CHESHIRE GARDENS TRUST

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Newsletter

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Inside:

Some future events:

- Visit to Combermere Abbey Gardens – Wednesday 7 May
- Stonyford Cottage Gardens and nursery (includes light meal and garden tour) – 5.30 Thursday 12 June
- East Garden at Arley – 11 a.m. Tuesday 8 July – bring a picnic

It hardly seems possible that it is ten years since the Cheshire Gardens Trust was launched at a packed event at Arley in 2004. Nearly seventy members attended the AGM and Spring Lecture at the end of March where we celebrated our achievements.

Jacqui Jaffé welcomed members with a choice of Cheshire Apple Juices from Eddisbury Fruit Farm – recalling our visit there in October 2008. We mingled and chatted until it was time to be served the hot meal of our choice eaten at one of the many round tables which allowed the chatting to continue.

After Sam Youd and Joy Uings took us through the business of the AGM, it was time to cut the cake. Made to look like Tatton Park if '*Capability*' Brown had designed it, it seemed a shame to spoil it. Joy was given the honour of making the first cut, then after everyone had been served with a piece, it was time for Steffie Shields to tell us more about '*Capability*' Brown.

Lancelot *'Capability'* Brown and the Gift of Landscape

Following the AGM, and the cutting and consuming of the cake, the floor was given over to Steffie Shields (right) to deliver the Spring Lecture.

Steffie is the Chairman (she prefers that to Chair) of the Association of Gardens Trusts and a member of the Lincolnshire Gardens Trust. She began by congratulating CGT generally on its ten years and specifically on our Research and Recording and Conservation and Planning activities which, she said, are second to none.

Steffie (a self-styled '*Brownaholic*') has had a long-standing interest in the 18th century landscape gardener Lancelot '*Capability*' Brown, which dates back to when she was living near Wimbledon Park, one of Brown's works. Without a garden of her own, historic gardens were of great interest to her.

Brown was nicknamed '*Capability*' due to his habit of referring to grounds which owners had asked him to 'improve' (the term 'landscaped' was not then used) as '*having capabilities*'. With Brown such a common surname (and there were plenty of Lancelot Browns, too), the nickname stuck and Lancelot, born in 1716 in Kirkharle in Northumberland, has been known by it ever since.

In his mid-teens, Brown went as apprentice gardener to Sir William Loraine at nearby Kirkharle Hall. Having learned his trade, he then travelled south while still in his mid-20s and was soon working for Lord Cobham at Stowe. While there he married Bridget Wayet, whom he had met in Lincolnshire.

In 1751 the family moved to Hammersmith and thirteen years later, having been appointed Master Gardener, to Wilderness House at Hampton Court.

Brown was financially very successful and in 1767 purchased Fenstanton Manor in Huntingdonshire. He was buried in the churchyard there, following his death in 1783.

Today we refer to Brown as a landscape gardener, but during his life he was often referred to as an engineer (see the quote on page 4). Brown was known for 'sorting out the water' – lakes, rivers, weirs and drainage and, as we heard in the talk on nurseries (see page 5), the one word 'gardener' was, in any case, used to cover a whole range of different activities.

And Brown did not so much design gardens as re-design the landscape – in fact, he fell out of favour in the 19th century because he swept away the formal gardens which once surrounded grand houses. This left the house standing in the landscape, drawing the eye and demonstrating the importance of the owner. (For the impact on the kitchen garden, see page 9).

The road to the house was also changed. Previously, a straight avenue would lead to the front door. Brown created winding paths, hills and hollows, and carefully placed clumps of trees, all of which meant that the visitor would catch glimpses of the house before it finally appeared in all its glory.

He was also skilled at creating the illusion of rivers by placing bridges across lakes which were extended so that the eye could not see where they ended.

Compared to the formal gardens of the 17th and 19th centuries, the landscapes created in the 18th century were not simply informal in layout but mimicked nature with their varying levels, apparent rivers and natural-appearing clumps of trees. They were, of course, a sanitised version of nature; one that was more perfect, more beautiful. But they have left their mark in that it is a vision of nature that we retain in our minds.

And this is not so surprising. Brown worked on over 200 commissions, many of which covered many acres, and his approach was copied by people like William Emes and John Webb. (It seems it was Emes who was responsible for the work at Crewe Hall – and not Brown as Steffie suggested). [1]

Much of England was re-designed and over the centuries, although landscaped properties have been broken up, their impact has not necessarily been lost. Steffie encouraged us to look, and look again. She quoted Marcel Proust: '*The real voyage of discovery consists not of seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes.*'

There is little evidence to prove that Brown was responsible for any landscape in Cheshire, [2] but his influence has certainly been felt. There are Brown 'signatures' that we can look out for.

For example, a single Sycamore – known as the 'tree of liberty' – was a symbol of the Whig party. (The Hanoverian symbol was the Lime tree.) Or a single Copper Beech (introduced into this country in the 18th century). Scots Pines planted in significant locations and Gorse, which was a useful insulator for water pipes. Tunnels under roads created so that farm animals and workers would be out of sight as visitors approached.

Steffie had seen a clump of trees at Brown Knowl which had brought Capability Brown to mind. Was he responsible? If you know, then please tell her…

Joy Uings

[1] The argument hinges on entries in Lord Verulam's Diary; checking is difficult as the book is not widely available.

