

### Inside:

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- Japanese Garden in Sale
- Grosvenor Park
- Halecroft Park

### Some future events:

- Manchester's Botanic Garden, Tues 28 Nov (eve)
- Out of Africa: Tatton's plant legacy, Sat 27 Jan (pm)
- A passion for trees: the legacy of John Evelyn, Wed. 14 Feb (eve)

*In the April Newsletter, I wrote about the gardens at Trentham and the sad state they had fallen into by 2002. In July our visit there showed the amazing transformation so far achieved.*



The weather could not have been more perfect – provided one wore plenty of sun-block. The heat was intense, but the bright light added to the experience. We were shown around by gardens manager, Michael Walker, formerly gardens manager at Waddesdon Manor.

The transformation of the gardens is breathtaking. On the right is the same view as that above, but taken four years previously. The basic structure of Trentham had survived but it had lost its soul. Now it is bursting with new life. This is not a strict restoration. In its heyday, the gardens would have been planted according to Victorian taste and with Victorian plants. Rather than re-create that look (which, in any case, is too labour-intensive for today), the gardens have a totally contemporary feel.

All, that is, except the bit in the foreground which is a reasonably accurate restoration of Charles Barry's scheme, planted by George Fleming, including the white gravel – which is not to everyone's taste!



Michael led us around the Italian gardens (which are only a fraction of the entire estate), responding to the torrent of members' questions, while managing to stick more or less with his carefully prepared talk.

Trentham has a long history – the guide book begins the story with the Domesday Book of 1086.

For more than 400 years, beginning with its purchase in 1540, the estate was handed down through the generations of one family, seemingly each generation trying to out-do the previous one in house and garden (Capability Brown designed the lake in the 18<sup>th</sup> century), until, in 1833, Charles Barry was employed to redesign the house and create the Italian Garden.

Within twenty years, Trentham had become one of the most celebrated gardens in the country. But it was not to last. The industrialisation of the nearby pottery towns soon had a deleterious impact upon the gardens. The Trent became an open sewer; and the Trent provided the water for the lake and fountains...

The family had plenty of other homes – we are talking seriously rich here – and eventually, in 1905, they decided to abandon Trentham. The County Council turned down an offer to purchase it and in 1911 the house was sold for demolition.

It was not until 1979 that the family finally sold the estate to John Broome who planned to create some-

*To give you a flavour of the transformation, here are some more before and after photos.*



*Before*



*After*



*Before*



*After*



*Before*



*After*



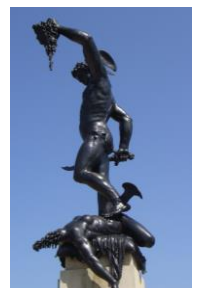
*Before*



*After*



*Before*



*After*

thing similar to Alton Towers.

But it was not to be. In 1980 several of the buildings that remained were listed. Then, from 1985 to 1996 the estate was owned by the Coal Board, which purchased it from John Broome rather than pay him compensation for subsidence that occurred and which caused the lake to disappear overnight.

The transformation of Trentham began in 1996 with its purchase by the present owners when new plans for its restoration were drawn up. Recognising that there have been gardens here for centuries – Brown had swept away a formal Elizabethan garden – the plan was not to return it to a particular point in time but to take what was already there and bring it up to date.



Piet Oudolf and Chelsea gold-medal winner Tom Stuart-Smith drew up the new planting plans – exuberant and carefully designed to take the garden through the seasons.



The work is by no means finished. There are more garden areas to be completed and the house itself is to be re-created – though its use is not yet decided.

Key to the whole work is the ability of the owners to maintain their restoration. There are seven full-time gardeners and – looking to the future – an apprenticeship scheme for six.

*Joy Uings*



*Above left, we study Tom Stuart-Smith's planting plan. Above right, part of the Trentham Chelsea Garden. The team is planning how to create the right setting for the seat.*

In addition to the Italian Garden, there are walks through the woodland and around the lake. Trentham Active includes the Aerial Extreme where the adventurous can swing, climb and slide their way from tree to tree up to 40ft above the forest floor. For more information go to [www.trenthamleisure.co.uk](http://www.trenthamleisure.co.uk).

