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# Newsletter

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

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## Some future events:

- ✿ Port Sunlight River Park – Thursday 13 August
- ✿ A walk to celebrate Runcorn's 2 special birthdays – Tuesday 22 September
- ✿ Trees in Historic Landscapes: all-day workshop – Saturday 26 September
- ✿ Grappenhall Heys: talks, tour and apple-tasting – Wednesday 14 October



What a fabulous entrance! You drive through the stone gateway, past the Lodge and up the south drive with its informal lawns and scattered mature trees before arriving at Tirley Garth.

This grey Edwardian country house, with its large windows and walls covered in grey pebble dash, is a solid, imposing yet sombre building, situated with panoramic views across its south terrace towards Beeston and the distant Welsh hills.

We started with drinks in the new Tea Room/Art Exhibition Centre, where we were introduced to Tony Booth, the Head Gardener (and our guide for the afternoon) and his assistants, Felicity and Matt. It is encouraging to have such good numbers attending our various events and this time was no exception as approximately 50 members attended the visit to Tirley, on a rather cool but dry afternoon.



Tony gave a brief overview of the history of the house and garden.

Tirley Garth is the only Grade II\* Arts and Crafts Garden in Cheshire that remains complete, with the ongoing refurbishment work in excellent maintained condition.



The house (*above*) was designed in 1906 by Charles E Mallows, a London based Architect, and it was built over the next five years. Thomas Hayton Mawson was sharing office premises with Mallows in Conduit Street and was involved in a working partnership.

Although Mallows designed both the house and the layout of the terraces and pathways and other architectural structures, it is thought that Thomas Mawson influenced the garden design and was certainly the plantsman in charge.

As we know, Thomas Mawson was greatly influenced by the Arts & Crafts movement, founded by William Morris in the 1880s, with its return to traditional crafts and, in garden design, by the more natural style partly inspired by Gertrude Jekyll. A style for grand houses of the period, it incurred high building costs coupled with a high level of maintenance; but labour costs were not then the issue they are today!

Tony highlighted that there are at present just two full time and two part-time gardeners employed.

We started our guided walk at the South terrace, crossing the house entrance and forecourt before passing a rectangular sunken garden laid out in a cruciform pattern of stone paths and small retaining walls and steps with a small water feature.

You cannot help but admire all the stone work in the gardens; it is laid very expertly and to a high standard which was very much a mark of Mawson's projects. One is amazed at the

integrity, skill and craftsmanship of the workforce, dressing and positioning the stonework particularly taking into consideration the size and weight of the majority of pieces used in the walling and remembering that they had none of today's machinery and specialised tools. There must have been many 'labour of Sisyphus' moments during the lifting and lowering into place of the larger stones; not to mention the use of a word or two of colourful language!

The South Terrace, with its splendid views across the south lawn to the woodland with the rhododendrons just coming into flower, consists of trim box hedging, small lawns with paths of crazy paved stone.



The central feature installed only recently is a black granite revolving globe (*see above*). Over a tonne in weight, it was craned into position and seated within a square stone crucible, but once the power was switched on it was rotated by the power of water and pump. To complement the granite globe and seated area are newly planted trees including Japanese Cherries, *Prunus* 'Shirotae' (also known as the Mount Fuji cherry). These soften and give height to the feature.

A broad flight of shallow stone steps in the stone retaining wall lead down to the south lawn. Along the perimeter of the retaining wall are herbaceous borders which Tony highlighted as they may have been laid out initially by Mawson.

When asked about the source of the sandstone blocks used in the garden, all Tony could advise was that it was not local since it was transported by train to Mouldsworth Station and from there to Tirley by local farmers who were also



employed during the winter months to help build the walls.

It is presumed that the sandstone came from one of Mawson's preferred quarries in today's Cumbria. It was also interesting to hear that local labour was used; with the supervision of a student of Mawson's work, the men could have replicated this style of garden in other local country houses of the period.

We left the south terrace at the north east corner downwards by a flight of stone steps, with its raised alpine bed and lawn area to the Octagon garden (*see below*). Within the octagon area is a modern skeletal steel time piece set in a shrub bed with eight large timber poles depicting the points of an octagon.



From the Octagon runs an axial walk running north and south, south leading to the pathway called Azalea Walk, which is terminated by a circular pool set into the south east corner of the retaining wall. Walking north along the axial path from the Octagon leads to the rose gardens in the east side which are set out in semi-circular pattern separated by lawns, stone paths and yew hedging.

