



Patron: The Viscount Ashbrook  
Company Limited by Guarantee, no. 05673816  
Charity Number 1119592

# Newsletter

[www.cheshire-gardens-trust.org.uk](http://www.cheshire-gardens-trust.org.uk)

## Inside:

- ✳ Creative Flower Photography
- ✳ Stonyford Cottage Gardens and Nursery
- ✳ A possible merger with GHS
- ✳ L is for Loggia
- ✳ London Open Squares Day

## Some future events:

- ✳ Growing bulbs in containers: a practical workshop – 2 p.m. Saturday 20 September (NOTE NEW TIME)
- ✳ Gardens of Portugal, illustrated lecture by Ed Bennis – 11 a.m. Saturday 11 October
- ✳ Restorations and renovations in the gardens at Quarry Bank, Styal – 11 a.m. Saturday 15 November



On a showery and cool May afternoon forty-five of us gathered for a fascinating few hours in which we heard about the history of Combermere Abbey and its gardens, and wandered around the grounds at our leisure.

We met in the Glasshouse (see photo above) which is a 2007 structure built to the footprint and plan of the central glasshouse which had been designed by Messenger & Co in 1901/2. The outer glasshouses were considered too dilapidated to be saved after years of neglect and use as pheasant-rearing quarters.

Sarah Callander Beckett, the current owner of the abbey and its estate, explained how the buildings and gardens declined through the two world wars as staff numbers reduced.

She inherited the estate in 1992 and has been working through a programme of restoration which is continuing.

We heard that the Abbey was built as a Cistercian monastery in 1133. Following the monastery's dissolution in 1536 the Stapleton-Cotton family owned it for over four hundred years.



In 1820, the first Viscount Combermere remodelled the Abbey in the then fashionable gothic style, covering over the black and white timbered walls. At the same time he added a semi-circular walled garden to the two rectangular walled gardens, and built a stable block. The estate was bought by Sir Kenneth Crossley (owner of Crossley Cars in Manchester) in 1919 and now it is Sarah, his great-granddaughter, who is reviving its fortunes.

The conversion of the 19<sup>th</sup> century stables into holiday cottages was the first of Sarah's restoration projects. In 1993/4 the first walled rectangular garden was restored as the 'Geometric Garden' and in 1994 the unique fruit tree maze was planted in the semi-circular walled space (see front page).

It is the fruit tree maze which we could see from our dry, warm refuge in the Glasshouse. The maze design was created by Randoll Coate and the fruit types were selected by Bert Davis MBE of Reaseheath College. The structure consists of one hundred and thirty-five apple and pear trees using ten varieties of apples and five of pears plus over two hundred gooseberry bushes and two hundred currant plants.

The maze design is complex and symbolic. The overall shape is of the iris of an eye and woven into the design are four primary symbols including The Tree of Life and The Minotaur's Head. As the only known fruit-tree maze in the world it has generated much interest.

The Geometric Garden was designed by Peter Beckett as a series of rooms around the tennis court, each with a different geometric shape and with a variety of colour schemes.

It is entered from the holiday cottage stable block through a pleached hornbeam hedge with arches leading, on the right to a large open space with beech and lavender hedging and a south facing Mediterranean border. To the left an arch leads first to the Circular garden with herbaceous borders in blue white and silver. The Square garden was created as a seating area for guests and it is at its best when spring bulbs are in flower. The Triangular garden features rose beds.



*Above: the Square garden with tulips in flower*

We were told that the middle walled garden was the last to be restored. This has been kept as a spacious area with herbaceous borders. Recently in 2013 Reaseheath students constructed an oak summer house against the South facing wall.

As we were special visitors we were told that we would be able to walk around each of the walled gardens and also to access the 'Pleasure Gardens'. This is an area of now mature specimen trees planted in the eighteen hundreds which was originally a place where abbey guests would take exercise after meals, giving views over the large lake. The more wooded area near the lake is gradually being cleared and replanted and is a work in progress. Additional 'work in progress' is the restoration of the west wing of the abbey, and the creation of a photo and family history archive of the abbey buildings, its grounds and the people who lived and worked there.

Before we stepped out of The Glasshouse to begin our explorations we were introduced to Phil Tatler, the Head Gardener. We were assured that he and his two staff would be available in the gardens to answer any questions as we walked around.



*Above: the Middle garden with herbaceous border and oak summerhouse*

Within the walled gardens many of the plants seemed to be well ahead of our own. The currant bushes looked as if they would be producing a bumper crop and I thought to myself how amazing the fruit maze must look in late summer and early autumn.

Particularly memorable for me were the two mature hornbeams in the Pleasure Gardens - such weird bark! I also loved the herbaceous borders and I was intrigued by the blocks in the brick walls that used to be moved to accommodate hot coals to heat the structure.

There was plenty of time for us to look at the different areas before reassembling for excellent refreshments. Many of us stopped at the plant stall on our way back. This was my first outing with the Trust. Everyone was friendly and I had a great afternoon. Thank you to Jacqui Jaffé for making the visit possible.