## Evening visit to the Japanese Garden at Walkden Gardens, Sale 9<sup>th</sup> August 2006

Our August event was an evening visit to the Japanese Garden, part of Walkden Gardens in Sale. It was attended by 18 members and followed by a convivial meal at a nearby restaurant.

An unusual garden, modelled on Hidcote's series of garden rooms, Walkden Gardens were gifted to the people of Sale by the horticulturalist Harry Walkden in 1949.

In 1970 the local council created the garden rooms flanked by beech hedges, which after a period of neglect, have been restored by The Friends of Walkden Gardens.

They now feature a Japanese Garden and the ancient dovecote (left) transferred from Sale Old Hall.

Our guide for the evening was Graham Hardman, Chairman of the Japanese Garden Society.



Graham had set up a display to show the plan and photographs of Japanese gardens, particularly the



Walkden garden, in the different stages of construction including the traditional method of moving enormous boulders and rocks. He answered numerous questions before taking members into the garden to show the different features.

The garden is still under construction, but several themes can be seen. The path through the garden is quite winding, which provides many different views as you walk along it.



The intention is to separate the garden into three areas with a see-through bamboo screen. The first area will be quite small, centred around the main entrance. This will have a large roofed entrance in the finished garden, so will make people feel they are entering a different space from the rest of the gardens. A rock arrangement based on Buddhist ideas can be seen, and some planting has been done.

The second area, again entered through a small



archway is where the trees are, so is a woodland scene. Here the gravel under the trees could be interpreted as water, perhaps left after heavy rain, or as low lying mist. Either way the trunks of the maple trees are seen much more clearly than they would be if they were surrounded by plants.

The third area is the rest of the garden beyond the trees, which includes a 'dry' lake made with gravel representing water, and two 'dry' rivers, made with slate and gravel and with small cobblestones. At one end is a mountainous area, with a river running down to the lake, which has many rocks on it perhaps representing mountain peaks.

There is some planting already, but much more to be added which will enhance the scene. In the lake are two rocks suggesting a turtle.

We hope that as you walk through the garden you get completely different views, and especially if you walk back the other way too.

*Heather Turner*

## Japanese Gardens

The history of gardens in Japan goes back about 1,500 years, and right from the beginning the idea of the garden was to model the natural world. This may be in a purely representational way, or may be idealised as a vision of paradise, or may be quite abstract. Because garden space is small in Japan, the scene depicted is often modelled in miniature, leaving the viewer to engage their imagination in viewing the garden. This is quite different from our own view of gardens as places for plants to grow, where flower colour is much desired.

The scenery in Japan is very rocky and mountainous, so rocks representing mountains became an important part of garden design. Being an island, the sea also plays a big part in natural scenery, and is often represented in gardens as a lake, or even as gravel representing water.

There are religious influences in garden design too, from both Shinto, the native Japanese religion, and Buddhism, that came from China and Korea in the 6<sup>th</sup> century.

Water is seen as a purifying agent in Shinto, so is often used in gardens, and in particular in water basins where people will scoop some water over their hands, thus



symbolically cleansing themselves. Buddhist deities are also represented in stone arrangements. Other stone arrangements reflect mythical figures, in particular the crane (the bird that is thought to have taken the souls of the dead to paradise) and the turtle (which is thought to have carried the paradise islands on their backs).

In terms of overall design, the garden is intended to provide the viewer with many different views as they walk through the garden, thus making a relatively small space appear bigger.

The garden is also seen as a world apart, so is separated from the normal world outside by being fully enclosed, and with gateways to pass through at the entrances. By allowing the viewer to feel they are in a separate world, and by engaging them in interpreting the scenes depicted, the viewer often experiences the garden as a peaceful place, where the cares of the world can be temporarily forgotten.