Continuing along the pathway we entered the Spring Walk, with its narrow borders with views west to the house and east to the stream and valley below. The north end of Spring Walk enters through the centre of the area known as the Round Acre, formerly the kitchen garden but now a lawn with isolated trees, rose beds, camellias, etc along the pathway. Tony mentioned that the lawn area in the Round Acre garden (the only one known in Britain: *pictured right*) never requires a feed because of the nutrients still in the soil from its original kitchen garden days.

The central pathway terminates at the timber Bothy with its central arch leading to the

greenhouses and the gardeners' working and storage area. The Bothy (*see below*) was built in the 1900s with windows set high in the walls so that the gardeners on their tea breaks could not see out although, if you stood at the windows in the house, you could see every aspect of the garden including the Bothy!



During our walk Tony was asked numerous questions but one worth recording was the time taken clipping and trimming all the yew hedges, which is carried out annually, usually mid-August, and takes the team two and a half weeks to complete.

From the Bothy area we made our way back via the drive with its avenue of mature rhododendrons to the Tea Room/Exhibition Centre for a much appreciated Afternoon Tea and walk around the excellent art exhibition currently on display, an extra bonus for the afternoon event.

At this stage we said our 'Thank you's' to Tony for his guided walk and input on the history of





the gardens and useful comments. Although limited, there was still time after to revisit areas of the garden passed through on our guided walk or to visit new areas.

We chose to visit the woodland area to the south east of the house across the lawn with its clumps of trees including many pines and banks of mature rhododendrons, varieties introduced in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

It is here in the south lawn that, in 2007, was planted the remarkable "Wollemi Pine", only discovered in 1994 growing wild in the Wollemi National Park in the Blue Mountains by David Nobel a National Parks Officer in NSW, Australia. They were thought to have died out at least two million years ago and at present only about 100 mature specimens have been found in the wild. From fossil deposits the genus has been identified as being 90 million years old and certainly would have been around when dinosaurs roamed this earth over 65 million years ago.

Wollemi is an aboriginal word meaning 'look around you, keep your eyes open and watch out', quite appropriate for plant hunters in their searches today finding the many secrets still to be discovered.

From the edge of the lawn by the lower pool we entered a 'hidden glen' known as the Dell, a rock garden complete with a small pool and a canopy of dense shrubs. The narrow stone path and edging, which would be very slippery in wet conditions, led down to the woodland showing off at this time of the year its bluebells.

Here, by the lower pond in the corner of the woodland, stands the garden's second remarkable tree: a Dawn Redwood (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*) planted as a sapling in 1965. Although fossil records show that this species has existed for 50 million years it was not discovered until 1941 when a single specimen was found growing in a temple garden in Madaogi, Sichuan Province, China, where it is known as the Water Fir. The first to be planted in Britain was in 1949 at the Botanic Gardens at Cambridge University.

From the lower pond we walked up towards the Azalea Walk, passing the superbly built wishing well set into the retaining wall and back to the South Terrace. One part of the house complex we could not visit was the open courtyard in the centre of the house with its sunk circular pond

and enclosed cloister walk round the sides. Although similar to a Roman atrium with its central fountain, in Anglo Saxon times the style came to be called a Garth, hence the reason for naming the house Tirley Garth.

A sincere thank you to Jacqui Jaffé for stepping in at short notice from Jane Gooch to organise a splendid afternoon event at a very special place, obviously enjoyed and appreciated by all those members who attended.



#### **A brief note on the house**

It was started in 1909 for Brian Leesmith, a director of Brunner Mond (later ICI), but he left the company before it was completed and the house passed to them. It was then leased to Richard H. Prestwich whose family lived in or was associated with Tirley Garth until 2002.

During the Second World War, Irene Prestwich was involved with the Oxford Group (which became known as the Moral Re-Armament Movement) and which followed the teachings of Frank Buchman.

The house was purchased after the war and put into trust for them until it was sold by the organisation in 2002.

Since then Tirley Garth has been privately owned and the gardens are opened annually for the National Gardens Scheme, usually in mid to late May.

**Gordon J. Darlington**

**Photos by Gordon Darlington and Chris Driver**

# Adlington Hall Gardens

Forty of us gathered on a sparkling sunny afternoon in April at Adlington Hall. We had the privilege of being shown round the historic gardens by head gardener Anthony O'Grady.



The hall has been in the family for seven centuries, but its history dates from Saxon times, when it was a hunting lodge. Like the house the garden has had many layers of alterations.

Overall there is a 2,000 acre estate, with 7-8 acres of garden and 30 acres of wilderness. We started in the garden to the north (or back) and more austere side of the house.