***Eileen Moncrieff***

## Creative Flower Photography

Taking a photograph is simple; just open the camera, point and click and from that split second a picture is recorded. But taking the quality picture you really want is never as simple as that.

Whether photography is art I suppose is open to debate; but it is creative and therefore an element of knowledge of the camera is required and the awareness of the subject you wish to record.

Along with fifteen other like-minded members of the Cheshire Gardens Trust I attended an afternoon talk and helpful hands-on session presented by Michael Turner, ably assisted by his wife Janet, who was in charge of the laptop and projector. The venue was the house and gardens of Didsbury Parsonage located in the leafy suburbs of South Manchester.



Michael's talk was entitled "Creative Flower Photography". Locally based, Michael is a highly experienced photographer, writer and seminar speaker who organises courses both for amateurs and professionals through his company Art in the Garden. He opened his talk with an overview of taking photographs of flowers, the likely problems we could encounter, i.e. a windy day, what to achieve with our photos using different settings, the relationship of the shutter speed and aperture setting. Photo shots could be blurred because of camera movement and photos could be under or over exposed due to the camera settings. The simple message was to experiment with your camera settings and take plenty of shots and see what works.

Michael then moved on to talk about light, colour and composition.

**Firstly Light.** It is best to shoot in soft light. Cloudy days are best because it helps to reduce shadows. It also helps to shoot around sunrise and sunset; the light is warm and creates golden casts.

Close up photography requires getting down really low, since a low viewpoint often gives a calm, uncluttered background and shows moods within its own light. Although getting down really low is not all that easy as one gets older!

Setting up your tripod or beanbag to support the lens also slows you down and gives you the time to think about what kind of creative photos you are trying to achieve. Knee pads could be an option, too!!

Michael also explained how important it is to use the available light and when necessary use a white reflector screen to bounce the light back or in bright sunshine use the flower and its shadow, whereas an overcast sky captures colourful and moody subjects.

Although, the first principle is to take photos with the light behind the camera, we were encouraged to take photos from different directions and angles using wherever possible plain backgrounds.

Cheat if necessary; remember flowers have an extra sparkle after rain so why not sprinkle or spray on water before taking your photo.

With very limited exceptions Michael rarely uses flash; the only time it would be considered was when shooting up towards the sky.

And so on to the Colour and the colour wheel. Setting the mood takes time and patience, but is rewarding – obviously to create drama, opposite colours are used whereas for a moody setting use near colours.

Other examples, using red/yellow gives warm colours, lime green gives a fresh look, purple/yellow gives contrast/opposite, reds/pinks gives pastel shades and to sharpen and highlight use dark backgrounds.

We were advised to look at other photographers' pictures to study their techniques on how they have balanced their photos. Colours give drama and excitement, which communicates the mood of the picture and supports the technical aspects of the photographs.

Technical use of the camera is mainly by trial and error, whereas the art of composition takes practice and thoughtfulness.

One of the difficult aspects in photography is the question of what is important to leave in and what could be left out. Learning how to use features in the garden, to give a sense of space or drama. Paths obviously gives lines, arches height, statues give a sense of space and solitude. Again it takes time and patience to review the surroundings and find an interesting focal point or feature in the garden.

And crucially experiment by angling your camera and making the subject come towards you including its shadow. For creative shots use texture and shapes for abstract patterns and if you are lucky to have macro settings, have a play with composition and exposure settings.

Michael also spoke briefly about post processing and printing, Photoshop, iPhone Apps, trying to give photos the vintage feel and different effects with shooting black and white, and printing in blue/brown tones etc.

The main benefits now with using digital cameras whether budget, compact or SLR is that the camera now processes your shots unlike print film from the past, which gives you the opportunity to change





Above and below: Gordon demonstrates the lessons learned



settings on the camera to achieve a better and more acceptable picture on site.

The main message from the talk, which I think we all found interesting and very informative, is you don't need lots of expensive gear to get started. Certainly get the practice and experience first before purchasing a macro lens and other equipment. Explore the surrounding area, choose your subject carefully and don't just pick the nearest place or flower to photograph.

It was then time to go outside into the Parsonage Garden and put knowledge gained into practice.

Both Michael and Janet were on hand during this practical session, answering numerous questions and offering helpful comments and tips.

We all came away with a considerably better understanding of the techniques needed for creative flower photography and appreciated the talk given by Michael, which was both informative and challenging for us amateur photographers.

**Gordon Darlington**

For further information on Michael Turner see [www.photogardener.co.uk](http://www.photogardener.co.uk) – [Michael@art-inthegarden.co.uk](mailto:Michael@art-inthegarden.co.uk) – 0161 428 6749

## Stonyford Cottage Gardens and Nursery

It was a beautiful late spring evening when we met at Stonyford Cottage Gardens and Nursery.