## Grosvenor Park and Overleigh Cemetery, Chester

*Saturday 9 September was our introduction to Edward Kemp and his work in Chester, courtesy of Ed Bennis. Ed's informative handout is the basis for this report.*

**Edward Kemp** (1817-1891) was one of the most influential garden designers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He was born in Streatham and trained in the gardens of the RHS at Chiswick. He then moved to Chatsworth, where he worked under head gardener, Sir Joseph Paxton.

In 1843, still only in his mid-twenties, Kemp was appointed Superintendent of Birkenhead Park, a post he kept for over 40 years. At the same time he ran a design business from his home overlooking the park.

In 1850 Kemp published 'Landscape Gardening: How to Lay out a Small Garden'. This had enormous impact and even crossed the Atlantic to be published in America.

Kemp's success must in part have been due to his practical nature as well as his design abilities. He laid out his principles for selecting a site, as well as his design principles which are easy to understand, a rare thing at the time. These were certainly a counter-response to the excessive design complexity and the over-use of garden decorations.

Kemp started pragmatically with the choice of place. He identified railways as the main reason for the development of suburbia where business men could live up to fifty miles from town, getting the benefit of country air.

Kemp identified 23 principles in design, the first being simplicity and states that this is the 'first thing to be aimed at in laying out a garden'. Much of his writing was about what *not* to do; a clear indication of his attempt to educate the public and other professionals in good taste within the garden.

His topics, many illustrated, included convenience, compactness, seclusion, unity and congruity of parts, blending, symmetry, richness and polish, variety, originality, character, styles of gardening, and beauty.

November 1867 saw the official opening of **Grosvenor Park** in Chester, situated on the banks of the river Dee. Its name came as a result of the decision by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Marquis of Westminster to donate, rather than sell, the land with the added bonus of an endowment of £200 per year.

Kemp's original plan shows a simpler layout than the one to be seen today, although his structure is still there. He used what J C Loudon called the style of the ancients – two long formal broad walks of 15' width intersecting at a statue of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Marquis, although that was added after the park opened.

One avenue was planted with conifers, the other with broad-leaved hollies. Elsewhere, there were ornamental clumps and belts of a variety of ornamental

trees and shrubs.

The remainder of the upper level is in the English romantic style: curving walks, distant views to ruined castles, clumps of trees and massed shrub borders which separate the park from the town.



*Ed's introduction first took us to Germany, where the idea of People's Parks predated the Public Park movement in this country. We also saw the original Kemp designs.*

Kemp felt that picturesque elements should be obscured and happened upon by chance. The Well is situated in the lower part of the park, along with the romantic folly consisting of three arches – one from the Shipgate on the city walls, one from St Michael's and one from the Benedictine nunnery of St Mary's.



The folly (*above*), the lodge, gates, walls and Billy Hobby's Well were the responsibility of the architect John Douglas. The lodge is half timber with English and African oak, and the gables have carvings of William the Conqueror and the seven earls of Chester (*below*).





Another key aspect of the park has completely disappeared behind mature trees. Kemp had originally allowed for long distance views to Beeston Castle from his view points. These views could be recovered, but only at the expense of losing those trees.

Features have been added into the landscape, such as the ornamental pool and its planting to the eastern end, and the rock work on the slopes below the main park area. These were built in the 1950s. Neither is detrimental to the ideas of the park, but it would be very easy to lose Kemp's first principle of design – simplicity. The cumulative effect of multiple additions is a danger.

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Following a picnic lunch alongside the Dee, we crossed the river to Overleigh cemetery – another piece of land originally owned by the Marquis of Westminster.

Overleigh was exceptional in its layout and was developed around a shallow valley with an ornamental lake in the lowest part.

It was accessed from three points, two of which had lodges. These, the two chapels (C of E and non-

conformist), and the Chaplain's house have all been demolished.