This was not originally a garden but from the 17<sup>th</sup> century there were extensive waterworks here, a moat, a channel from the River Dean, a millpond, and an extensive network of canals linking to fishponds, powering a corn mill and timber mill. There was even a gold and silver fish pond, popular in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century and duck decoys in a further pond to provide duck for the table. Around the fishpond was a stone wall with 63 holes or niches, thought to be bee boles to provide honey for the table.



*Above: square bee boles in the stone wall*

Much of this had been uncovered recently, often accidentally by gardeners digging in the grounds.

The moat and the mill pond are now a modern garden, with a laburnum arch leading to a rose garden on the site of the millpond. An area above the original millpond is being cleared to create a bee and wildlife friendly haven.

Although the laburnum and roses weren't out, the garden was framed by two beautiful small maples.

The south front of the house is Georgian. Originally it had two additional wings but these were removed in 1929. This Georgian side of the house was built by Charles Legh in 1757, with money from his wife Hester. He also made major changes to the gardens.



*Above: the Georgian front*

In front of the house there are now sweeping lawns, with views across to the surrounding estate. The original garden proper starts with gates at the entrance to the original walled garden.



*Above: looking back to the gates through the avenue of limes (see next page)*



The gates and the walkway of limes were introduced by Thomas Legh as a welcome to William of Orange who invaded England in 1688. As a reward for this “Whig’s welcome”, Thomas Legh became High Sherriff of Chester.

Beyond the gates are the formal gardens to the left and wilderness to the right. The wilderness was a serious project for Charles Legh (from around 1747), developed over a number of years.

Although it became overgrown with *Rhododendron ponticum*, over more recent years it has begun to be cleared, displaying many exotic trees and architectural features.

Originally the grounds were described as by Capability Brown, but it is now thought that the Royal Parks of London were far more of an influence.

Mr. Greenings from Richmond Park came to advise the Leghs on the design of the garden. The result was rococo style with many follies and garden buildings throughout the grounds – gothic, Chinese, a temple of Diana and a ruined hermitage. There is also a “Tin House” in Chinoiserie style, a small square pavilion (*below*). A copy of this was produced for Adlington Hall’s garden at the Tatton Flower Show in 2014, and now sits adjacent to the rose garden.



There are plants from all over the world, with many specimen trees, such as the Lucombe Oak, Turkey and variegated oaks and large hornbeams.

As in the north garden, waterworks were again used in the wilderness area, though for less industrial uses, for a small grotto and cold bath, for an amazing water system. This powered a fountain and also a pond and cascade.

The latter has only recently been renovated. It had a statue of father Tiber on top, now in the relatively new East side gardens. It is thought that there is an equivalent in Parham Gardens in Sussex.



*Above: the cascade and pond: Father Tiber (below) once sat at the head of the cascade*



After Charles Legh died in 1781, there were probably 40-50 years of neglect. Then from the 1820s, many trees and shrubs were imported from America and elsewhere, conifers, redwood and monkey puzzle trees, some of which are thought to be among the largest in Cheshire.

Within the walled garden there is a rustic cottage, with a recently restored shell house on the inner wall, a rockery restored in the 1820s and a ‘gay parterre’. An old sundial has recently been discovered to be an ancient monument, an Anglo Saxon cross. There is also a yew walk, originally planted in 1650.

The garden to the east of the hall is far more recent. It was established in 1950, some years after the east wing was demolished, and includes a parterre, a small statue of Napoleon and a water garden incorporating Father Tiber. Overall, a fabulous garden with lovely planting and many, many layers of history.

**Sue Eldridge**

**Photos by Jacquetta Menzies**

# Tour of Adlington Hall

Pevsner describes Adlington Hall as a delightful mixture of 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century work, having little formality but being rather homely. And so it was.

For our tour of the interior we were divided into two groups. My group was led by Becky, an art graduate from Manchester University who admitted nervously that this was her first tour. She did very well.

The house is a series of consequences but all the more interesting for that, and its paintings, furniture and collections added hugely to the interest.



*The back of the house is very different to the front*

We began our tour in the courtyard where Becky explained the Saxon and Norman origins of the hall. By the thirteenth century Adlington had become the home of the Legh family. The present occupant, Camilla Legh, is the 24<sup>th</sup> generation of the family to live here. A small plaque in the corner of the courtyard explains that during the Second World War Adlington served as a maternity hospital for the wives of servicemen, recording over nine hundred births during that period.

Into the Screens Passage, much altered but still showing fifteenth century work. Most prominent were the lower parts of two enormous carved

oak posts, said to be from the original Saxon hunting lodge. From here, up a seventeenth century staircase with twisted balusters and newels surmounted by carved fir cones and artichokes. This led to the so-called Number 10 bedroom. Here we saw a set of four landscape paintings by Thomas Bardwell depicting the Hall and its environs in the mid eighteenth century.