We were met by the owner, Tony Overland (right), who had owned the property for thirty years. He told us he had started the nursery twenty years ago and was now helped by his twin sons, one of whom was trained at Pershore College.

Stonyford specialises in perennials and herbaceous plants, but particularly in hard to get plants. Tony began the nursery with a touring van, a *Plant Finder* and an NGS booklet and brought back plants in the van. Now, he sells plants all over Europe.

The nursery site is mostly well-drained sandy gravel. There is a gravel quarry very near to the nursery. There have been changes lately with the site not being as free draining as previously, but the soil is very easy to work.

There are a number of specimen trees around the site and Tony admitted to making a few mistakes with the early planting, such as having a group of two, not three, and having some too close together. This didn't detract in any way from the interest the trees provided. We saw an Indian Bean Tree which produces beans, a handkerchief tree grown from a seedling, *Quercus rubra*, silver birch with white bark and a lime tree. There is also a tulip tree and a *Ginkgo biloba*.

The nursery itself contained a varied range of plants at reasonable prices. There was a wonderful display



of house leeks, some were in individual pots, others in groups in containers. It was an informal arrangement of plants and greenhouses and was a delight to walk around.





*Exploring the nursery*

Recently a brick archway has been built to separate the nursery, for which entry is free, from the gardens, where admission must be paid.

As we passed under the arch, there was a dramatic change in the landscape. The planting was much lush and there was the sound of running water. The garden is filled with trees with underplanting that included *Primula bulleyana* and astilbe. The white astilbes were some of the tallest with large white spears and they made a dramatic impact on the garden.



We crossed the lake that filled the centre of the garden by a wooden bridge and once on the island, Tony invited us to jump, which we duly did, and felt the ground move under us!

The lake was formed from a natural water supply, and many years ago a pipe took water to Northwich. It was eventually abandoned when the level of nitrates in the water made it unsuitable to be used for drinking. Tony disconnected the pipe and now the water flows quite naturally like a small fountain.

Across the lake we could see a brick archway through which the water flowed to Delamere Manor. The swans had already returned to their night time haunt through the duct and so we missed seeing them. The island has alders and willows which are hard pollarded. The garden was full of bird song and as we walked around we saw a boat, another small lily pond, hens and an assortment of seats, all designed to allow the visitor to take advantage of different aspects of the garden.



This area was quite wild, not manicured at all and looked as if it had been taken a bit at a time from nature, which Tony assured us is what he had done. The farthest areas had fallen trees and overgrown areas but this just added to the uniqueness of the garden.

There was plenty to enjoy and a lot of plants to interest the visitor. One of our members commented that all that was missing was a glass of wine and a long leisurely sit on one of the many seats. Instead, we settled for a salad and scones in the tea room in the nursery. Delightful!

**Jackie Cawte**

**Photos by Chris Driver**

# Proposed Merger between GHS and AGT

The Cheshire Gardens Trust Council of Management would like to receive YOUR views on this very important subject, before deciding its position. The following information is heavily condensed. If you would like to read the reports of the Merger group and the initial response from Cheshire, please contact Joy Uings (see foot of back page for contact details).

Over the past couple of years, a group formed by the committees of the Garden History Society (GHS) and the Association of Gardens Trusts (AGT) has been meeting to discuss the possible merger of the two organisations.

At the AGT AGM, to be held in Chester on 5 September, the Gardens Trusts will be asked to vote on whether or not the merger should go ahead. The Cheshire Gardens Trust Council of Management would like to receive YOUR views.

## Background

Both GHS and the County Gardens Trusts have similar aims and objectives, which is the promotion of our garden history and the conservation of designed landscapes.

Both have received grants from English Heritage. However, as a result of the poor economic climate, general funding for both organisations has been reduced (although a special project *has* been funded) and English Heritage has encouraged the two organisations to consider merger.

## The Garden History Society

The GHS has existed since 1965. It has approximately 1,300 individual members who pay an annual fee of between £35 and £85. It is a statutory consultee, which means that it must be notified by Local Authorities of any planning application which would affect historic planned landscapes, thereby giving the GHS an opportunity to comment. Apart from this statutory role, it provides the forum for academic debate on garden history and its Journal is peer-reviewed.

For the past few years, the GHS has had an income of around £230k per annum, but its combined deficit for the three years ended December 2013 was £23,327. There are 3 part-timers working on Conservation (one of whom is dedicated to Scotland).

## The Association of Gardens Trusts

The AGT is much younger than the GHS and has a part-time (2 days a week) Co-ordinator. It was formed to act as a co-ordinating body for the growing number of independent County Gardens Trusts – over the past 30 years the number of such has grown from one to thirty-six (plus the Welsh Historic Gardens Trust), with more than 7,000 members. Each Trust pays to AGT a subscription plus an affiliation fee based on numbers of members. In 2014, with 187 members, Cheshire's payment amounted to £274.50. County Trust members have a wide range of backgrounds, some in garden or landscape design or history, many with just an interest in gardens. Most

County Trusts respond to planning proposals affecting designed landscapes in their area.