However, what remains is a cemetery clearly in the English parkland style; parts are overgrown with ivy as nature reclaims and lends a dark and solemn, but romantic, air. The nineteenth century saw the development of burial grounds like Overleigh cemetery. They took over from church graveyards, partly as a response to excessive demand.

*Chester Cemetery, Overleigh*, published by the Chester Civic Trust in May 1994 includes the following passage:

*"At a public meeting in the Exchange the bishop had spoken of the disgraceful state of the burial grounds in the city and of a 'general feeling that the internments of the dead should be removed from the abodes of the living'. Chancellor Raikes said that 'Christians' cemeteries should not be all gloom, but bear some emblem of the bright hopes of the faith'. They were early advocates of the landscape, park-like burial grounds which were so characteristic of Victorian Britain."*

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*In the January newsletter, we carried a letter from Ian Trickett of Trafford Borough Council about three parks/gardens. Ian is looking for help in researching their background. In April we looked at Denzell Gardens and in July we featured Stamford Park. Here look at Halecroft Park*



Halecroft Park lies on the A56 Hale Road between Altrincham and Hale Barns. It was originally a garden attached to Halecroft, an Arts & Crafts house built in 1891 by Edgar Wood. The house was sold into private ownership, but the garden was given to the local authority.

Of the three gardens, this is the one of which least is known. It was only discovered recently that Edgar Wood designed the house. Whether he also designed the gardens seems to be open to question. Following our visit there earlier this year, member Barbara Moth reviewed the OS maps for the area and found *'the area laid out east of the house, and now in the park, does not appear on the maps until 1935'*.

Regardless of how early the garden was designed, cutbacks of the 1980s and 1990s led to a general decline. A number of original features remain, although some are in poor condition.

The Friends of Halecroft Park have been very active and were delighted when the Park won the North-West region competition for "Britain's Best Park".

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Edgar Wood (1860-1935) was a founder member of the Northern Art Workers Guild and in 1910 was President of the Manchester Society of Architects.

Following school, Edgar wanted to be an artist while his father expected him to join the family's cotton business. They compromised on architecture as a career.

The family lived in Middleton and most of Edgar's work seems to have been in the Middleton / Rochdale areas, although by 1892 he had moved his offices to Cross Street in Manchester.

Obviously a flamboyant character, Edgar would 'arrive at work wearing a large black cloak, lined with red silk, a flat, broad-brimmed hat and brandishing a silver handled cane. He said, "If an architect is not allowed to advertise his name he must advertise his personality"'.\*

\*Information from:

[www.manchesterhistory.net/edgarwood](http://www.manchesterhistory.net/edgarwood)



## A Bouquet of Love

Love affairs nowadays are often carried on via text messages and emails. The Victorians, lacking such electronic conveniences, made elaborate use of the language of flowers, which they wore or gave to each other.

Imagine a typical romance.

The young man sees a beautiful girl with a nosegay of white rosebuds (a heart ignorant of love) and white daisies (innocence). She should have been warned by his buttonhole of purple larkspur (levity), but they were attracted to each other and soon she was wearing purple lilac (the first emotion of love) while he wore Arkansas coreopsis (love at first sight) and strawberry tree (esteem and love).

However, just as she was hoping for a more definite declaration of love than a red tulip, he met another woman of great rustic beauty (French honeysuckle). He showed weakness (musk plant) and they were soon engaged in a passionate flirtation (variegated poppy).

The first girl appeared wearing fish geranium (disappointed expectation), and passion flowers (love in agony). Her mother, who had always worn sprigs of the linden tree (conjugal love), now appeared with ladies' cushion (maternal love) and red columbine (anxiety). Her father's nosegay was the hundred-leaved achillea (war!).

Then the young man realised he had made a big mistake. The rustic beauty showed a desire for riches (corn), was vain and vulgar (African marigold) and made it clear that without matrimony he would not be getting any full-blown moss roses (voluptuous love). There were plenty of broken straws (quarrels) and he resolved never to see her again and to try and reclaim his first love.

By this time one gardener had taken to drink and another was threatening to emigrate.

