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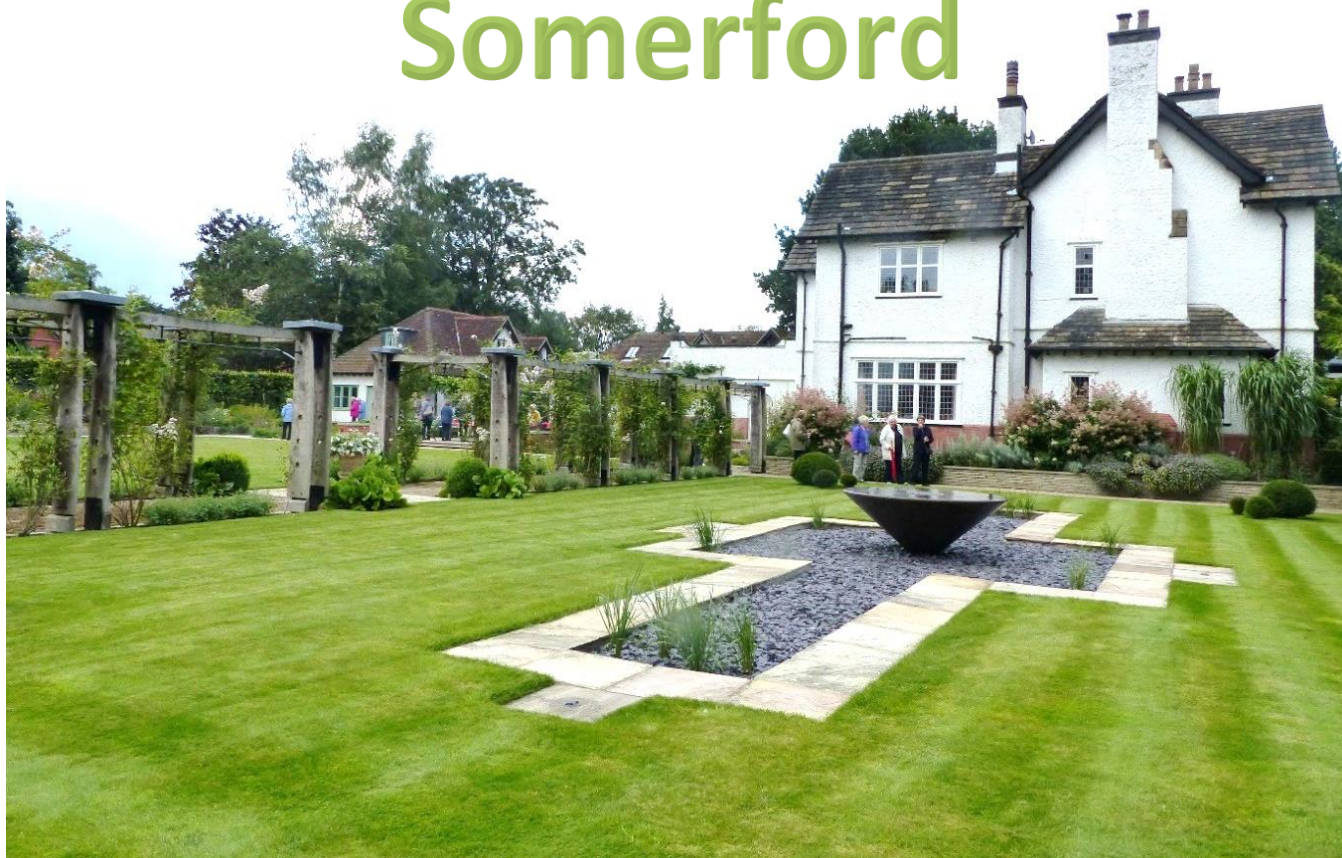
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Some future events:

- ✿ The Land Beneath our Boots – 12 November
- ✿ Crematoria to die for – 21 January
- ✿ The Gardens of St. Petersburg – 11 February
- ✿ Edward Kemp and his work – 18 March

Somerford



On a typical somewhat showery August evening CGT enthusiasts visited the glorious garden at Somerford House in Knutsford.

We were delighted to be received by the owners, Emma and Joe Dearman, who spent time talking to members about the garden and how they were inspired by their love of the Arts and Craft movement.

The garden at Somerford surrounds a 1909 Arts and Crafts house. The present owners, Emma

and Joe, moved here in 2006 and since then have completely re-designed and replanted the substantial garden, as well as converting the stables into a further family residence.

The garden is interesting with a modern take on an Arts and Crafts garden - raised beds, herbaceous borders, rose pergola, mature copper beech and oak, plus alpines and a water feature inspired by Chelsea in juxtaposition to a Lambanana (Liverpool City of Culture).