## Working Together

Over the past few years there has been an increase in the level of co-operation between the two organisations, which is made easier by the fact that their offices are in the same building. The co-operation has been mostly in the Joint Conservation Committee. GHS has relied more and more on the County Trusts to enable it to fulfil its statutory role with regard to Planning. GHS and AGT made a joint bid for funding for The Historic Landscapes Project which has been running for the past three years. Originally focusing on the south-east, the project has extended to other parts of the country. There are now 2 part-time staff working on this project.

## Our concerns about the original merger proposals

In July last year, the Cheshire Gardens Trust Council of Management carefully considered the original proposals and responded with a detailed list of comments, none of which appear to have been considered in the final proposal.

## The Final Proposal

The Merger Group has now issued its Final Proposal, which contains many laudable aspirations, but unfortunately no Business Plan to show how these will be accomplished.

It is intended that the AGT should merge with the GHS, creating a new body, with a new name and a new constitution. It is proposed that there will be two types of membership of the new organisation – individual (i.e. ex-GHS) and corporate (i.e. ex-County Trusts). This will give 1300 individual voting members and 36 corporate voting members. To deal with this excessive discrepancy in numbers, it is proposed that any measure requiring a majority vote, will require a majority of each constituency.

The County Trusts will be asked at the AGT AGM in Chester in September for an in-principle agreement to a merger. The GHS members will be asked for the same at their conference at the end of July.

If each AGM gives this in-principle agreement, the Merger group will draw up a new constitution which will need to be approved by the GHS Council and the AGT Committee (but not by the County Trusts). It will then be sent to the Charity Commissioners for approval.

Following such approval, there will be a joint GHS/AGT conference in July 2015 at which each organisation will hold its AGM to give approval to



signing the new constitution. There will then be a joint AGM to appoint Board members to the new organisation.

### Options for Cheshire

Cheshire has one vote at the AGT AGM in September. We could vote for or against or abstain from voting on the proposal to merge.

Whatever we decide to do, if the majority of County Trusts vote in favour of the merger then the next step for us will be the AGM next year where we have to approve the signing of the new constitution (not approve the constitution itself).

If the merger goes ahead, then we have the option of joining or not joining the new organisation.

## L is for .....Loggia

A word with Italian associations – but there are loggias in Cheshire gardens despite our lack of an Italian climate. Chambers dictionary of Etymology defines it as a “Gallery or arcade open to the air on at least one side (1742 borrowing of Italian *loggia* from the Old French *loge* covered walk, from Frankish)”.<sup>1</sup> In parks and gardens loggias usually serve as summerhouses, to provide shade.

There are Loggias in the gardens of Norton Priory, Eaton Hall, Peover Hall, Thornton Manor and probably others that we are not aware of. Many of these buildings are not commonly referred to as Loggias.

The 18<sup>th</sup> century summerhouse at Norton Priory, said to be by James Wyatt, is a simple and classic example of a loggia. Located south of the former hall, it terminated a formal walk between the pleasure grounds and Big Wood. Though the Hall and much of the layout of the grounds have been lost, this building survives as a reminder of more gracious times and aspirations.



*Norton Priory summerhouse  
Photograph courtesy Moira Stevenson*

At Eaton Hall a Loggia at the south end of the Broad Walk is known as the Temple.<sup>2</sup>

Set amid mature trees where the landscape slopes gently to the lake, the sandstone loggia was constructed c1880 to the design of Alfred Waterhouse, designer of Eaton Hall for the 1<sup>st</sup> Duke of Westminster.

The Loggia was incorporated in Detmar Blow's redesign of the east garden (1911) as the southern terminal of the main cross axis. It contains a Roman

altar and replaced a Gothick temple (1822) designed by William Cole to house a Roman altar.<sup>3</sup>



*Image Courtesy of the Grosvenor Estate*

At Peover Hall the gardens are laid out in a series of formal compartments remodelled in the 1920s by Hubert Worthington.

A loggia, c1920, forms the west side of the Lily Pond garden, the largest of the three garden spaces south of the hall. In the English Heritage Register entry the building is referred to as ‘the Aviary, a stone columned, verandah-like building’.

The aviaries with trellis screens between brick arches lie at each end of the building and are now used for storage.

The central portion with stone columns is largely unused though it is understood that the gardeners shelter there in inclement weather! The splendid spirally clipped yews in front of the building detract from its function as a loggia but perhaps it was never used to overlook the tranquil lily pond; maybe it was simply an architectural device to enclose and embellish the garden.