[2] Eaton Hall website gives Brown a credit for the gardens: the estate made substantial payments to Brown, but it seems there is no evidence as to what exactly he did there.

More news from the AGM

It was Sam Youd's first and last appearance at the AGM as Chair of CGT. He took over this role in a 'caretaker' capacity last year.

Our new Chair is Barry Grain, (left) head gardener at Cholmondeley Castle. Barry joined the Council of Management last year and is looking forward to his new role.

Photo right: plenty of time was allowed for socialising

Photos courtesy of ***Chris Driver***

Visit to Chetham's Library

On Friday16th January, a group of 28 had a fascinating and enjoyable morning at Chetham's Library in Manchester.

As CGT Members we were under the impression that our visit might be limited to viewing, from the Library's stock, rare books and manuscripts of a horticultural and botanical nature.

So we were delighted that our excellent guide, Dr Powell, the Librarian, prior to showing us the documents he had selected of particular interest, provided a superb guided tour of both the Library, the oldest surviving public library in Britain, and the original building, dating back to 1421, which served as priests' accommodation for Manchester's Collegiate Church.

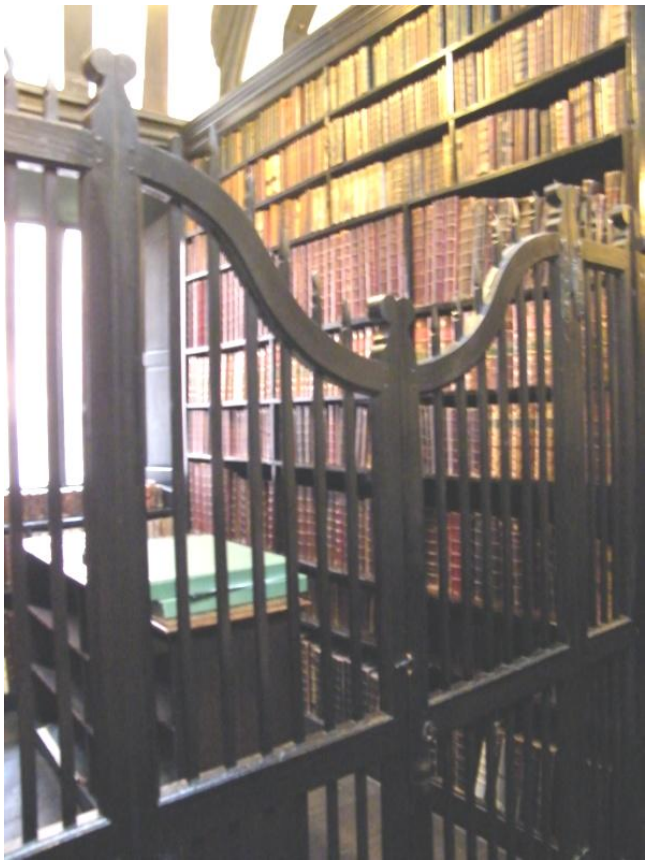
Chetham's, being in the centre of Manchester, is surrounded by buildings of far less vintage. As we looked from the college grounds over to the Cathedral, we were asked to imagine how the area had originally looked, with an orchard and an apple market!

The original building had provided accommodation for the warden and the eight fellow priests within walking distance of the present day Cathedral. In this beautiful original building we toured the kitchen, the baronial hall and the Cloister Court, with the priest cells and an interesting well – with eyes!

Both the Library and the School date back to 1653 from the provision made in the will of local gentleman, textile merchant, banker, landowner and benefactor, Humphrey Chetham. Before his death, Humphrey Chetham had provided for the education and livelihood of 22 under privileged boys from the Manchester area. The will enabled the founding of Chetham's Hospital as a place of shelter/hospitality as well as instruction, thus fulfilling Humphrey Chetham's wishes.

From those beginnings the school was maintained over the centuries, eventually specialising to become, in 1969, the present day highly esteemed co-educational music school. The Library, however, whilst housed in the school building in the former Warden's Bedroom, has always been separate from the school. Again, it was founded as a result of Humphrey Chetham's will, thus enabling academics and professionals access to books and manuscripts in Manchester to enable them to continue their studies on their return from academic institutions such as Oxford and Cambridge.

As we wandered in the Library, we appreciated what an amazing rare collection of books the Library holds. Originally the books were all chained, but as the number of books grew and the shelving was expanded, this was impractical and the chains gave way to gates to each aisle of books (see photo, next page).



We were shown one particular set of books, Ben Johnson's copy of the classic edition three volumes of Plato, written in Latin and Greek, acquired in 1655 for £3. 10 s.! And the book was signed "This book belongs to Ben Johnson!"

We wandered around the beautiful reading room, where Marx had worked in 1845, when he visited Engels. Here can be found examples of how the books were chained.

At the close of the tour, in the Audit Room directly below the reading room, Dr Powell presented his selection of books and manuscripts of interest to us, including the Library's biggest book on gardens, dating back to 1613 from a German Prince Bishop, acquired by the library for £10, with its superb life-size illustrations of plants, such as narcissus, chrysanthemum, hyacinth, and primulas (see right). Dr Powell stressed the weight of this book, a drawback to him in transporting it back to the shelves! This book was printed in black and white, whilst other books on view from the mid 18th century had very delicate colouring.