Emma was pleased to describe how the garden had been transformed and to share her delight in the planting. It was interesting that care had been taken to ensure that the transformed garden was so much in keeping with the age and period of the house.

One of the key features of the garden is the addition of the impressive avenue of cube-headed hornbeams (*below*), leading from the front of the house. A hedge had been removed as well as other substantial trees.



From the avenue of hornbeams, your eye cannot miss the substantial water feature with its vortex centre that has replaced the pond, and the beautiful sculpture of a man and a woman, leading to the rose pergola. The roots of previous trees can be seen along the edge of the lawn, becoming almost sculptural forms in themselves.

At the rear of the house, the pleasant terrace leads to a more informal lawn, surrounded by raised beds. Emma is especially pleased with the range of lush herbaceous perennials she has planted successfully in these beds. One area is given over to alpines, many of which have been planted effectively in home-made concrete tubs. She is also proud of the range of pot planting that she has done successfully. The garden is so beautifully planted and you



Above and below: two different views of the water feature



kept seeing so many different areas of interest throughout the garden. The informal lawn area is complemented by a beautiful summer house and a greenhouse in the Arts and Crafts style, again in keeping with the period of the house.



Above: raised beds and groups of pots. Purple tree Aeoniums in pots feature throughout the garden

As a group we were so impressed by how the garden has taken shape in the short time the present owners have been there. Whilst the garden is now well established, the owners have shown that gardens can continue to evolve and yet, with care, retain the original Arts and Crafts movement style.

The shower of rain did not dampen our enthusiasm and we gave many sincere thanks to Emma and Joe for a very pleasant evening. And we hope you take advantage of the CGT membership we presented to you. We were pleased also to present a donation of £136.00 to the NGS charity, which raises substantial charity funds each summer through its yellow book open gardens scheme.

Margaret Blowey



Sandymere Gardens

The overall impression of this garden was that it is, on the whole, a family garden. There are putting greens, a children's activity area, a paddling pool, a tennis court and a gym and swimming pool. There is even a memorial garden to a much-loved grandmother. It would be a great place to grow up and a fascinating garden for adults. It held surprises around every corner.



We were met by Rachel, who had been employed in the garden for seven years, five of them as Head Gardener. We were given a booklet written by John Timpson, owner of Sandymere for thirty eight years. It explained the history of the gardens from the moment the Timpson family bought it. It described how John spent one day weeding and then called in the experts!

He originally engaged Henk Couwenhoven, a Dutch gardener from Kelsall and Margaret from Little Budworth. It was Henk who suggested that John and his late wife, Alex, grow hostas and sent twenty plants to a grower near Buxton to propagate. Eventually, 17,500 small hostas began to arrive at the cost of £1 a plant. These are now protected from slugs by garlic spray, a new development since the gardeners have

stopped using slug pellets. This was the start of a nursery business, set up by Alex, which has now closed.

It was Alex who decided that the outdoor pool had to be covered and had a structure built that doubled the size of the house. It also included a snooker room.

More than twenty years later, Alex decided that if she couldn't move then she would update the house. The first extension was demolished completely and the next four years saw the building of a new leisure centre.

In 1989 Alex commissioned Mark Darwent of Colvin and Moggeridge in the Cotswolds to draft a future plan for the garden. A ten-year plan was drawn up and it is about to be fulfilled twenty-seven years later! The plan was to develop a garden walk with lots of surprises, having something different hidden round every corner.

This was exactly the feel of this garden. Wherever one walked there was a surprise that made one gasp with pleasure. The garden is immaculately maintained by a team of seven gardeners and this added to the enjoyment of the planting and the woodland walks.



Alex Timpson sadly passed away earlier this year and the gardeners are very keen to continue the colour schemes she favoured. The walled garden contains shades and hues of purple and pink, a mirror to make the space appear larger than it is and a covered space with table and chairs and a bed, which is used for sleeping on warmer nights. The parterres were filled with geraniums and heliotropes, which had replaced earlier tulips.



The garden has been filled with trees for all of its life, since the house was built in the 1930s. Many of these are now mature specimens, but a couple of years ago, sudden high winds brought forty crashing down. It took eight weeks to clear them away and delayed the planting of the garden for the same length of time. The garden has younger trees in the walled garden, such as magnolias and medlars. Many of the planters used are galvanised, which helps to enhance the colours of the plants.

Water plays an important part in this garden, with many ponds and a lake. The water moves around the garden and draws your eye as it does so. This has been enhanced recently with the construction of a rill that runs from one of these ponds and travels below the terrace towards the pergola.