Two small rooms came next. The first was the Chinese Room so named from its wallpaper. The second was the Deed Room which displays a selection of family documents dating back to the twelfth century and some interesting early photographs of the Hall and gardens.

There was also a music score – the Adlington Hunting Song – signed by G F Handel, a frequent guest. Thence via the Minstrels Gallery (with a brief glimpse into the Great Hall below), we passed into a noble Drawing Room completely panelled in oak and hung with family portraits. A second oak staircase leads to the Dining Room directly below. Again fully panelled, this room enjoys views over the former Deer Park.

Finally, into the Great Hall, the treasure of Adlington. Originally constructed between 1480 and 1505 this majestic room manages to retain the character of a family home.

Above is a wonderful hammer beam roof with carved angels on the beam ends holding heraldic shields.



At the western end of the hall is the most amazing wooden quadrant canopy, divided into sixty panels by oak ribs. Each panel displays the painted heraldic emblem of a noble family of Cheshire, whilst high in the roof are carved the arms of England, Wales and Scotland.



At the eastern end of the hall the two massive oak posts glimpsed in the Screens Passage frame a magnificent organ (*right*).

We were told that this is England's finest surviving instrument of the late seventeenth century.

Played by Handel during his visits, the organ was fully restored in 1959 and regular recitals are given. Two enormous murals depicting classical scenes and filling the west and north walls complete the decoration.

Tea and cake rounded off a very enjoyable visit

**Ken Moth**



## Cholmondeley Castle

Thirty-six of us met in the tearooms of Cholmondeley Castle gardens on a rather overcast day on 17<sup>th</sup> June. As we supped our tea and coffee we were given an introduction to the estate by Barry Grain, Head Gardener at Cholmondeley since early 2013, and Chair of Cheshire Gardens Trust since March 2014.



The Cholmondeleys have been on the estate since the early 13<sup>th</sup> century and the house and gardens have changed extensively over that time.

In 1571 Sir Hugh Cholmondeley re-built the original medieval family home in the timber framed Elizabethan style, surrounded by a moat.

Initially there was a deer park, but extensive landscaped grounds were developed around the old hall in 1688 by the French gardener Lecoche, modelled on Versailles, with an extensive parterre.

Lecoche was followed by London and Wise, who designed terraces, allées, a knot garden, broad walks and a maze as well as an extensive canal system.



*Above: Barry indicates where the original formal garden had been*

There were many decorative features, such as fountains and lead statues, some of which have



been re-used elsewhere for example lead statues in the Temple Garden and terraces near the castle, and white screen gates by Robert Bakewell.

The garden was developed before the house, which was rebuilt on a grand scale in 1701, encasing the remains of the old house in a stone façade.



The third reincarnation of the house was the gothic villa built in 1801, remodeled as a castle in 1817-1819 (*above*). At this stage further extensions to the grounds were made by the 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Cholmondeley, who married into the Walpole family and was able to undertake extensive landscaping, including many specimen trees. Not much of the original garden remains.

Much of what we see now, in particular The Tower garden and the Temple Garden, are the responsibility of the dowager Marchioness of Cholmondeley, who has been overseeing the gardens and landscaping for 65 years.

Barry is very proud of the fact that she has at last been recognized for the work she has done, not just in the garden, but for gardens and gardeners in general.

[You can read about this on page 16.]

The oldest building on the estate is St. Nicholas' Chapel, (*below*) which was built in 1285. It is still used for services.



Outside the chapel, Barry showed us where the old deer park would have been, still with some of the original trees. The stone pillars at the entrance to the park can still be seen.

The deer park was cleared and the formal garden developed, as mentioned above. Not much survives, other than the stone pillars and a canal. We then walked past the old sandstone house and followed an avenue, which was the original drive from Beeston. Some of the old limes survive, but it was planted with Lombardy poplars after the war, interspersed with hornbeams.

The avenue led to this very unusual memorial (*below*).



This commemorates the Czech army in exile which was stationed at Cholmondeley during World War II. From July to October 1940, 5,600 soldiers and airmen were based here, many of whom went on to serve with British forces.

Later the site was used for preparations for Operation Anthropoid, an assassination attempt on Reinhardt Heydrich, the 'Butcher of Prague'. Two members of the Czech army in exile, Jan Kubiš and Jozef Gabčík, parachuted into Czechoslovakia in May 1942. They achieved their aim, but later were killed as part of brutal Nazi reprisals. An astonishingly moving site.