There was also an excellent book of prints of the Royal palaces and stately homes from the 18th century, including Eaton Hall and Dunham Massey. It was of particular interest to see how many have survived and what changes to the landscaping that had occurred over the centuries.

We were also shown a very interesting set of plans from that mid 18th century of Shude Hill area with their large gardens, including orchards. Sadly all this area has been swallowed by the city! We were amazed and delighted to be given access to such a range of interesting and rare manuscripts and to be able to browse them at leisure.

Today the Library continues to expand, specialising in the history and topography of Greater Manchester and Lancashire.

At the close of our visit Dr Powell was asked about current developments at the Library. He gave detail of the Library's work to digitise the Jennison collection at Belle Vue, which had included an impressive botanical garden as well as the Zoo: possibly a topic for a further CGT talk?

Many thanks to Barbara for arranging such an excellent and fascinating morning.

Margaret Hutchinson

As we were told by Steffie Shields, Capability Brown was known as an engineer rather than a landscape gardener:

"*Mr. Brown, the Engineer, commonly called Capability Brown, is to have the new modelling St. James's Park; but till the Arches of the Drains are settled, the Ground cannot be covered in. The principal Point intended is to give a full View of Whitehall to the Queen's Palace, and also of Westminster Abbey, to effect which almost all the Trees on that Side will be taken away.*"

Public Advertiser, 6 September, 1770

Change of date

The date for the Bluebell Walk at Tushingham Hall has been changed to 4 May.
Call Peter Moores-Dutton on 07970 417772 for details

Nurserymen of Manchester and the North-West (1750-1850)

CGT Lecture by Joy Uings at Wilmslow Library, 22 February 2014

The subject of this lecture formed part of Joy Uings' PhD thesis on 'Gardens and Gardening around Manchester 1750-1850'. Those attending, therefore, benefited from hearing part of her extensive and original research and came away knowing a great deal about the many enterprising and important nurserymen of the area – eighty of whom were in the vicinity of Manchester alone.

Three areas were covered in the lecture: the horticultural trade in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; the range of plants sold and how their importance changed over time; and, an introduction to a few of the nurserymen during this period. From these, two aspects became very apparent: first, the difficulty of the terminology used to describe anyone connected with the horticultural trade during this period and secondly, that it was a trade almost guaranteed to end in bankruptcy!

The horticultural trade in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries

The difficulty of the terminology was tackled first with the following being examined: nurseryman, gardener, seedsman, florist, fruiterer and market gardener, the difficulty in differentiating between all of these was clearly shown in that in the eighteenth century a gardener could be a person who worked as a private gardener, a market trader, a nurseryman, someone who laid out gardens, or a combination of any number of them. Examples of the more obvious differences between a nurseryman, seedsman and florist, were stated including, for example, that the former, who usually sold forest trees, fruit trees, shrubs, flowers and tools, traded outside the town or built up area whereas a seedsman usually occupied premises in the town. Also, quite frequently seedsmen sold seeds as a sideline to their main trade, which might be as chemists, druggists, grocers, ironmongers, woollen drapers or even blacksmiths.

An explanation of 'florist' and 'florists' flowers' was also given, with the former having a very different meaning from that of today. Florists did not sell cut flowers and flower arrangements but in the eighteenth century sold bulbs and corms (usually of tulips, hyacinths and ranunculus), and dormant perennials. [Although not mentioned in the lecture the term 'florist' was first used in 1623 by Sir Henry Wotton, and meant at this time "*a person whose special interests whether amateur or professional was in growing flowers, or alternatively in flower gardening*". Typical early florists' flowers were comprised of a relatively small number of species from which many hundreds of cultivars were raised particularly those which were different from the 'type' (the species), for example, by being double-flowered or of an unusual colouring.] Florists' flowers included: auriculas, polyanthus, tulips, hyacinths, carnations and pinks, all of which remained popular throughout the eighteenth century. Examples of the range and availability of these cultivars was shown by those sold in 1798 by Goring and Wright– who had taken over the nursery business of James Maddock (1718-1786) – which included 329 hyacinth cultivars, with the cheapest selling for one shilling and the most expensive for eight guineas.

In addition to the difficulties of terminology two further problems were explained in that through a lack of evidence it was often difficult to ascertain, first what exactly was being traded by nurserymen, seedsmen or florists, and secondly whether or not a particular individual was an amateur or professional grower.

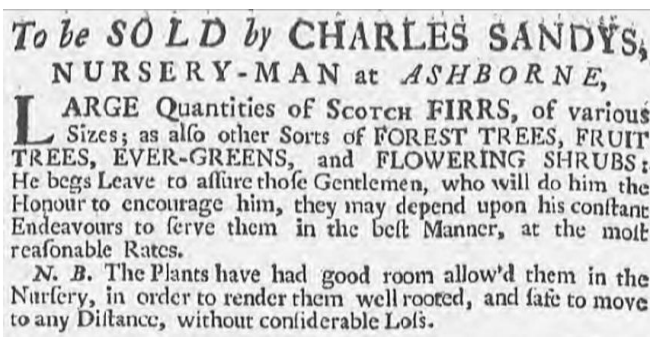
The range of plants sold and how their importance changed over time

Due to the fickleness of fashion it was explained how in the nineteenth century new types of plants such as dahlias, pelargoniums, fuchsias, pansies, calceolarias and verbenas became popular and replaced previously popular plants.