In places this rill contains stepping stones which are functional and are also sculptures. The water in the grounds poses many challenges and is regularly treated for algae.



The lawn beyond the house was the subject of much discussion as it was unusually contoured, but Mr Timpson's booklet explains that originally this was an azalea garden in front of a rock garden. The azaleas gave pleasure for a brief time in spring and for the rest of the year blocked what could be a view from the house and terrace. Mark Darwent eventually persuaded the Timpsons of the benefits of the view and these were both removed leaving an undulating lawn. Wandering across this lawn revealed a concealed path which led to woodland and to a meadow, which had been planted with flowers, mainly yellow coloured, but there was a mixture of wild and cultivated flowers.

The woodland areas had paths which encouraged you to continue your journey around the garden. One path skirted a pond where a Muscovy duck was nesting. Her partner was to be found patrolling the garden. This path led on to a semi-circle of beech hedge containing a statue of a mother, child and dog, a memorial to Alex and the children she fostered. With the sculpture behind you the view extended down an avenue towards Granny Dodd's memorial which was contained by a beech hedge with

dahlias and day lilies. A slate plaque was engraved with the phrase – ‘No better place to sit and think’ with a bottle of sherry and a pack of cigarettes engraved on it, apparently pleasures that Irene Dodd enjoyed. A seat gave views of the house and lake. Follow the path further and you arrive at a tented pavilion on a raised platform. In front of this, on the ground, was a slate spiral with a gravel path.

Following the rill to the pergola was where we encountered the majority of the hostas, which varied in size and all looking as if the garlic spray was working. Again, this was an inviting part of the garden, encouraging you to keep walking and keep turning every corner. One of the pleasing aspects of the planting was that the plants were in groups, giving colour and form full impact. Specimen trees punctuated the beds and gave height and interest.



The terrace in front of the house and leisure centre was punctuated with brick beds and steps leading down to the rill. This was yet another peaceful place to stop and relax.

This garden is open once a year under the National Gardens Scheme and should be at the top of the list of places to visit in Cheshire. Thanks to John Timpson for allowing us to explore his wonderful, surprising garden.

Jackie Cawte

CGT Rhododendron Workshop

On a beautiful sunny day in May, ten of us gathered at Arley Hall.



We were taking part in the first of a series of events, aimed at owners, head gardeners and staff, and people interested in an in-depth look at theoretical and practical horticultural topics, drawing on the expertise of members. This had been the inspiration of Ruth Brown and Jane Gooch. They didn't want to compete with colleges or courses run by garden centres or the National Trust but wanted to fulfil a specialist educational need.

For this first course they drew on the expertise of our patron, Lord Ashbrook. Most of the participants had a special interest in rhododendrons because of the nature of their

gardens; they wanted to know more about the range of rhododendrons, pests and diseases, aftercare and propagation.

Lord Ashbrook introduced himself, insisting that he wasn't an expert but someone with a keen interest and forty years' experience. He had started by chance. His mother, responsible for much of the rest of the gardens at Arley, liked rhododendrons but didn't specialise. The family had a visit from Jim Russell (1920-1996) who suggested that something should be done with The Grove and Woodland Walk. The soil is ericaceous so rhododendrons were an obvious choice. Lord Ashbrook took it on as a challenge.



Michael and Zoë Ashbrook had just come back from a trip to Wisley which was celebrating the

centenary of the RHS Rhododendron, Magnolia and Camellia Group. As well as displays and talks, for example by Ken Cox of Glendoick Gardens and John Anderson, they had visits to the Isabella Plantation in Richmond Park and the Saddle and Valley Gardens at Windsor Park, which Lord Ashbrook feels are particularly worth a visit.

Lord Ashbrook had on display some of his favourite books on rhododendrons. He particularly mentioned the Cox family from Glendoick Gardens, founded by Peter Cox in 1953 and now run by his grandson Kenneth Cox. Their website, which includes mail-order plants and books, is worth a visit www.glendoick.com.

Also on display were leaves from rhododendrons, demonstrating an astonishing range from the huge *R. falconeri* to *R. impeditum*, tiny flowered and leaved, which has been a parent for many hybrids.

The photographs in this report show the wide range of wonderful flowers there were on display at Arley at this time. We have not tried to identify each one.



There are more than 900 known species of rhododendrons. The largest number is found among the mountains of south-west China, through the border with Tibet and Burma and into Assam and Nepal. Northern China has relatively few, but the significance of these is the connection via Alaska with the rhododendron populations of North America. From here the deciduous azaleas, important in hybridisation, originated.