The young man, having repented his stupidity (scarlet geranium), began by sending the girl some filberts, to show he wanted a reconciliation, as well as *Adonis Phlos* – Pheasant's eye - to show he was full of sorrowful remembrances.

At first, prompted by her mother, she responded with clove gillyflower (dignity) and almond laurel as a reminder of his perfidy, but he persevered with white periwinkle (tender recollections) and soon he was wearing a palm wreath (peaceful victory) while she wore a coronet of roses (reward of virtue), and both wore lily of the valley (return of happiness), followed by full-blown red roses to mark their engagement.

As for the rustic beauty, she fell for a man who wore a pomegranate flower (mature and finished elegance). She found out too late that it should have been sunflowers (false riches). There was a generous display of hellebore (scandal) and it all ended with barberry (sourness and spite).

*Sheila Holroyd*

## A Colourful, Edible Garden for Leisure & Pleasure

Cheshire Gardens Trust Chairman, Ed Bennis is also a member of The Rotary Club of Manchester Breakfast. His was the inspiration behind the launch of a Garden 'Design & Build' Challenge for Schools in Manchester. Local schools were invited to design and create 'A colourful, edible garden'. The challenge was taken up by three Moss Side primary schools: Claremont (*below left*), St Mary's CE (*below, middle*) and Bishop Bilbsborrow RC (*below, right*).



Through the spring and summer, pupils planted seeds and raised seedlings. They learnt through experience about plants and their enemies. They designed their gardens and artwork. When schools broke up for the summer holidays, their carefully tended plants were put into the care of the Hulme Community Garden Centre.

At the Caribbean Carnival of Manchester 2006 held in Alexandra Park on 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> August, their handiwork was on display for all to see. Judges were roped in from Hulme Garden Centre and Cheshire Gardens Trust. Each garden excelled in a particular area and each received an award that reflected that.

The aim of the project was to provide an innovative learning process for school children within the bounds of the national curriculum. The results showed this aim had been achieved.

*Joy Uings*



## AGT Conference – 1-3 September 2006

Cheshire Gardens Trust was well represented at the AGM and Conference in Bangor, 1-3 Sept. with 3 members there for the duration, and one for Saturday. The AGM itself took place on the Friday, getting the 'work' out of the way. Then, following the evening meal, we were entertained by a talk from Bleddyn & Sue Lloyd-Jones of Crug Farm Nurseries and their adventures as modern-day plant hunters.



*A view of Sue and Bleddyn's garden – showing their ability to display the plants they collect to great advantage*

Plant-hunting was the theme of the conference and on Saturday morning, Toby Musgrave gave a very lively overview on plant hunters from the eighteenth to the twentieth century. The following morning it was the turn of Jenny Potter who gave an excellent review of the 17<sup>th</sup> century John Tradescants, father and son.

I found the three talks were unusual in that I am hard pressed to remember a conference when all presenters were so good. It was a good learning curve and I felt that it broadened my understanding of the landscape and those involved.

The visits are always a highlight and it was interesting to see how well people responded, despite the wet weather, to the scenic landscapes of north Wales. Many had never been there before.

**Ed Bennis**



*The rain failed to dampen spirits on the visit to Bodnant and had the bonus of lifting the colour of bark to glorious effect*



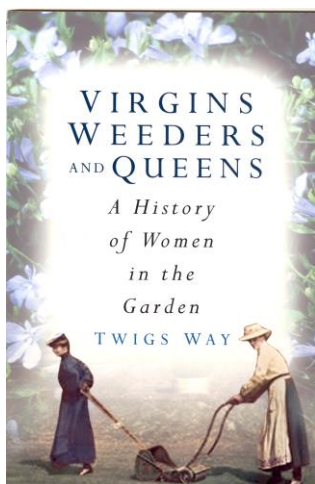
*Gwydir Castle is a fine example of a Tudor courtyard house, rescued by Judy Corbett and Peter Welford.*