The range of plants being grown by nurserymen also changed. In the 1750s forest trees, fruit trees, shrubs, herbaceous perennials, bulbs, seeds of garden vegetables, flowers, grasses and agricultural and bird seed were all offered for sale but by 1850 a more exotic range of plants were being offered.

This reflected changes that had occurred not only in taste, but also in the availability of considerably more plants from North America and South Africa, many of which were tender and required heated greenhouses in order to be kept, sown or propagated during the colder months.

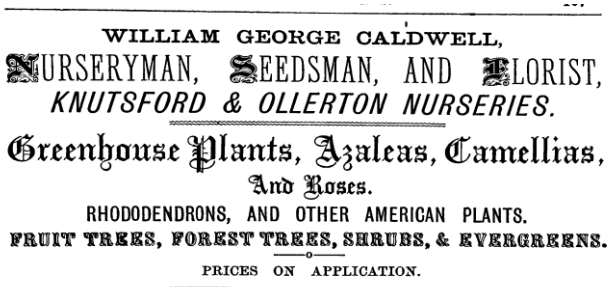
It was very fortuitous that at the same time as these tender plants were being introduced greenhouses were available at much more affordable prices – primarily because of a tax reduction on glass. A comparison of two advertisements was made to show this change – one (below) in the *Derby Mercury*, placed by Charles Sandys in 1758, which advertised forest trees and fruit trees and the other (overleaf) placed by William George Caldwell in the Warrington Directory in 1871, which advertised greenhouse plants, azaleas, camellias and roses.



To be SOLD by CHARLES SANDYS,
NURSERY-MAN at *ASHBORNE*,

LARGE Quantities of SCOTCH FIRRS, of various Sizes; as alſo other Sorts of FOREST TREES, FRUIT TREES, EVER-GREENS, and FLOWERING SHRUBS: He begs Leave to aſſure thoſe Gentlemen, who will do him the Honour to encourage him, they may depend upon his conſtant Endeavours to ſerve them in the beſt Manner, at the moſt reaſonable Rates.

N. B. The Plants have had good room allow'd them in the Nurſery, in order to render them well rooted, and ſafe to move to any Diſtance, without conſiderable Loſs.


WILLIAM GEORGE CALDWELL,
NURSERYMAN, SEEDSMAN, AND FLORIST,
KNUTSFORD & OLLERTON NURSERIES.
Greenhouse Plants, Azaleas, Camellias,
And Roses.
RHODODENDRONS, AND OTHER AMERICAN PLANTS.
FRUIT TREES, FOREST TREES, SHRUBS, & EVERGREENS.
PRICES ON APPLICATION.

The sale of trees was still important but the emphasis had changed from offering forest trees, for growing for timber, to those used for ornamental purposes and their suitability for smaller gardens. An interesting detail was that the cost of an 8ft beech was half the cost of a single tulip bulb.

As with other herbaceous plants and bulbs, there was also a large increase in the availability of cultivars of fruit trees, and various examples were shown, one of which – the apple – had 20 offered for sale by the nurseryman John Webb of London in 1760 whereas 168 were available in 1826 from John Miller of Bristol.

As there were no full-colour catalogues produced by nurseries it was surmised that choosing any plant from just a description must have been difficult and must instead have been done by recommendations by word of mouth or by seeing particular plants at one of the numerous horticultural shows. These shows were frequently held at pubs and such venues were where people met and exchanged horticultural and gardening information. (In passing it was also mentioned that landlords charged individuals for meals whether or not one was actually eaten!)

A further factor which was explained which influenced the change in demand for particular plants was the rise of the middle-classes. By 1850 Britain had changed from a rural to an industrialised economy, and this change had been accompanied by a corresponding shift in the population from country to town. As a consequence, and combined with a substantial increase in the growth of the population, there was a rapid expansion of suburbs in which many members of the middle class lived in their newly built villas. These villas all had reasonably sized gardens and the ever enterprising nurserymen now focused much of their business on advertising and selling products for this expanding market. This change was clearly shown in two maps of Manchester the first of which, around 1750, showed many open places and gardens within the relatively small city but which in the second map of 1850 had all but disappeared in the city centre but which were very apparent in the suburbs.

An introduction to a few of Manchester's and the North West's nurserymen

The first of these to be considered was Thomas Gorton, who in 1767 was described in the *Manchester Mercury* as *a Florist near Manchester*, and who was selling five different auricula seedlings. Gorton was one of those whose status was not known.

Robert Turner, Giles Boardman of Pendleton and John Bridgford were mentioned, with the latter changing his career as a barber and wig-maker to a nurseryman, seedsman and florist.

An example of the often unusual combination of products sold by nurserymen was demonstrated by an account of the products offered for sale by James Middlewood which included not only horticultural products but also foodstuffs, such as oysters from Colchester and the most efficacious of soaps – Abyssinian Flower-soap – a cure-all for any facial problems including "*dispelling blotches and eruptions in the skin*". (Middlewood was a nephew of Elizabeth Raffald (1733-1781) sometime housekeeper at Arley Hall, who married the head gardener, moved to Manchester and opened a confectionery shop with her husband John, who sold flowers and seeds on a market stall.)