At Arley, some hybrids were planted in the early 20th century, but the majority have been planted by Lord Ashbrook over the last forty years. He thinks it essential to take care with spacing and not crowd them too much.



The first rhododendron species, *R. hirsutum*, was introduced in 17th century, then around a dozen in the 18th century, but it didn't really all get going till 19th century, when plant hunters began visiting sites across the world, and hybridisation started to become important. Joseph Hooker was particularly influential, sending back 45 new species, mostly from India's northern frontier.



Lord Ashbrook then showed us photographs of a large variety of rhododendrons, for example:

- *Rhododendron arboreum*, which was introduced into a Cornish garden in 1820; Lord Ashbrook was lucky enough to see it in the wild in China in 1994. It can grow up to twenty metres and holds the Guinness Record for the World's Largest Rhododendron.
- *R. calophytum*, which again grows very tall and has produced a large number of hybrids, including *R. 'Nimrod'* with its speckled throat
- *R. macabeanum*, a beautiful pale yellow rhododendron with fantastic stamens

- *R. kesangiae*, with rose pink flowers, introduced only thirty years ago and named after the Queen of Bhutan



There are a number of species rhododendrons at Arley which have been important in hybridisation, such as *R. fortunei*; *R. loderi*; *R. thomsonii* (a red rhododendron that Lord Ashbrook saw in Nepal); *R. barbatum*, very important for hybridisation, introduced at the beginning of the 19th century; *R. wardii*, a very pale yellow, possibly one of his favourites, a very important parent for yellow hybrids; *R. argyrophyllum* 'Chinese Silver', which was in full flower at the time of the course; *R. auriculatum*, white and scented, flowering in July and August, which can extend the season; *R. augustinii*, a beautiful blue, which has been parent to an incredible range of blue hybrids.

A very important species is *R. williamsianum*, (in cultivation since 1908 and first described by E.H. Wilson) with pale pink bell shaped flowers, a very good parent, very prolific very reliable (e.g. Bow Bells).



Lord Ashbrook suggested these are all very easy to grow on acid soil. However, it is absolutely vital to keep them well watered, very time consuming but crucial. He also believes in dead heading.

Probably the most significant of the semi-dwarf species is *R. yakushmanum* which has had an enormous impact since being introduced in 1934; it only grows on an island off Japan. It has been a very good parent, with 500 different first crosses, all compact, though he suggests none are as good as the original species.

Azaleas mentioned were the deciduous species *R. vaseyi*, *R. schlippenbachii*, (which won the top challenge cup at Wisley) and the hybrids 'Persil', 'Summer Fragrance', 'Daviesii' and 'Exquisitum', all scented.

At the end, we all realised how very little we had known about rhododendrons before the day began.

Lord Ashbrook believes that planting shouldn't just be about rhododendrons, which can be very dull when not flowering, but should be broken up with other plants such as *Magnolia*, *Camellia*, *Kalmia*, *Cornus*, *Pieris*, *Hydrangea*, *Malus*, *Acer*, *Photinia* and *Hamamelis*.



Lord Ashbrook then took us round the grove and woodland to view the beautiful range of hybrids and species and associated plants and showed us unexpected aspects such as the beautiful leaves, some with a golden underside, and the very attractive new growth contrasting with old leaves.



In the afternoon Ruth Brown demonstrated the more practical aspects out in the woodland. People were very interested in propagation and in particular layering, which can be undertaken on the spot with the addition of some rich leaf mould. A fairly young shoot is bent down to the ground and then held down with a peg or a brick. The end of the shoot can be encouraged to grow straight upwards by using a stake. Wait a year before severing from the main plant. Propagation can also be carried out by collecting seed or taking cuttings, which have more or less replaced grafting for propagation of many rhododendrons.



The importance of watering and dead-heading has already been mentioned. Rhododendrons obviously need acid soil and a sheltered, shady site (woodland is ideal). Aftercare is minimal, but avoid cultivating around the plant because rhododendrons are shallow rooted and any disturbance causes damage; pruning is usually not needed and it is best to let rhododendrons grow naturally; however, old plants can be rejuvenated or improved in shape by severe pruning.

Mulching is important, using a rich layer of organic matter, in order to retain moisture, suppress weeds, and provide nutrients. Leaf mould is ideal but other materials such as pine needles, chipped bark or garden compost, can be used. Oak and beech leaf mould is best but elm, sycamore, lime and horse chestnut should be avoided because they break down to give an alkaline reaction.

We then went back to base to undertake soil testing from samples taken in the woodland. A soil pH of 4.5-5.5 is ideal.