The memorial stone was carved by a young Czech artillery man, Franta Belsky, who later settled in England and became a famous sculptor, sculpting Winston Churchill and many



of the Royal family. There is still a large contingent of Czechs in Cheshire and an annual memorial service is held here. 2015 will be the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

We then retraced our steps and, courtesy of Barry who had been out with a strimmer to clear the way, visited the vast walled kitchen garden. This was built between 1801 and 1820, when the current castle was built and much of the existing gardens and grounds developed. The kitchen garden area, including a long line of glasshouses, as well as orchards outside the walls, covers 7 acres in all. Sadly this was abandoned after the war and attempts to revive it have failed.

We then returned to the tearoom, through the old gatehouse, for some very welcome refreshments.

After lunch some of us visited the more formal gardens. This included beautiful planting round the castle itself, with its terraces and lily pond, with the figure of a huntsman and ironwork by Robert Bakewell.



Much of the planting was so simple, yet so beautiful, such as the valerian in the walls, and the small daisy flower (*Erigeron karvinskianus*), loved by Gertrude Jekyll which grows on the steps mixed with rambling roses. Then across the sweeping lawns, with beautiful specimen trees,

down to the stunning pebble stone mosaic, (*below*) commissioned in 2006 by Lady Cholmondeley as a memorial to her late husband.



The Temple Garden (*below*) is the pièce de résistance at Cholmondeley, a romantic setting with its lake, islands, bridges and temples.



The rhododendrons and azaleas were all but over, but there were waterlilies, *Iris*, *Primula*, *Gunnera*, *Meconopsis*, *Magnolias*, and the scent of *Philadelphus*.

We then walked back along the Lavinia walk through beautiful herbaceous planting, remodeled in 2014, below 4 ornamental pears. Then back through the rose garden to our starting point at the tearooms. A very satisfying day all round, despite the inclement weather.

**Sue Eldridge**

## Don't forget...

... to take up Head Gardener, Phil Tatler's offer to CGT members of a 20% reduction to Combermere Abbey's garden open days on 26 August and 23 September. The normal entry price is £5, but if you take this newsletter with you as proof of membership you can get in for just £4.

The walled garden, pleasure garden and pleasure garden wood (with access down to the Mere) will all be open. There will also be refreshments (in the Glasshouse) and a plant stall.

Opening times are 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. with last entry at 4 p.m.



## P is for Pergola

A pergola is a garden structure of uprights and cross members that create a framework for climbing plants which provide shade. The word comes from the Italian pergola, referring to a projecting eave. A pergola can be linked to a building or freestanding, terminate in an arbour or lead to another feature such as a pool.

In English Renaissance gardens tunnels or arbours, with timber structures forming the arched shapes, provided shady walks. The naturalistic style of the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century did not favour such features so pergolas only came to prominence with the revival of formal gardens in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Reginald Blomfield included pergolas as part of his vocabulary of garden architecture in *The Formal Garden in England*<sup>1</sup> but it was arts and crafts gardens, particularly those designed by Gertrude Jekyll, Edwin Lutyens and Thomas Mawson, that really popularised them.

Referring to the pergola Jekyll wrote:

*"It is true that it is often injudiciously placed. There are many gardens that have not had the benefit of experienced advice, where a poorly constructed pergola stands in some open place where it has no obvious beginning or end; whereas it should always lead from one definite point or another; one at least being some kind of full stop, either of summer-house or arbour, or, at any rate, something of definite value in the garden design."*<sup>2</sup>

So how do Cheshire's pergolas measure up to her advice?

At Thornton Manor, a formal garden created by William Lever (later Viscount Leverhulme) and Thomas Mawson, a pergola of classical design known as the Forum, occupies a platform between the terrace and lower gardens.



*The Forum in its heyday*

*Courtesy of Cumbria Record Office WDB 86/9/13*

Rectangular in plan and forming an outdoor room, it has pairs of reinforced concrete Doric columns with oak beams and a lattice of smaller oak cross beams with shaped ends.



*A pair of the Doric pillars*

Now approximately 100 years old, the structure is in a fragile state, the metal reinforcement of the columns having become severely corroded and many of the timbers rotted.

Hilary Morris contributed this photograph of a pergola at Hadlow Wood, Willaston.



*The Pergola.*

She says *"The house was built in 1909, and the gardens laid out by Wm Rowlands of Childwall Nurseries, Liverpool. The picture is from a family photo album not much later than that."* This makes the pergola contemporary with that at Thornton Manor. We are uncertain where it leads or how it terminates.