The following were also mentioned: Hodgson Bigland, with a nice detail about his being referred to in *Mary Barton* by Elizabeth Gaskell (1848): "*but still you know you did go and forget to ask Bigland for that rose, the new rose they say he has got"*; Richard Smalley Yates, who had nurseries at Sale and was reputed not only to grow the best orchids in the country but also to have been the leading florist in Manchester (despite which he was one of those to go bankrupt); William Lodge, a very successful florist particularly for growing dahlias; John Slater, who was interested in tulips; George Vaughan and Thomas and Henry Watkinson; and the Bannerman family (particularly Alexander Bannerman).

It was pointed out that a number of nurserymen, including Boardman, created gardens within their nurseries not only to encourage the general public to buy plants but also to enable them to have somewhere pleasant to sit, have tea and occasionally be entertained with music. These gardens were, therefore, frequently laid out with walks, bowers, and pleasure grounds and with the railways making places more accessible nurseries became places to visit for a day's excursion.

The Caldwell dynasty was then discussed, which for a number of CGT members was very pertinent to their research work. Two myths were immediately dispelled, the first that there had been an uninterrupted line of William Caldwells since the Caldwell nursery was established and secondly that no-one else had been involved in their nursery business other than a Caldwell.

The following Caldwells were mentioned, but as time was pressing only briefly: William Caldwell 1st (1766-1844); William Caldwell 2nd (1789-1852); William George Caldwell 3rd (1824-1873) and his three sons Alfred, William and Arthur, (by all accounts Alfred was the black sheep of the family and it was William Caldwell 4th (1855-1918) who, under difficult circumstances, ran the business with his brother Arthur; William Caldwell 5th (1887-1953) and William Caldwell 6th (1922-2001). Arthur Caldwell's grandson (Don Leaman) became a director in 1963.

As this lecture progressed it became apparent that there were two common reasons for the failure or demise of nurseries: the first, bankruptcy, and the second, that land upon which nurseries were established, and which had originally been on the outskirts of towns, was increasingly required for development, particularly for houses – the same fate which relatively recently befell the site of Caldwells in Knutsford.

This lecture was delivered with a considerable depth of knowledge, humour, pertinent illustrations and an obvious pleasure for the subject. The difficulty was condensing all the material into a one hour period and with car parking meters ticking away had to be concluded, albeit reluctantly, and after a limited question time, at 12.30, but with the possibility of a further lecture in the future.

Jane Roberts

The CGT Lisbon Trip, 13-15 September 2013

Part Three

Day Two ended with a visit to Quinta da Regaleira and Day Three began with a look at a nearby park.

Quinta da Regaleira

We ended our (long) day at the mysterious, exuberant Lord of the Rings set-like building, (photo below) which sprouts turrets, towers, ornamentation and crazy paving block work.

No wonder; it was designed by an Italian architect and set designer at the end of 19th century. The gardens are as dramatic and magical, revealing the story of the cosmos through a sequence of gardens, grottos, fountains, towers, a ziggurat, lakes and waterfalls and a promenade of statues of the Gods. The elements are linked not only by above ground footpaths but also by a series of very dark, spooky underground tunnels that zig-zag up and down the steeply sloping wooded site.

No-one got to see all of it, some made it to the virgin's grotto at the top and others repaired to the cafe for tea and beer.

Day Three started close to the hotel area in Lisbon.

Park at top of Parque Eduardo VII

We had a short stop to admire the contemporary landscape with an elegant curved pond, in which children (and dogs) splash around.

C. Gulbenkian Foundation

This was some people's favourite; a 1960s landscape that provides a true setting for the building and demonstrates real understanding between architect and landscape architect. '*This is rare'* says António Morgado Fonseca, coordinator of the garden team who showed us around. He explains that the landscape somehow transmits Portuguese culture, so people feel very comfortable in the spaces and free in spirit. He explains the space is the structure, not the paths, or vegetation.

The design focused on the '*absence of masses'* or the open space. It was designed by landscape architects António Vianna Berreto and Gonçalo Ribeiro. The concept encapsulates light and shade, a water body at the heart of the garden which is approached via a series of spaces and vistas that help anticipate the presence of water and the role of the edges in guaranteeing the physical integrity of the perimeter.

The relationship with the buildings is key and incredibly successful. António thinks that it demonstrates remarkable understanding between the architect and landscape architect, which he says is rare.

Most of us were knocked out by the beauty, serenity, simplicity and composure of this landscape. Real ying and yang. Some of the original features have needed adaptation for health and safety reasons, but the underlying structure which hosts simplicity with contrasts in materials, colour, textures and scale remains.

Parque das Nações

We were dropped at Calatrava's amazing Gare do Oriente railway station, built for the expo site in 1998.

Oriente station

Next door is "Commercial Vasco da Gama" (Vasco da Gama Shopping Centre) located between twin towers with a nautical feel. The architects in our midst were able to wax lyrical about the design as some worked for the company that designed the towers, whilst the bird-watchers were photographing the lesser black-backed gull feet through the translucent roof.

There was too much to take in at the extensive Parque das Nações, (above and below) designed by landscape architect Cristina Castel-Branco for the 1998 Expo on a flat former industrial site. Located beside the River Tejo there are contemporary buildings set in contrasting landscapes. Expo pavilions, the oceanarium, water gardens, sculptures, gardens, a cable car and riverside walk, housing areas and the presence of the 17km Vasco da Gama bridge, constructed for Expo and still the longest bridge in Europe. It is a total contrast with the old parts of Lisbon.