As usual, the real value in a conference is the discussions that take place outside of the official events. In particular I noted the following points of interest:

- \* each Trust operates differently and has different strengths, some of the differences occasioned by geography and ease or not of communications. For example, London finds that events held centrally – lectures, guided walks and visits – are well attended but events organised outside this zone are hopeless. Gwynedd don't hold events in the winter months due to difficulties of communication and the vagaries of the weather.
- \* Gwynedd arrange a study day each autumn. These are well attended, usually about 40 people.
- \* Gwynedd also hold a spring plant fair at Crug Nursery, attended by local nurseries who grow their own plants, for which the Gardens Trust receives a percentage of the takings and provides ploughman's lunches and teas (renowned for food!). The event, one of the first plant fairs of the year, is very popular. Profits, exceeding £2,000, are used to make small grants towards garden based projects, ones that find it difficult or wouldn't receive other funding. These have included a grant to enable production of a tree trail leaflet for a historic landscape/country park.
- \* Essex have about 12 members involved in research, as and when. They search historic maps for likely sites and then check out what is left on the ground including requesting, but not always obtaining, access. When they have completed research on a district they present the findings in a file together with their publication - Historic Designed Landscapes - to the local planning department and are sometimes given funding from the local council to cover the costs of copying.
- \* in each Trust a small core of people undertake most of the work
- \* Bedfordshire make use of a wiki for Conservation communications. This appears to be an internet conference call/noticeboard where the Conservation group post information and carry on dialogue so that everyone is kept in the loop without the need to send individual e-mails. Cost of the service is free.

**Barbara Moth**





Today women are in the forefront of garden design and the horticultural world, with Beth Chatto, Carol Klein, Rachel de Thame and other household names.

However the history of women's role in the garden has not always run such a smooth course nor their contribution been so eagerly appreciated. In this captivating book, garden historian, Twigs

Way unearths the history of women's fascinating and varied relationship with the garden.

From the early misfortunes of Eve, condemning her descendants to a dubious reputation for fruit management, the fortunes of female gardeners rose high in the medieval period, when the management of kitchen garden and herber was a matter for the conscientious housewife.

Queens also appeared in the garden, although Elizabeth I's presence was as often symbolic as actual, as courtiers bankrupted themselves installing statues and fountains of her alter-ego, Diana the Virgin Huntress and planting the coy foxglove and pure lily.

The eternal spring of Elizabeth met its fruitful autumn as sexuality and scandal entered the garden in the eighteenth century, with the scandalous Linnaean System turning botany into anything but a 'polite' study.

Stamens were emasculated and orchids shunned as the humble, sexless, fern became the mania of the day. Little wonder that those women who did dare to venture beyond the conservatory were labelled as eccentric, whilst the first schools for women gardeners

were considered by many to be sheer madness. Then there was the matter of what to wear . . .

*Virgins Weeders and Queens* explores the full range of women's involvement in the garden, from the downtrodden weeding women and the hardworking housewife, to the eighteenth century nobility seeking retreat and solace through horticulture.

Anxious Victorian women wondering how one gardened in corsets share the pages with their adventurous plant-hunting 'sisters', while knowledgeable medieval herbwives are finally brought face to face with their plant-loving queens. Sensual plants, virginal lovers, and eccentric gardeners are brought together in this delightful and entertaining book.

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Dr Twigs Way is a professional garden historian, who combines lecturing for the University of Cambridge (Institute of Continuing Education) with undertaking research on historic gardens for clients including private garden owners and public bodies such as English Heritage.

She has recently edited collected research papers on *Picturing Paradise* and *Paper Landscapes* covering a wide variety of themes and is particularly interested in the social aspects of garden history. Recent design work includes the installation of a medieval inspired garden within a black-taxi as part of a community art project, unexpectedly described (by a passing 9 year old) as 'cool'!

Twigs lives in Cambridge where she shares her life and gardens with a range of rabbits, ducks and cats and is probably unique amongst gardeners in holding an Open Garden once a year in aid of the Rabbit Welfare Association.