The pergola in the gardens at Tatton Park was, according to Sam Youd, an addition by the last Lord Egerton. *"It clearly does not fit the period of the now reconstructed garden but as it was put there by him it was allowed to remain. Date of its building is uncertain; around 1930?"*



*The pergola at Tatton Park lies within the walled fruit garden and leads from the dipping pond to the entrance to the ornamental gardens.*

Somerford is an Arts and Crafts house of 1909 within Knutsford's Legh Road Conservation Area.



It has a 21<sup>st</sup> century pergola (above) designed by Johnstone Godfrey and Associates to reflect the period of the house. The pergola, formed of two sections, adds structure to what was a flat lawn. It leads from the house to the boundary border, the central break graced by a ceramic plant pot.

**Barbara Moth  
Research and Recording Group**

<sup>1</sup> Blomfield R. 1892. reprinted 1985. *The Formal Garden in England*. Thames and Hudson reprint 1985

<sup>2</sup> Jekyll G and Weaver L. 1912. *Arts and Crafts Gardens*. Country Life 1912, Antique Collectors Club 1997

## Caldwell Website Launched

It seems to have been a long time coming, but the Caldwell website was officially launched on 20 June at the Arley Garden Festival.

Lord Ashbrook, as Patron of the Cheshire Gardens Trust, welcomed Caldwell family members, nursery staff and project volunteers.

Barbara Moth reminded us of the steps taken along the way: the generous grant from the Royal Botanical and Horticultural Society of Manchester and the Northern Counties which enabled the creation of the database; the volunteers who have been populating that database; the extension of the original project to include oral histories, exhibition, talks and – still to come – a book.



*The Home Page of the website*



*Above, left to right: Barbara Moth (Project Team member), Mavis Caldwell (widow of last William Caldwell); Joan Zorn (volunteer transcriber and descendant of the Caldwells who remained at Knowsley); Jane Caldwell (daughter of Mavis and William Caldwell)*

The extension of the project beyond the setting up of the database has been thanks to a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Joy Uings demonstrated the website – showing how photos can be enlarged and text revealed. The website already includes a great deal of information. There are five main 'tabs':

**Plants** includes a brief introduction to nurserymen and the plants they sold 200 years ago as well as reproductions of old nursery



Catalogues and, of course, the ledgers themselves. There are 12 ledgers so far loaded (two more to come). Of these two – both from the 1790s, but one from Knowsley and the other from Knutsford – have been fully transcribed. Volunteers are currently working through a third from the 1830s.

The website allows you to see the ledgers and read the transcriptions page by page so it is possible to find, for example, William Egerton's order of 4 November 1789 (ledger 6, page 10) when he bought 6 roses and some lettuce seed. Customer Reports show all the orders William Egerton placed (though only those that have been so far transcribed), and Plants Reports allow us to see who else purchased the same variety of roses.

To complete this section, we have included some information on pre-decimalisation money and imperial measurements for those not old enough to remember their use.

**People:** This section includes information about the owners of the nurseries from the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century up to its closure. Information about customers is slowly being added (see Ann Brooks' information about Hannah Lumb overleaf). The memories of family, staff and customers are to be found here too – and you can listen to them recalling days gone by.

**Places:** There is information about the different nursery sites and this is where more information will be added in due course about the places where the customers lived.

If this has whetted your appetite, why not log on and browse – [www.caldwellarchives.org.uk](http://www.caldwellarchives.org.uk). So far more than 700 people have visited the website.



*Barbara Wright (volunteer researcher) talking to John and Val Prince at the Launch. You can hear John's memories on the website. In the background is the Caldwell exhibition.*

**Products:** Here you can learn about the services that Caldwell's offered and the items they sold in addition to plants.

**Prunings:** Information which does not fit easily into any other pages is included here. Advertisements; flower shows; other nurserymen in the area, many of whom were Caldwell customers. There are also photographs of surviving artefacts – many of which have been donated to us since the project started.

There are several more ledgers to be transcribed. It is a fascinating activity.

If you think you would like to be a transcriber and would like to find out more, contact Pat Alexander at [patriciaalexander@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:patriciaalexander@tiscali.co.uk).

## Research and Recording Study Day

*Lancelot 'Capability' Brown at Kings Weston: A Re-assessment  
Exploring his Legacy of Comfort and Elegance*

Tuesday 22 September 2015 – 9.30 am to 3.45pm - £50

Kings Weston has a long and complex history and the grounds have been variously associated with John Evelyn, Robert Mylne, Thomas Wright and Lancelot Brown, but lack of funding meant the estate had been neglected for too many years. This situation changed in 2011 when the Kings Weston Action Group was founded to protect the estate to fight for its future and protect its past.