We all went away knowing so much more about rhododendrons and inspired to do new things. We owe tremendous thanks to Lord Ashbrook who started us off on this new venture, and to Ruth Brown and Jane Gooch who had put so much hard work into making the occasion a success.

Sue Eldridge

Photos Sue Eldridge and Graham Moss

U is for Urn

An urn is “a vase with rounded body, a narrowed mouth and often a foot”.¹

Funerary urns, to contain the ashes of the dead, were used by many civilizations. The design of Greek and Roman urns, seen or collected on the Grand Tour, were a source of inspiration to architects and designers, including Wedgwood. Urns were used to adorn 18th century buildings, in niches and on cornices, and in gardens, adding classical reference and reinforcing links with antiquity.

William Kent used urns in the exedra at Chiswick and in the grounds of Rousham. At Croome Park, Capability Brown’s first commission, there is in the shrubbery an 18th century Bath stone urn with spiral fluting, listed Grade II. Another stone urn on a pedestal is located beside the ha ha.



Many 18th century urns were made of Coade stone, a fired clay body with the appearance of stone. The Coade catalogue of 1784 listed thirty four different designs. These included fluted urns and squat vases on pedestals.²

At Eaton Hall a large decorated stone urn punctuates the rhododendron walk, and a pair of terracotta urns on square pedestals rise above the herbaceous plants in the blue borders. The urn motif is used in timber trellis work surmounting the pillars in the rose garden.

From the 19th century to the present day, the word 'urn' seems to be used more loosely and applied to containers without a 'lid'. These urns, or vases, are often planted with flowers and used in gardens to provide interest and to be a focal point in the design. Edward Kemp included "vases for flowers on pedestals" for a garden design in Surrey.³ Congleton Park, where Kemp advised on the layout, retains some Victorian cast iron urns.



In the Dragon Garden at Eaton Hall, which was originally designed by Nesfield, altered by Sir Edwin Lutyens and more recently replanted by Arabella Lennox Boyd, the urns are planted in a palette of blue and silver to complement the overall colour theme.

Today, garden urns are made of stone, imitation stone, ceramic, concrete, glass fibre, resin brass and copper in classical and contemporary designs. This graceful urn in the garden of Somerford in Knutsford provides a feature in the trellis walk, continuing a long tradition of placing urns in the landscape.

Research & Recording Group



¹ Definition from the Chambers English Thesaurus

² For more information about Coade stone see Alison Kelly, *Mrs Coade's Stone*, 1990

³ In a plan for a garden designed for T R Hoare in Surrey 1855, from *How to Lay Out a Garden*, Edward Kemp, 1858

Note from the editor: With this edition of the newsletter I have been the editor for 13 years. I am giving notice that I do not intend to continue beyond this time next year. This gives time for members to plan how the newsletter should be created in future and who should be involved in its production.

The Capability Brown landscape at Trentham Gardens



Lancelot 'Capability' Brown was commissioned by Granville 2nd Lord Gower to carry out improvements at Trentham. Over 21 years, from 1759 to 1780, he enlarged the existing lake which was then fed by the river Trent. Fields were turned to parkland, with the characteristic planting of strategically placed groups of trees. He created a sunken fence (ha-ha) to separate the lawn from the deer park. Due to many subsequent developments, only part of the original Brown landscape remains.



The view across the lake and the remains of the Brown landscape

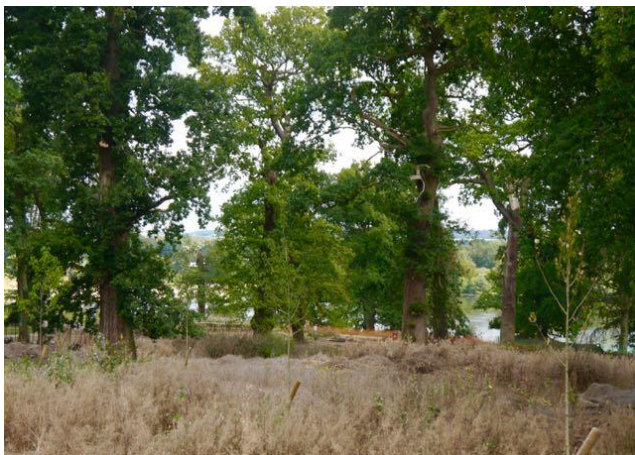
Michael Walker, Trentham's Head of Gardens and Estate gave us a most riveting overview of the history of the estate, work in hand and proposed exciting developments. The current plan, already underway, is for the dramatic renovation of the park and woodland, opening up views across the lake and river Trent from both sides and revealing the historic Kings Wood on the rising ground to the west.