*Peover Hall: A view across the Lily Pond garden towards the loggia*

*Photograph courtesy of Jacquie Williams*





Looking out from the loggia towards Peover Hall  
Photograph courtesy of Jacquie Williams



Thornton Manor: View south west from the roof over the garden and parkland towards the Dee estuary and north Wales  
Photograph courtesy of Maria Luczak

The gardens of Thornton Manor on the Wirral, the former home of Viscount Leverhulme, were laid out predominantly between 1905 and 1914. Their design was the result of collaboration between Thomas Mawson and Leverhulme. Colonnaded garden loggias serve as focal points in the garden, buildings which were designed to enable views out as well as being focal points themselves.



The loggia at Thornton Manor with principal red sandstone facade facing south west beside one of the main walks in the garden  
Photograph Barbara Moth



The Tea House at Thornton Manor, in effect a smaller loggia, which terminates the south eastern end of the main terrace  
Photograph courtesy of Maria Luczak

<sup>1</sup> Edit Robert K. Barnhart, 1988. Chambers Dictionary of Etymology Chambers Harrap Publishers Ltd Edinburgh, 607

<sup>2</sup> Mako, M, 2009. *The Gardens at Eaton, Eaton Hall, Chester*: Sinclair Communications

<sup>3</sup> English Heritage Register entry for Eaton Hall



Thornton Manor: The rear elevation of the loggia with flights of stairs onto the roof and a central doorway leading to the kitchen garden  
Photograph Barbara Moth

Fig. 154 shows a pavilion, or rather loggia, in the pure Italian style. If glazed, as the sketch shows, it would answer for an orange house, or winter house for half-hardy plants. The casements might be removed in summer, but the side doors should be retained at all seasons, or the thorough draught will be inconvenient.

could be given in the Italian style. If glazed, as the sketch shows, it would answer for an orange house, or winter house for half-hardy plants. The casements might be removed in summer, but the side doors should be retained at all seasons, or the thorough draught will be inconvenient.

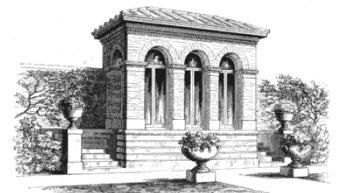


FIG. 154. ITALIAN LOGGIA.

From *Garden architecture and landscape gardening*.  
By John Arthur Hughes  
London 1866



## London Open Squares Day

The London Open Squares Day, was founded in 1998 by Caroline Aldiss, with support from The London Parks and Gardens Trust and English Heritage.

The original purpose was to draw attention to the importance of London's green spaces and the need to conserve them and to enable non-residents to enjoy squares and gardens not usually open to the public. The event began with a small number of gardens taking part and has grown steadily. It now spreads over a weekend, with over 200 gardens and squares taking part in inner and outer London.

For several years I have thought it would be an enjoyable event and finally managed to organise myself, booked my ticket and on Saturday 14th June set off for my personal starting point of Bedford Square, seeing, over the two days, a mere tenth of what is on offer, of which I only report on a selection.

This year a ticket bought in advance, covering entry to all the participating gardens, cost £10 or £5 for National Trust Members, (slightly more if bought on the day). Along with the ticket comes a quarter inch thick, illustrated guide book, with details of all the gardens, including opening times and transport information, plus useful maps. One can think of worse value for money.

It would be utterly impossible for any mortal to see every garden in the one weekend, so the guide book is invaluable in planning routes and selecting which areas and which gardens to visit. I chose Marylebone, West End and Bloomsbury, and The City.

Bedford Square is probably what most people think of as a typical London Square, surrounded by Georgian buildings, originally fine houses, bordered with railings and containing huge mature plane trees. Like many other squares it was originally designed as a private garden for the residents of the houses, which formed part of what was then a large, brand new (but rather superior) housing estate.



*Bedford Square*

Other squares and small gardens also provided, or still provide, a private garden space for residents or workers but public squares, like Russell and Brunswick Square also feature. Several of the squares have

benefited from Heritage Lottery grants for their restoration.

Another private space, or spaces, were the two small, secluded, courtyard gardens of The Academy Hotel. In one it was possible to enjoy wine or coffee by a pool, a privilege usually reserved for guests.



*The garden at the Academy Hotel*

Other open spaces have grown from churchyards. St George's Gardens still contains many of its tombs, while the adjacent graveyard became a medical school and is now a nursery, its trees hung with bottles and jam jars containing – well, I'm not sure what, but they were colourful.

On the edge of Regent's Park are the private Park Square and Park Crescent, designed by Nash and maintained by the same organisation since 1824. There is a "nursemaid's tunnel" between them, going under Marylebone Road, so that the nannies could push their charges from one to the other without having to mix with the common people and traffic on the road above.

Close by is The Royal College of Physician's Medicinal Garden where informative and entertaining tours were conducted. The guide told us the various uses, past and present, of the plants in the garden and pointed out that, while plants like deadly nightshade are toxic, there is another plant that is far more toxic and kills far more people. No prizes for guessing which one!

The City has many small green spaces. The square (actually a circle) at West Smithfield had an unusual white and dark purple colour scheme for its planting. These are colours of mourning, which seems appropriate for what had once been the site of brutal executions.

