares to a value of £18k, so the gardens opened in considerable debt. And by the time they opened the economic boom of the 1830s had turned into the slump of the early 1840s.

One of the Manchester papers tried hard to get the public interested in the gardens, but it was really a lost

cause. The animals needed feeding and the entry charges were simply not covering costs. One thing that might have saved them was opening on a Sunday, the only free time for factory workers. But this was anathema to the most influential members of Manchester society and the idea was turned down.

In November 1842, the animals were auctioned off and the gardens closed. John Mearns, who had laid out the gardens and was head gardener, left Manchester to take up a similar position at the Leeds Zoological Gardens. But this was no more successful and in 1847 Mr. Mearns was sacked and a year later the garden closed.

Richard Forrest – landscape gardener

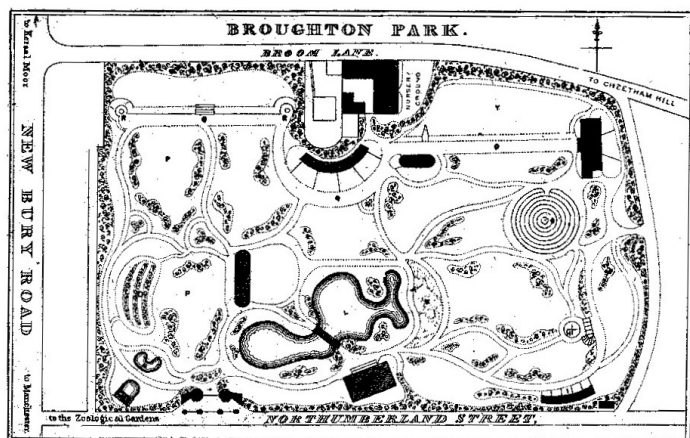
Richard Forrest is a forgotten landscape gardener and nurseryman. In 1837 The Monthly Magazine carried a piece about him at the Kensington Nursery, where he had introduced new ideas. The nursery had always had a good reputation, but the plants had not been well displayed. Richard Forrest made changes so that the shrubs were "elegant", the flowers "lovely" and the place "quite an optical feast".

Like many of the best gardeners of the time, Forrest had been born in Scotland. His father was a nurseryman and the young Richard trained under James McDonald who worked for the Duke of Buccleuch before going on to Kew where he continued training under William Aiton.

Aiton recommended him to Earl Grosvenor and Forrest created the gardens and pleasure grounds at Eaton Hall. He then moved to the Duke of Northumberland's gardens at Syon House.

He then went into private practice, purchasing the Kensington nursery and taking landscaping commissions. He designed the Bristol Zoological Gardens, which were more successful than Manchester and remain open to the present day.

It is difficult to find out what happened to Forrest, but he lost the nursery, moved to Reading and died in penury.



PLAN OF THE ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS.

A big thank you to Ruth



Ruth, 2nd from left, with Monty Don and the Tatton team,

Ruth Brown is stepping down from the CGT events group after 14 years of stalwart service. She has been the group's horticultural expert during all

that time and has put in a tremendous amount of hard work. She was a key part of the successful Caldwell's King Canute garden at the Tatton Flower Show. She worked tirelessly with Christine Wilcox-Baker on the fantastic CGT stands at Arley and the Cheshire Show. She worked with Jane Gooch on the education side of the CGT, developing professional events for head gardeners and knowledgeable amateurs, such as the Rhododendron workshop. And she's still involved in forthcoming events such as the visit to Mostyn hall and the tree identification workshop. She's been a tour de force and we will miss her contribution, especially her own particular brand of humour. So thank you Ruth for all you've done.

From the CGT Events group

From A for Avenue to Z for Zoological Gardens



Avenue at Marbury Park

In the last edition of the CGT newsletter we featured Z for zoological gardens, the final article in the A to Z series of garden features. These had been researched and written by the Research and Recording Group and we owe them great thanks for such a tremendous project. Thank you.

If anyone has other suggestions for a topic or theme for future articles please contact the editor.

Following this, Moira Stevenson has contacted the editor to say "Members of the Research and Recording Group are currently exploring the

possibility of using the 26 articles which have appeared in past newsletters to form the basis of a small book on the A to Z of Cheshire garden features. If members have good quality photographs or illustrations which did not feature in the original articles but might add further interest to a potential book, please contact m.stevenson999@btinternet.com with details of the image together with any copyright details or credits."



Chester Zoo 1960

And finally a thank you from a parent, Julie Moreau. Her daughter is doing her gardener's badge at her scout group. They came across the Caldwell's archive which "had all of the gardening information we were looking for! Layla had also found another gardening page. It covers both flower and vegetable gardens and has some fun projects that Layla and I are going to try this spring"

Copy date for July newsletter is 30th June

Contributions to the Newsletter are very welcome. If you want to comment on articles in this edition or would like to contribute one for the next, please contact the Newsletter Editor, 148 Chester Road, Hazel Grove, Stockport SK7 6HE or email sue_eldridge@hotmail.com