The planned renovation was hastened by an outbreak of *Phytophthora ramorum* in the rhododendrons. This affected the banks of the lake and spread into the woodland. The only way to stop the infection was complete removal of plants, which had the benefit of opening up the woodland floor. Larch is also a potential host for *Phytophthora* and, working with the Forestry Commission, the Trentham team have removed all larch trees. There were extensive commercial coniferous plantations on the Trentham estate. These have been completely cleared: no small undertaking, but in the Trentham tradition, where nothing is done by halves.

Another Trentham tradition is emerging; that of bringing in top modern landscape designers to take the work of their historic forebears to a new level. This began with the commissioning of the internationally acclaimed designers Tom Stuart-Smith and Piet Oudolf to give their different contributions to the Charles Barry/Nesfield Italian garden and the riverside.

Now, Michael Walker has brought in Nigel Dunnett to work with the Trentham team under Carol Adams (known to many of us from her stint at Reaseheath) to transform the woodland and lakeside. Professor Nigel Dunnett of Sheffield University Landscape Department has worked for many years developing planting combinations for public areas that provide

maximum visual impact, ecological gain and low maintenance. He found fame for his work at the Queen Elizabeth Park in London (previously the Olympic Park).



Woodland Renovation – weeds among young tulip trees and magnolia have been sprayed off

The rhododendrons were cut to the ground and the regrowth treated with systemic weedkiller. Once the ground under the trees was cleared, the soil could only be shallowly cultivated due to roots of existing trees. The area was then mulched with green waste (sourced from the Local Authority in Newcastle) which, it is claimed, is weed free. This Spring, the plants went in and many are already in good flowering form. Emergency work in progress to a Brownian era beech meant our group had to view this from behind the safety fence.



The felled Beech landed on part of Nigel Dunnett's woodland planting

Later in the afternoon the fence was removed and I managed to have a closer inspection. The woodland features white and blue asters which create a soft mist of colour under the trees. I

observed *Pulmonaria*, *Deschampsia*, ferns, *Bergenia*, *Brunnera*, *Geranium* and *Hellebore*. No doubt there are many I missed. Michael told us that they planted 28,000 9cm pots in total. There are a great many native wood anemones, and the aspiration is to plant one million bulbs in the coming years.



Nigel Dunnett's woodland planting

In another innovative move, groves of large ornamental shrubs are being planted in the woodland clearings. *Magnolia* 'Elizabeth' and the tulip tree *Liriodendron tulipifera*, have been planted in groups of 20s and 50s. Many more are being grown to order by John Ravenscroft at Cherry Tree Nursery and Arboretum and will be planted over the coming two years. These will go some way to replace the colour lost with the flowering rhododendrons. Some of the felled timber is being put to good use by the creation of stumperies, planted with ferns.



Stumpery with ferns

The path on the west side of the lake follows the line of an old scenic railway. When this was built, the construction work levelled an ice house built in 1729, remains of which were recently revealed. There is an ongoing debate as to whether this should be fully excavated and be

open to the public, or whether it should be covered over again by the path.



Partially excavated Icehouse

Nigel Dunnett's annual meadow mix has been trialled along the steep west bank of the lake. It has taken less successfully here than on the roundabout at Trentham's entrance where it signals brightly that something special is happening on this estate.

There are extensive plantings of annual Cosmos along the path on the east side of the lake, and these might be repeated next year. The east side of the lake is the area where, in partnership with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, the habitat along the river is being improved for wildlife and

otters have taken up residence. There are hides for bird watching on the river but the main show during our visit was the lake itself, with multiple water fowl including the spectacular swans.

One of the first things you see when you enter Trentham Gardens (and the last before you leave) is another example of Nigel Dunnett's planting, this time a perennial meadow. It creates a pool of soft colours on the pink spectrum from pastels to brights, starting in early summer and lasting all the way through till autumn, when the planting in the Italian Garden reaches its peak.

Trentham has gone from strength to strength under Michael's stewardship – there were 600,000 visitors last year, a six fold increase in eight years. His aim to educate and entertain a very diverse audience has been wildly successful. This has been achieved by being tremendously innovative and without compromising on design excellence. All the more interesting is that, unique among gardens open to public, behind this enterprise is not a worthy public institution, but the hard-nosed commercial property developer St. Modwen Properties PLC. Truly, the very acceptable face of capitalism.

Jacquetta Menzies



To complete our series of newspaper clippings on 'Capability' Brown, here are two: the first proclaims his financial success, the second draws attention to what was lost.

The late Capability Brown's affairs turn out very affluently – no less than two thousand pounds a year to his son, and seven thousand pounds to each of his daughters.