The Fred Cleary Garden, (named after a green space campaigner), had a happier history as a Roman bath and Medieval vine trading area.

Postman's Park, a small, pretty garden next to St Botolph Aldersgate, contains a wall of tiles movingly commemorating people who died trying to save others.





*Postman's Park*

As a contrast to the historic gardens and way above the city streets is the garden on the 6th floor roof terrace of Nomura International. This modern garden, with stunning views across and down the river, is maintained by its planners but volunteer employees have created a spotless vegetable garden along the edge by Canon Street Station. No doubt an enterprising snail will reach it one day.



*The roof-top vegetable garden at Normura International*

I finished my weekend working back towards Bloomsbury through the elegant gardens of the Middle and Inner temple.



*Middle Temple*

These are open to the public at limited times but one could not, normally, take tea by the roses.

Finally I walked through Gray's Inn where an ancient Indian Bean tree displayed its beans. This tree is supposed to have grown from slips brought from Virginia by Raleigh, presumably along with that very toxic plant.....

**Jenny Wood**

Some useful and/or interesting relevant websites:

[www.opensquares.org](http://www.opensquares.org)

[www.londongardenstrust.org/history/squares.html](http://www.londongardenstrust.org/history/squares.html)

[www.londongardensonline.org](http://www.londongardensonline.org)

[www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/thingstodo/greenspaces/citygardens](http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/thingstodo/greenspaces/citygardens)

## Tom Hart Dyke - Modern Day Plant Hunter

On 2nd September, Tom Hart Dyke is coming to Arley Hall to talk about his experiences when he was kidnapped in the Columbian jungle on a plant hunting expedition that went dangerously wrong.

*"On the day the guerrillas told him he would die, he planned a world garden for his ancestral home, Lullingstone Castle, Kent."*

Tom and his travelling companion, Paul Winder, were kidnapped while trekking through 'The Darien Gap', a dangerous place abandoned by all to warring guerrilla factions. Tom and Paul were kidnapped on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2000 and were held for nine months before their release on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2000. During this nine month ordeal, the British Embassy gave the boys up for dead, but Tom and Paul's parents never gave up hope.

After Tom's return to his ancestral home of Lullingstone Castle, near Sevenoaks, Kent. Tom and Paul (Winder) penned the best-selling book *The Cloud Garden* (Transworld 2002) detailing their experiences.

At the event, Tom will talk about his experiences.

The event will be held in Arley Hall at 7.30pm on 2<sup>nd</sup> September. The talk will be followed by wine and canapés in the Drawing Room.

Cost £17 for members of Friends of Arley or £20 for non-members.

If anyone is interested please contact me on 0161 962 3507 for further information or tickets.

**Patricia Hazlehurst**



## News from the Caldwell's Nurseries Project

A lot seems to have happened recently, so in no particular order...

### Database

The transfer of information from two ledgers into the database is almost complete. Our computer consultant has written reports which will

- allow people using the website to find out what appears on each page of each ledger;
- find out what was bought by each customer;
- find out who bought particular types of plant.

For the last two, there is always a reference back to the ledger and page number, so it is easy to find the original entry.

But – before letting the public loose on this information we need to review these reports and check for errors.

### Customers

John Edmondson has done a review of all the customers so far entered on the database. He has found 800 names in all, though some of these (he thinks about 10%) will be duplicates, due to different spellings. He has found 306 people living in Lancashire and just 84 in Cheshire. This is because of the differences in the two ledgers so far dealt with.

One is for the Knowsley nursery and is a day book. This means that there are lots of entries of just a few lines as it records the sales to people who dropped in to make their purchase and probably paid cash on the spot. One gentleman, unnamed, but from Bickerstaffe, bought 6 gooseberry trees for one shilling. On the same page is another one-line entry, this time for a Mr. John Plumb of Netherton who bought 100 early cabbage plants, a snip at 10 for a penny.

However, the other ledger so far transcribed is from the Knutsford nursery and is a sales order book. There are fewer names, but those customers ordered large quantities – sometimes one order might stretch over two pages. For example, on 18 February 1790, Lord Egerton at Tatton ordered 83 different items, including many different varieties of some vegetables: 10 bean; 6 broccoli; 3 cabbage; 4 onion; 6 peas and 4 radish among others. These were credit customers and could sometimes take a couple of years to settle their accounts.

### Oral history

Sue Eldridge has completed the mammoth task of listening to all the oral history recordings and making notes of where to find particularly interesting snippets. If RHS Tatton had been around a few decades ago, Caldwell staff could have popped home at night and wouldn't have needed the caravan they used for shows:

*"I'd take the lorry and 2/3 staff and set up the display. Then George and I would stay overnight in the caravan for the rest of the show, usually three days. We'd cook for*

*ourselves, because we had a stove and calor gas."* (Frank Passant)

### Exhibition

This has had two outings recently – Oxton Secret Gardens on 11 May and Macclesfield Open Gardens on 5 July. The second one led to the donation of a Dron-Wal sprayer purchased from Caldwell's. Still in its box, it's price was 15/9d. We have also recently acquired a number of items including five Caldwell catalogues from 1944-48.