What else did we find time for? Photographs, video, sketching, note-taking, cycling, bird-watching (31 species over the weekend), eating and drinking and generally communing as a group.

Annie Coombs

K is for Kitchen garden

Before the improvement in roads, the introduction of railways, the coming of steam ships and then of aeroplanes, for many people "growing your own" was not so much a personal choice as an essential part of their food supply. Only a proportion of people lived in towns, supplied by market gardens. For those in the country their kitchen garden was their own personal market garden.

Although the history of the kitchen garden reaches back into the mists of time, for most people the term usually calls to mind the 18th century walled kitchen garden.

Surrounding the kitchen garden with walls had a number of beneficial effects: walls created a physical barrier which hid the productive garden from the pleasure grounds and also helped to keep out the opportunistic thief. They provided a sheltered micro-climate and the walls, because they absorbed the heat from the sun, made an excellent place against which to grow fruit trees. This use was sometimes further improved by building part of the wall with flues, to direct the heat from fires.

Harry Delaney demonstrates where the fires were lit in the walls at Tatton

The position of the kitchen garden varied over time and according to changing tastes in garden design. Philip Miller's *Gardeners Dictionary* ran to many editions and is an excellent source for tracing these changes. In the 1735 edition he wrote that the kitchen garden should be out of sight but close to the house and particularly to the stables, otherwise there would be a lot of wasted labour carting the dung from one to the other (it was needed to create hot-beds to grow vegetables out of season). After that the fad for the landscape gardens of 'Capability' Brown swept the nation. Kitchen gardens were then tucked well away from the house and in the 1768 edition Miller

An espalier fruit tree, also at Tatton – the shadow shows the urns that conceal the chimneys/flues at the top of the wall

This sign for a Peach 'Barrington' can still be seen on the kitchen garden wall at Castle Park, Frodsham

explained why this was a mistake. Out of sight, out of mind – the kitchen garden would be neglected; or the place would be chosen without thought to the soil and aspect. Best, he said, to choose the place for the kitchen garden first then design the landscape around it to hide it from view: ensuring the paths to it were welcoming by having them wind through the shrubbery.

After Miller, the leading garden writer was John Abercrombie and his *Universal Gardener and Botanist* strikes a very 21st century note: "*health depends much on the use of a proper quantity of wholesome vegetables…"* he wrote in his lengthy piece on kitchen gardens. By the time he wrote this (1778 edition), the rising middle classes, owning smaller gardens than the great land-owning classes, were combining the kitchen, fruit and pleasure ground in one, and these were not necessarily surrounded by walls.

The size of the kitchen garden was determined by the number of people that were to be fed. Miller had suggested between one and four acres, but Abercrombie had the range from a quarter to eight acres. There were instructions as to the width of paths, number of beds and height of the walls (Miller

advocated 12 feet; John Loudon in the following century suggested between 10 and 18 feet, depending upon the size of the garden, the way it faced and the slope of the ground). Fruit could be grown on both sides of the wall, doubling productivity.

However, gardens were so often subject to depredation that societies were formed to catch offenders and get them taken to court. Some gardeners took matters into their own hands and set traps.

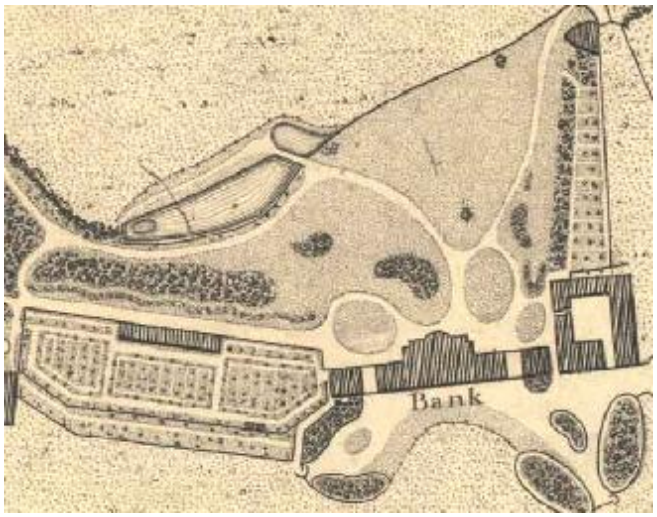
In 1814 a man was killed in Mitcham in Surrey by a spring gun which he triggered when raiding the garden of the man who would end his life as Dean of Manchester: the Hon. William Herbert. (He escaped punishment as the coroner recorded 'accidental death'.)

The number of plants and fruit stolen from gardens around Manchester apparently led to an increase in walled gardens – a writer to the editor of the *Manchester Times* complained that he could no longer appreciate the gardens he passed as they were now hidden from sight. Fruit was a particular attraction, but not everyone sought punishment of the offenders. William Cobbett recorded this kinder approach:

> "*I knew an old gentleman, one of whose garden walls separated the garden from a meadow, which was unprotected except by a common hedge. Those persons of the village who were fond of wall-fruit, who had none of their own, and who were young enough to climb walls, used to leave him a very undue proportion of his fruit, and that not of the best quality. He therefore separated a strip of the meadow from the rest by a little fence, very convenient for getting over; turned this strip, which lay along against the wall, into kitchen garden-ground, planted excellent fruit-trees against the wall, trained them and cultivated them properly; and thus, by furnishing his juvenile neighbours with onions for their bread and cheese, as well as fruit for their dessert, ever after he kept the produce of the inside of the garden for himself, generally observing (as he once particularly did to me) that he was not so unreasonable as to expect to have any of the produce of the exterior garden.*" [1]

In the nineteenth century improvements in transport meant that food could be more easily transported to the growing towns and cities and the kitchen garden became less ubiquitous. Over time most have been lost – those close to towns disappeared as the towns grew, like this one (below) belonging to Holland Ackers. His house lay just north of the Crescent in Salford (see map above right). By 1850 both house and garden had disappeared, having given way to a Brick Croft and Filtering Ponds associated with the Adelphi Dye Works.