Morning Chronicle – Tuesday, 25 February 1783

"Capability Brown" was the sobriquet applied to Lancelot Brown who flourished in 1715-1783. He was the reviver of the natural style of landscape gardening, and laid out the gardens at Kew and Blenheim. He was the architect of many country houses, and was high sheriff of Huntingdon in 1770. Under the advice of Brown much of the habitable part of Cardiff Castle was modernised, and many precious remains swept away.

Evening Telegraph – Tuesday 13 July 1909

There have been numerous events over the past year celebrating Brown's heritage. The Landscape Gardens Presentation Pack is available from <http://shop.royalmail.com/landscape-gardens/landscape-gardens-presentation-pack/invnt/20160190>. In addition to the eight commemorative stamps, Brown's life, times and achievements are explored, with lots of images and text by Dr. Laura Mayer.

The Capability Brown Account books have now been digitized and are available at <https://www.rhs.org.uk/education-learning/libraries-at-rhs/collections/library-online/capability-brown-account-book>. They make fascinating reading.

See <http://www.parksandgardens.org/projects/capability-brown> for articles about 'the man'.

Plans in the pipeline

In recent weeks the Trust has received notification of a large number of planning applications and consultations. Some of these have been sent to us direct from Local Authorities, others through The Gardens Trust,¹ and some from members who have heard of proposals through the media.

Planning applications have been received for:

- Lyme Park – response submitted
- Birkenhead Park – response being considered
- Lymm Hall – response submitted
- Ness Botanic Gardens – response not deemed necessary

Pre application consultations for:

- Walton Hall, Warrington - pending
- Cholmondeley Bewilderwood - pending

We have been notified of consultations on:

- Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part Two) Land Allocations and Detailed Policies - Preferred approach consultation – response submitted
- HS2 Phase 2a to Crewe - response not deemed necessary
- Cheshire Gateway – development affecting Dunham Massey – no resource to pursue
- Public Parks Inquiry and Consultation – response submitted

And in addition, we have received several other applications of a more minor nature which nevertheless still need checking.

Reviewing and commenting on planning applications is undertaken on behalf of the Trust by a very small number of people. This is unsustainable. If you care for the historic designed landscapes of our County which shape its character and attractiveness as a place to live, work and play, then please consider becoming actively involved. A landscape you cherish may

become the subject of an ill-informed planning application and without more help the Trust is unlikely to be able to take action. Support, training and letter templates are available. The following events may be of interest.

- Historic Landscapes Assembly: 24 November 2016, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Venue is The Gallery, 70 Cowcross Street, London EC1M 6EJ. This is a free event, though a donation of £5 towards lunchtime catering would be welcome. There will be speakers from The Gardens Trust, Historic England, Parks & Gardens UK and the Capability Brown Festival. There will also be the leaflet 'The Planning System and The Protection of Historic Parks and Gardens' (this is also available to download from The Gardens Trust website).
- 'Knowledge is Power: using research to conserve historic parks and gardens'. 28 February 2017, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Hodsock Priory, Blyth, Worksop, Nottinghamshire, S81 0TY. There will be speakers from Historic England, the Historic Environment Records and local authorities. Again a free day, but as well as lunch there will be a snowdrop garden tour. Hodsock Priory is famous for its snowdrops and grows many different cultivars.

¹ *The Gardens Trust is one of seven national amenity societies which local authorities have a duty to consult when they receive applications affecting **listed** buildings, monuments or landscapes relating to their interest. This means that The Gardens Trust should be notified of any planning application affecting a registered landscape, that is, a park or garden in Historic England's register that is deemed to be of national significance. In reality The Gardens Trust does not have the resources to respond informatively to the cases they receive so it is up to individual County Gardens Trusts to formulate a response if they deem it appropriate.*

Looking for Mr. Kemp

Next year we will be celebrating 200 years since the birth of Edward Kemp. Unlike Capability Brown, Kemp has left his mark upon the Cheshire landscape.

Edward Kemp worked with Joseph Paxton who designed Birkenhead Park and Paxton recommended him as the Park's first Supervisor. Kemp accepted many design commissions and published his book 'How to Lay Out a Garden' in 1850. Our researchers are gearing up for the special year:

On 29 June Researchers/Recorders met at **Congleton Park**. One of seven public parks designed by **Edward Kemp** (1817-91), Congleton Park was financed by public subscriptions, cost £3,000 and was opened in May 1871. Between 2002 and 2005, the park was restored at a cost of £1.65 million with a large contribution from the Heritage Lottery Fund.



Our site visit concentrated on recording remains of Kemp's original design and features, also on specimen trees possibly planted in the 1870s.

We used this detail of the Ordnance Survey map surveyed in 1873.