### Postcard

We have produced a postcard that can be given to people to remind them of what the Project is all about. Can be used as a bookmark or to write to us.

### Video

We have been working on the production of a short (3-minute) video to whet people's appetites. It will be shown for the first time at the AGT/AGM conference, be available for talks and exhibitions and, hopefully, go on YouTube to catch the interested who might not otherwise discover it.

### King Canute

You will remember that we have been looking for a permanent home for our King Canute, star of our silver medal-winning RHS Tatton garden in 2012 (see below). We have now heard that planning permission has been granted to Knutsford Town Council and he will be taking up residence in the grounds of their offices in the centre of Knutsford. We and Knutsford Town Council are delighted with this news and we'll let you know his moving in date once it's confirmed.





## Cheshire's Gardens of Distinction win Best Show Feature at RHS Tatton for 'Cheshire's Carnival of Gardens'



Left: Just a few of the team were around to receive this award from Show Manager Kris Hulewicz. Receiving "Best Show Feature" is like winning a Gold Medal.

Like Cheshire Gardens Trust, Cheshire's Gardens of Distinction is celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, so the Carnival Theme of the show was very appropriate. We were pleased to provide one of the eight gardens that made up the exhibit.

The design that Christine produced was included in the April Newsletter. It was wonderful to see it brought to life.

We had a budget of just £200, so most of the materials were borrowed. We are truly grateful to Fryer's Garden Centre who lent us pots, urns, apple boxes and plants; to Chelford Farm Supplies for providing the hazel hurdles and fence posts; to Plantation Nursery for the loan of a van; to Ashley Reclamation for the loan of a vintage wheelbarrow. Without them the garden could not have happened.

The labour was provided by volunteers from Cheshire Gardens Trust and Reaseheath College RHS students.

Their work was much admired by visitors. More CGT volunteers were available to talk to people about the work of the Trust.

There were also exquisitely designed and beautifully executed gardens from Arley Hall and Gardens, Adlington Hall and Gardens, Biddulph Grange, Bluebell Cottage Nursery and Gardens, Cholmondeley Castle Gardens, Fryers Garden Centre and Norton Priory



Above: the picnic basket idea was greatly appreciated. In the forefront is the section referencing our visits to modern gardens. Diagonally opposite, was a section with urns and bright red pelargoniums representing the more traditional, historic gardens. One section, with brambles and nettles, represented researching of lost gardens and diagonally opposite that, boxes and other containers of vegetables and herbs, together with an old wheelbarrow and tools represented our Caldwell Project.



Left: the old wheelbarrow;  
Above: our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary "cake" created from chrysanthemums;  
Right: Ruth Brown with Monty Don





## Oooops!!

It doesn't happen often, but the last Events mailing contained – *a mistake*.

The Bulb Planting on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> September at Grappenhall Library will be at **2 p.m.** and not 10 a.m. as stated. If this means that you could make it after all, and have lost your mailing (like me!) then here are the details:

This will be a demonstration of container bulb planting followed by a hands-on practical with a choice of hyacinths, crocuses and dwarf narcissi for participants to **take home**. Bulbs, pots and compost will all be provided and there will be assistance, advice and inspiration from Ruth Brown and Jaquetta Menzies, the workshop leaders.

Before you get to plant your bulbs though, Ruth (horticulturist) and Jaquetta (garden designer) will talk through the following topics:

- is it a bulb? a corm? a tuber? or a rhizome? (they have different needs and qualities)
- knowing which are best for indoors and which for outdoors
- what to look for, where and what to buy
- types of compost and containers
- different ways to plant to get different results
- forcing (or not) bulbs for indoors
- how to make and use plunge-beds
- what to do with the bulbs when they have finished flowering

Then try your hand at planting using the bulbs, pots and compost provided. And – if Ruth and/or Jaquetta have got their act together – there could even be ready-planted pots for sale.

The cost of this event (£10 for members, £12 for non-members) includes not only the bulbs, pots and compost, but also tea, coffee and biscuits.

September is not too early to plan for next Spring, so why not pencil this into your diary? But make sure you book with Jaquetta. You can contact her at [jacquettamenzies@mac.com](mailto:jacquettamenzies@mac.com) or on 01625 575711 to reserve your place and send a cheque for the appropriate payment (made payable to Cheshire Gardens Trust) to CGT Bulb Planting, 13 Irwell Rise, Bollington, Cheshire SK10 5YE.