During the 20th century, surviving walled kitchen gardens fell into disuse, as two world wars changed society's structure and reduced the number of gardeners.



Above: Holland Ackers' house 'Bank' as shown on Green's map of 1794.

The greenhouse at Dorfold Hall is an interesting structure with a tiled roof and tiny glass panes

In more recent times, however, there has been a growing appreciation of this part of our garden heritage. Many gardens have been saved from complete dereliction; some have been restored to full production while others have found a new lease of life as pleasure gardens or community resource.

Joy Uings

[1] Cobbett, William. The English Gardener (1996; first published 1829), p. 20.

Further reading:

You can download a pdf copy of Miller's *Gardeners Dictionary* from books.google.com. The same site also provides editions of JC Loudon's *Encyclopaedia of Gardening* and many other gardening books of the period.

Susan Campbell has written both *A History of Kitchen Gardening* (London, 2005) and *Walled Kitchen Gardens* (Princes Risborough, 2006) both of which are available at Amazon. Also available are various editions of *The Victorian Kitchen Garden*.

www.walledgardens.net has a downloadable pdf listing 150 walled kitchen gardens to visit. Cheshire gardens include those at Rode Hall, Norton Priory and Tatton Park. Just over the border in Staffordshire there is another interesting kitchen garden, built in 1739 at Sugnall, the property of Dr David Jacques. In Shropshire, the restored kitchen garden at Attingham Park is worth a visit.

A Forgotten Cheshire Gardener
Rev. Charles Wolley Dod 1826 - 1904

Edge Hall near Malpas has been the home of the Dod family since the time of Henry 11. The male line disappeared, the family ending with the heiress, Frances Parker, the granddaughter of Thomas Crewe Dod. She married Charles Wolley, (pronounced "woolly"), who changed his name to Wolley Dod. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the gardens created by the Rev. Charles Wolley Dod, were among the most celebrated in the country.

Charles taught at Eton for many years during which time he developed his interest in gardening. He retired in 1878 and moved to Edge Hall where he had the space to indulge his hobby. The soil is described as being stiff clay with poor drainage, and this probably encouraged his interest in plant habitats.

The garden, which covered ten acres, was mainly in the walled enclosure known as the Broad Lake, but a visitor said "*plants were everywhere. They line the sides of the carriage way, they fill borders on borders, they occupy bed after bed. They clothe the slopes, they are dotted on the lawn, they edge their way in up to the very hall-door, they are invading the kitchen garden at such a rate that fruit and vegetables are ousted by their more showy looking neighbours*."

Dod began lecturing and contributing to horticultural magazines, and corresponding with the leading gardening writers of the period. Gertrude Jekyll called him "*an experienced gardener and the kindest of instructors*", and sent him proofs of her books. Many of the greatest gardeners of the period visited Edge, including Reginald Farrer and Ellen Willmott. Unfortunately, none of his articles were expanded into books, and after his death he was quickly forgotten, and his garden gradually disappeared.

A number of plants were named after Edge Hall or its owner. There was *Saxifraga* 'Wolley Dod', *Dianthus* 'Wolley Dod', and two daffodils – 'Edge' and 'Wolley Dod'. None of these are listed in the modern *Plant Finder*, but may survive in a country garden.

'Wolley Dod's' Rose, *R. villosa* '*Duplex*' (R. *pomifera* 'Duplex'), is a mystery. A hybrid of unknown origin, possibly a seedling at Edge, it was never mentioned in his writings. It is a large shrub with grey green leaves and semi-double pink flowers and large red hips. The illustration in Ellen Willmott's *Genus Rosa* (1910-14), was from a sample supplied from Edge Hall gardens.

Dod's younger son, Lt. Col. Anthony Hurt Wolley Dodd, inherited his love of plants and combined a study of botany with a military career. He published a number of books and became an expert on roses, but never referred to 'Wolley Dod's Rose'.

John Davies

Sources

Who Does Your Garden Grow? Alex Pankhurst. Earl`s Eye Publishing. 1992

Gertrude Jekyll. Sally Festing. Viking. 1991.