The day's programme includes a tour of the house in the morning, together with lectures and in the afternoon a tour of the garden. The price includes lunch. This study day is being run by the Association of Gardens Trusts and Avon Gardens Trust, in association with the Garden History Society.

Details and booking form are available at [www.gardenstrusts.org.uk](http://www.gardenstrusts.org.uk).



## Mrs. Lumb of Knutsford – A Caldwell Customer

When entering the data from one of my pages of the Caldwell's archives (15 January 1834 Ledger 363/10) I was immediately struck by one of the names, Mrs. Lumb, and the address, Knutsford.

Further research showed that the date of the order meant that it could have been placed by the aunt of Elizabeth Gaskell, Mrs. Hannah Holland Lumb. (Mrs. Lumb died on 1 May 1837 aged 69.)

Elizabeth Gaskell wrote to Mary Howitt on 18th August 1838: 'Though a Londoner by birth, I was early motherless, and taken to my dear *adopted native* town, Knutsford'.<sup>2</sup>

She had been born in Chelsea on 29<sup>th</sup> September, 1810, the daughter of William Stevenson and his wife Elizabeth; her mother died soon after the birth.<sup>3</sup>

Into this history now steps Elizabeth Stevenson's older sister, Mrs. Hannah Holland Lumb. She suggested she should take the baby to live with her in Knutsford and bring her up as her daughter and as a sister to her own small crippled child.

Indeed when soon her ailing cousin died, Elizabeth continued to play the role of a second daughter to her aunt. Mrs. Lumb, who was separated from her husband lived in Knutsford in an imposing house fronting the heath.<sup>4</sup>



Mrs. Lumb<sup>1</sup>

'The front garden looks on the heath which stretches for miles. There is a small garden in front, with a modest gate and fence. At the back of the house is a large garden, with a lawn, flower-garden, and tennis court; beyond is a well-stocked kitchen garden. When Elizabeth Stevenson lived there, the garden was much larger, reaching to the wall of the Knutsford Gaol in the distance.'<sup>6</sup>

Using the newly launched Caldwell Database we find that there are three orders for Mrs. Lumb recorded so far (all in 1834).

1. 15 January 1834 Ledger 363/10, p.37
 

1 x Bigaroon Cherry (Stand.)	1s 6d
1 Quart x Ely Frame Peas	9d
2. 26 March 1834, Ledger 363/10, page 85
 

1 Quart x Prussian Peas	8d
1 Ounce x Carrot	2d
2 Ounce x Mustard (seed)	3d
1 Ounce x Cress	2d
Radish	2d



Mrs. Lumb's House, Knutsford<sup>5</sup>

Mrs. Chadwick describes the house and garden in 1910 in some detail:



3. 8 May 1834, Ledger 363/10, page 91

1 Quart x Prussian Peas	8d
1 Quantity x Brocoli	2d

This print (*right*) is a frontispiece from the "Knutsford" edition of her collected works (8 vols, 1906). While not entirely complete or textually reliable, the series was produced by her original publisher, Smith Elder & Co., and thus maintains a link with her lifetime. The artist's signature is unreadable.<sup>7</sup>

**Ann Brooks**

<sup>1</sup> Chapple, J.A.V., *Elizabeth Gaskell: A Portrait in Letters* (M.U.P.: Manchester, 1980), facing p.78

<sup>2</sup> Chapple, J.A.V. and Pollard, Arthur, *The Letters of Mrs. Gaskell* (M.U.P.: Manchester, 1966), p.28

<sup>3</sup> Elizabeth Stevenson's family name was Holland and her father was a farmer and land agent of Sandebridge, Cheshire. The Holland's were also customers of Caldwell's Nursery.

<sup>4</sup> Mr. Lumb was a Wakefield man and they lived apart because of his insanity. Chadwick, Mrs. Ellis, *Mrs. Gaskell, Haunts, Homes and Stories* (Sir Isaac Pitman and Sons Ltd: London, 1910), p. 21

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid* Chadwick, Photograph, facing p. 48

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, p. 48

<sup>7</sup> Information from Janet Allan, Chairman, Manchester Historic Buildings Trust. Also see The



*'A romantic view of Aunt Lumb's House, Heathwaite, Heathside, Knutsford'*

Gaskell Society website. See also: Chapple, J.A.V., *Elizabeth Gaskell: A Portrait in Letters* (M.U.P.: Manchester, 1980), Illustration 5.

## The Gardens of Henbury Hall

It is a very exciting time in the gardens at Henbury Hall. The gardens, had become overgrown and neglected, but are now undergoing a major restoration and renovation.