### Anecdotes of Mr. BROWN, the Gardener

Few persons from so humble a sphere of life have been so much talked of as Mr. Brown. He was an under gardener originally at Stow; the gardens of which place he improved and gave the design for the temple of Concord and Victory, which raised him into some degree of estimation as an architect. He is almost as well known for his vanity as for his talents in laying out ground. When he had finished the water at Blenheim, he stood upon a rising ground near it, and cried out in an exclamation, - *The Thames will never forgive me this!*

He obtained his name of *Capability Brown*, from the answer he made to Lord Coventry; when, having been shewn the place to which much had been done before, his Lordship asked him how he liked it? *Why, my Lord, the place has its capabilities*. He did much to it himself, and esteems it his best performance.

He was sent for by a gentleman in Staffordshire who had more money than land – and upon being shewn the ground – *That hill, said Brown, you must clump*. That I cannot do, said the gentleman, for it belongs to Mr. Jennings. *Well, - we must pass over that; this valley must be cleared and floated*. Impossible, returned the other, for that is also Mr. Jennings's. *Your most humble servant*, said Brown, taking an abrupt leave, *I think Mr. Jennings should have sent for me, not you*.

When Lord Exeter shewed him Burleigh, and he had viewed the ground where the water was to be made; his Lordship asked him what the expence would be? – He replied, *The Goddess of Taste will reproach you, my Lord, if you think of expence in so divine a place*. Still he was urged. *It will take several years to do it, I must have two thousand a year for it 'till it is done*. He would hear of no other terms, and has been for some time employed on those terms. Brown certainly laughed when he called it a divine place, and it will be one of his word things.

**Morning Post and Daily Advertiser** 30 July, 1776

## Combermere

If you weren't able to go on the Combermere trip, but our report has made you wish you could, remember that the gardens will be open between 1 and 5 p.m. on Thursday 21 August and Wednesday 24 September. Admission is £5. (Combermere Abbey, Whitchurch, Shropshire – postcode for Sat Nav is SY13 4AN)

## September Conference at Chester

Cheshire Gardens Trust will be hosting this year's annual AGT AGM and Conference at the Queen Hotel in Chester. All places have been booked, but there will be a report in the next newsletter. The Planning Group has organised an exciting weekend which will look at Continuity and Change in Cheshire's gardens. On the Friday we will visit the newly restored Grosvenor Park in Chester. Saturday looks at the difficulties faced by gardens where the original owners have long gone – Thornton Manor, once the home of Lord Leverhulme and the model village he built for his workers, Port Sunlight. In the afternoon we will visit the gardens at Burton Manor. We will consider the different ways in which these gardens are being saved for posterity.

On Sunday we will visit Cholmondeley and Arley – two gardens which have remained in the ownership of their families for generations and which each maintain and yet develop those gardens.

## Study Day at Hagley Hall

On Wednesday 1 October, the Association of Gardens Trusts together with Hereford and Worcester Gardens Trust and the Garden History Society will be holding a Study Day at Hagley Hall, the home of Viscount Cobham. In its day, the park at Hagley was considered one of the greatest of all English Landscape Gardens. After nearly 150 years of neglect, a major restoration of the gardens is underway, funded by English Heritage, Natural England and the Hagley Hall Estate.

This will be one of the first groups to look at the work that has been done and the Landscape that has been recovered. The day's programme runs from 9.30 to 4.30 and costs £45. Hagley Hall is not far from Junction 3 of the M5.

You can download the full details from the AGT website: [www.gardenstrusts.org.uk](http://www.gardenstrusts.org.uk). To check availability of places email Teresa the AGT Co-ordinator at: [gardenstrusts@agt.org.uk](mailto:gardenstrusts@agt.org.uk) or phone 020 7251 2610.

## For continuing education...

If you are feeling in need of some intellectual stimulation and an excuse to visit Cambridge, then why not consider these courses on offer at the University of Cambridge, Institute of Continuing Education (ICE)? ICE is based at Madingley Hall, a beautiful 16<sup>th</sup> century manor house just outside Cambridge.

### **Undergraduate Certificate in Historic Environment**

This is a one-year course starting 17 October 2014. The programme will be taught over six study weekends at Madingley Hall, plus four field trips and online support throughout. Cost is £2,175. More details at [www.ice.cam.ac.uk/historic-environment-certificate](http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk/historic-environment-certificate).

### **Undergraduate Advanced Diploma in Ecological Monitoring and Conservation or**

### **Undergraduate Advanced Diploma in Historic Environment**

These 2-year research-based courses offer supervised independent study of a topic of your choice, culminating in a dissertation of 10,000–12,000 words. There are 6 individual supervisions and one Saturday day school at Madingley Hall. Cost for each is £2,300. More details at [www.ice.cam.ac.uk/eco-monitoring-advdip](http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk/eco-monitoring-advdip)

The Diploma courses are an excellent foundation in research methods.

The deadline for application for all courses is 17 September. Some bursaries are available. Check out the [www.ice.cam.ac.uk](http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk) website.

**Copy date for October newsletter is 30 September**

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, 26 Sandford Road, Sale, M33 2PS, tel: 0161 969 3300 or e-mail [joy.uings@btconnect.com](mailto:joy.uings@btconnect.com).