Shrub Roses of Today. Graham Stuart Thomas. Phoenix House Ltd. 1962

This engraving (right), from a photo of Edge Hall sent by Wolley-Dod, appeared in William Robinson's *English Flower Garden* (1900). He described the garden thus:

EDGE HALL garden is one of those in which the hardy flowers of the northern world are grown in numbers for the owner's delight and the good of his friends, and it is in such large collections that charming novelties for our gardens often make their appearance. … The riches of the collection in such gardens are a source of danger as to effect, the very number of plants often leading to a neglect of breadth and simplicity of effect; but there is no real reason why a garden, rich in many plants, may not also be beautiful in its masses, airiness and verdure… A sunk fence of sandstone, easily jumped by a fox or a hare, and in other parts a line of movable hurdles, well wired against rabbits, separate three acres for house and garden from the surrounding grass fields and from a small park of eighty acres. About 200 yards from the house the sand rock comes through, forming a long terrace with an escarpment towards the west. The woods in spring are carpeted first with Primroses and wood Anemones, then with wild Hyacinths and Pink Campion, whilst later there is a tall growth of Campanula latifolia and large breadths of Japanese Knotwort (sic), which have been planted to supersede Nettles, while overhead is abundance of Hawthorn, Crab, and wild cherry. The hall stands on the side of a hollow watercourse worn in the stiff clay, which in Cheshire often lies over the sand rock. Down this watercourse runs a torrent in heavy rains, but it is quite dry in summer. On the sloping banks of this, close above the house, there formerly stood ranges of cow-houses and pig-sties, which drained into a stagnant pond in the bed of the watercourse within twenty yards of the bedroom windows. Twenty-five years ago it was drained, the watercourse confined within a covered culvert; and the whole space is now covered all summer with a dense forest of herbaceous plants – every good kind which will thrive in the cold soil on which the house stands being cultivated there.

Kew Gardens under threat

Kew Gardens has long played an important role in plant science and the 1983 National Heritage Act committed the government to ensuring that Kew is adequately resourced to carry out botanical research, education and to preserve its collections.

Over the past few years, however, Kew has suffered annual cuts to its grant from Government. Since 1983, when the grant made up 90% of Kew's income, successive cuts have reduced that figure to less than 40%.

More cuts are forecast, Kew has a £5m deficit, and it is expected to have to cut 120 jobs. If you would like to demonstrate your support for Kew, why not sign the on-line petition urging Government to reverse the cuts. You can find it at www.change.org (search-term = Kew).

Continuity and Change in Cheshire Gardens

5-7 September 2014

Bookings are coming in fast for September's Conference, so if you have been thinking about attending all or part of it, make sure you book soon. Details can be found on our website: www.cheshire-gardens-trust.org.uk.

As we said in the previous newsletter, there will be opportunities for volunteers. If you think you would like to get involved in some way, contact Jane Gooch at janegardendesign@aol.com.

Programme of events at Burton Manor

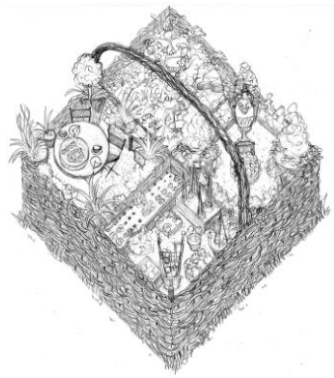
As you will know, we will be visiting Burton Manor during the AGT Conference weekend. But why wait until then before you visit there. The Friends of Burton Manor have a fascinating programme of events to help raise funds. Here's some to whet your appetite.

Thursday, 15 May, 7.30 p.m. The Making of the Wirral Landscape. Illustrated talk by local author Antony Annakin-Smith – the story of rocks, fieldscapes, roads and more. £10 fee includes cold buffet supper.

Thursday, 3 July, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Plants in the Wrong Place – A practical course on weed identification. Fee for this is £30 which includes tea and coffee but not lunch (there is a café on site, though).

There are also courses on drawing and painting, wildlife and archery. A plant fair will be held on Sunday 15 June (10-3) entry £1; a family treasure hunt is scheduled for 10 May at 3 p.m. £10.

Courses must be booked by post (Friends of Burton Manor Gardens, The Village, Burton, Neston CH64 5SJ); telephone (0151 345 1107: answer phone – please leave a message and we will call back) or e-mail (burtonmanorgardens@gmail.com). Find more information on http://burtonmanor.wordpress.com/. Become a Friend of Burton Manor Gardens and enjoy discounted prices.



We will continue the celebrations for our 10th anniversary by joining with the Cheshire Gardens of Distinction at the RHS Tatton Show in July.

Ruth Brown and Christine Wilcox-Baker are working with Tracy from Reaseheath and members of the Gardens Forum to create a show feature for Cheshire's Gardens of Distinction. CGT's part will be in the form of a basket (see early draft, left), divided into four parts. Section one references our events; section 2, our research & recording and conservation & planning activities; section 3, visits to both public and private gardens; and section 4 will be for special projects.

Fryers' Garden Centre will be lending us most of what is needed and Ruth and Christine plus volunteers will provide the rest. Let's hope it all goes according to plan!

The Didsbury Open Gardens charity event in aid of St Ann's Hospice will take place on Sunday 8 June. New gardens, as well as old favourites, will open to the public, with around 15 gardens opening in all.

There will also be willow weaving and music, teas and cakes. Programmes go on sale from The Cheese Hamlet and Inmans Newsagents from early May. See www.didsburyopengardens.org for updates.

Don't forget Arley Garden Festival on 21 & 22 June; Arley Chilli Festival (3 August); the Autumn Plant Fair (7 September) and Arley Mushroom Walks on 28 September.

Copy date for July newsletter is 30 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, 26 Sandford Road, Sale, M33 2PS, tel: 0161 969 3300 or e-mail joy.uings@btconnect.com.