Because of the congested planting many wonderful trees and shrubs were unable to flourish. Our on-going task is to 'clear the decks'.

The walled kitchen garden is a major project. Over 200 years old, it had stood for many years empty and neglected. The original Foster & Pearson greenhouses had reached a sorry state and a decision had to be made whether to let them fall down or to try to save them.

We chose the latter and they now await a final painting but they are fully in use again and we have already started to establish an exciting collection of exotics.

It is a similar story for the historically important peach cases. We hope in due course to be able

to commence restoration. Meanwhile they continue to house peaches, figs and Muscat grapes. The work continues in all parts of the garden and there is much to do in all areas - main garden, walled garden and glass-houses.

We are looking for people who might like to volunteer to do 2-3 hours a week in any part of the gardens or glasshouses.

If you would like to be part of this exciting project please contact me, Sean Barton / Head Gardener on: Mobile : 07876 885 449 Office line : 01625 422101

E-mail : [headgardener@henburyhall.co.uk](mailto:headgardener@henburyhall.co.uk)

Web-site : [www.henburyhall.co.uk](http://www.henburyhall.co.uk)

Facebook : Henbury Hall Gardens

**NEWS FLASH** – Henbury Hall Gardens are open on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> July from 2pm – 5pm.

Entrance £5. Enter in School Lane, Henbury, SK11 9PJ.



## Congratulations

Members who, in June, explored the amazing gardens created by Lavinia, Dowager Marchioness of Cholmondeley will not be surprised to learn that in May she was the first ever recipient of the 'Garden Owners Award' presented by the Professional Gardeners' Guild. This followed last year's award from Cheshire Gardens of Distinction when she was presented with a commemorative plaque and a specimen of Magnolia 'Yellow Bird', in recognition of her 60 years of development at Cholmondeley, her ability to inspire other gardeners and gardens and her championship of gardening and young gardeners.

Visit [www.cholmondeleycastle.com](http://www.cholmondeleycastle.com) to see a photo of our Patron, Lord Ashbrook, presenting a beautiful engraved rose bowl. This was received on Lady Cholmondeley's behalf by her son, David, Lord Cholmondeley, Also present were our Chair, Barry Grain, head gardener at Cholmondeley and our past chair Sam Youd, now chair of Cheshire Gardens of Distinction.

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Lord Ashbrook's own gardens at Arley have also received recognition. Jim Gardiner, the Executive Vice President of the Royal Horticultural Society included Arley in his list of the best formal gardens in Great Britain. You can see Jim's list of 30 gardens (in 3 categories) at <http://press.rhs.org.uk/RHS/files/24/246cd4fd-1795-46c0-af4d-56819621db2d.pdf>.

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Cholmondeley and Arley are both family-created gardens. Rather different is Walkden Gardens in Sale. If you have never been, they are worth a visit. This is not only our opinion (Cheshire Gardens Trust has visited in the past), but also the opinion of TripAdvisor who have awarded the Gardens their Certificate of Excellence. Tucked away in the corner of Marsland Road and Derbyshire Road, Walkden Gardens was originally a nursery run by Harry Walkden. Now in public ownership, the Gardens have been developed and maintained by the Friends of Walkden Gardens.



Claremont, the purchase of Mr. Dawes, was built for Lord Clive. Capability Browne was the architect – and this exemplifies how well, or rather how ill he judged himself, when he thought his genius led to building. He said, "I was born an architect – I was bred a gardener". The only proof this house exhibits in his favour is the pretty colour of the bricks, the choice of situation, and the mode in which the ground is made up about the house. But what can atone for everything being crowded under one roof – for the kitchen under the best room, and a thousand other defects! The bricks were made in Norfolk, or some other place far distant, and cost, according to the tradition, four-pence halfpenny a piece. Except Sir C. Thomson's new house at Dalton, we never saw a building of a better colour.

***Bath Chronicle**, 21 June 1787*

## An Evening with Laura Leong

Laura Leong has won RHS Chelsea Florist of the Year in both 2013 and 2015.

Knutsford Floral Design Club has arranged an evening at which Laura will demonstrate her skills. The date is Thursday 10 September and the venue is Plumley Village Hall. Doors will open at 6.45 and the Demonstration will begin at 7.30.

Tickets cost £15.00 and this includes homemade cake and a glass of Prosecco (or soft drink).

For more information or to book tickets, call 01477 532266

**Copy date for July 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: 07900 968 178 or e-mail [joy.uings@btconnect.com](mailto:joy.uings@btconnect.com).