Here is what we found:

1



2. The main **promenade** winding along the bottom of Town Wood's steep slope, with boundaries and alcoves of **rockwork**. Looking NE.



3. **The promenade**, looking SW. Views from seats in alcoves range to the river Dane and are framed by specimen trees (many of them evergreens).



4. **Pillars** and rockwork steps mark entry points to the ascent into Town Wood.



5. **Town Wood**: paths wind along contour lines or climb steeply; they present a variety of views and surprises.



6. At the summit of Town Wood: the **viewpoint** onto the town.



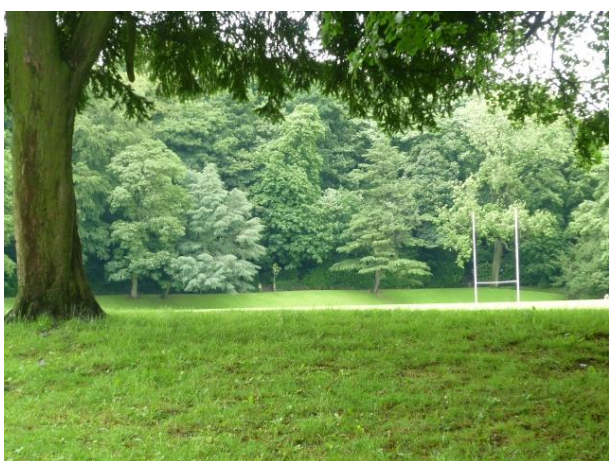
7. In 1871 the **viewpoint** was a mock fortress with a Russian cannon, brought back from the Crimean War. The town gave the cannon to the war effort in 1940.



8. The oval shape of the **bowling green** seems unusual; it is shown on the OS map of 1873.



9. The promenade continues as a perimeter walk. It includes an **avenue** of beech and horse-chestnut by the river Dane.



10. Looking from the riverside walk towards Town Wood and specimen trees by the promenade (cf. 3).



11. The horse-chestnut avenue by the river c. 1890.

RHS Flower Show Tatton Park 2016 – 'An English Stumpery Garden'

Designed by Mary Moxon (Volunteer Gardener at Biddulph Grange, former Reaseheath student of horticulture and garden design and CGT member) and constructed by Biddulph Grange Gardeners. Here Mary tells the story of how the garden came to be.

The inspiration for the garden was taken from James Bateman and Edward Cookes' creation of the first stumpery built in 1856 at Biddulph Grange. Oak tree stumps are carefully arranged to create planting pockets for ferns, mosses and delicate flowering plants providing, also, a wildlife-friendly habitat. The atmosphere in the stumpery varies with the seasons and the weather, ranging from sunny and bright to misty and spooky. This was the concept submitted to the RHS for the back to back garden category at this year's Flower Show at Tatton Park.

Translation of the concept to the open field situation at Tatton Park inevitably imposed limitations. The constraints of the back to back arrangement necessitated a change to the original design which had included a tunnel having been based on all round visibility. To maintain visibility for the back to back design, one corner of the plot was used not only to display the stumps but also an upside down holly tree supporting *Cobaea scandens* and a hosta bed which are also features of Biddulph Grange Garden.

Prior to the build, the BBC registered their interest in the stumpery concept and spent a day filming with us all at Biddulph Grange. Having to spontaneously create and deliver our own scripts was quite a challenge especially when asked to 'do it again'. Thankfully, excellent editing resulted in an enhanced performance and the short feature was well received.

The ferns used in the display included *Adiantum venustum*, *Asplenium scolopendrium*, *Arachnoides aristata* 'Variegata', *Cyrtomium devexiscapulae*, *Dryopteris erythrosora*, *Dryopteris filix-mas*, *Polystichum munitum* and *Polystichum setiferum* 'Plumosum Densum'. The flowering plants included *Anemone x hybrida* 'Dreaming Swan' and 'Ruffled Swan', *Astilbe* 'William Buchanan', *Geranium nodosum* 'Silverwood', *Roscoea beesiana* and *Veronicastrum virginicum* 'Diane'. The Hosta varieties were 'Captain Kirk', 'Fried Bananas', 'Golden Spider', 'Halcyon', 'Marmalade on Toast', 'Rainforest Sunshine', 'Touch of Class' and 'Toy Soldier'.

I would like to thank the National Trust and Biddulph Grange Garden for giving me the opportunity to design a show garden on their behalf and to acknowledge the skill of the Biddulph Grange Gardeners in arranging the stumps so perfectly.

Mary Moxon



Right, Mary: above her well-deserved Medal and below a view of the garden



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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

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