*Virgins, Weeders and Queens* was published on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2006.

## Public Parks

One day while I was preparing this edition of the newsletter, I read the headline: "*Plans to give four of Tyneside's most historic parks a £4.5m makeover have been given a boost.*" Newcastle City Council had been awarded £188,000 from the Big Lottery and Heritage Lottery Funds.

Plans for the parks include restoration of key historic features including a Quarry Garden, a grotto and historic bridges. There was a quote from Sir Clive Booth, chair of the Big Lottery Fund. He said "Parks are a vital free space in which people of all generations and backgrounds can come together. Whether you walk the dog or like to jog, the Parks for People investment will make a huge

difference to your park by transforming it into a more attractive and safer place to be."

And I realised that public parks have been something of a theme this year for us. It started in January with Allan Ruff's wonderful talk on the origin of public parks in Manchester.

We have touched on Birkenhead Park, the three parks in Trafford, the London Parks and Gardens Trust web-site exploring public parks, Frodsham's Park and Fletcher Moss Park. Some of these were designed originally as public parks; others have become so following the gift of private grounds to the local council.

So since parks are the in thing at the moment .....



18-25 June [www.loveparks.org.uk](http://www.loveparks.org.uk)

The Love Parks Week back in June received massive levels of support from local authorities and other organisations up and down the country.

Almost 200 park events were held throughout the week, attended by over 95,000 people.

There was significant media coverage, with almost 100 local and regional newspaper articles, television and radio interviews running throughout the week- seen by over eight million people throughout the UK.

Go to the internet for a flavour of these events.

Love Parks Week 2007 will take place from Sunday 17 to Sunday 24 June 2007 and will be even bigger and better than this year.

So start planning an event for **YOUR** park. You can get more information about the 2007 event from: Martin Duffy, Communications Manager Tel: 0118 946 9062 e-mail [martind@green-space.org.uk](mailto:martind@green-space.org.uk) or Becky Volker, Communications Officer, 0118 946 9068 e-mail [beckyv@green-space.org.uk](mailto:beckyv@green-space.org.uk).



## Your local park...

Litter-strewn or litter-free?

Brilliant or boring?

A no-go area or a safe place to be?

## ...what would make it better?

What do you think about your local park? Is it a delight or a disgrace? You can have an input into a survey of the country's parks via [www.millionvoices.org.uk](http://www.millionvoices.org.uk).

Sometimes we say nothing because we think one voice will not be heard. The idea behind the website is to give us the chance to add our voice to that of others. As it says on the web-site:

Parks are very important to our everyday lives ... Whether it is to kick a football around, take the dog for a walk, play with the kids or just relax, away from the pressures of everyday life, we all use parks and are best placed to say what is good, and bad, about them.

Go to the web-site and let them know about **your** Park.

Would you like to know more about **Capability Brown**? Steffie Shields is the amazingly energetic AGT Committee member responsible for Publicity. But she is also a Photographer, Lecturer and Garden Writer who specialises in historic landscapes, gardens and plant portraiture. She supplies Garden Matters Photographic Agency, and her work has been published by the Times, Sunday Times, Financial Times, Sunday Express, Gardens Illustrated, English Garden, BBC Gardeners' World, Heritage etc.

She is also a regular contributor of illustrated articles to Lincolnshire Life and writes the editorial commentary for the annual Lincolnshire Tourism Gardens Brochure. She is a Licentiate of the Royal Photographic Society, a member of both the Garden History Society and Garden Writers Guild, and a committee member of the Lincolnshire Gardens Trust.

She has lectured to camera, flower & garden clubs, Fine Art & Hardy Plant Societies, County Gardens Trusts including the London Historic Parks & Gardens Trust, National Trust, Probus, NCCPG, the Garden History Society and the Georgian Group (London).

This is a woman who knows a lot about gardens!

Following the 1987 hurricane, she began to research the work of landscape gardener Lancelot 'Capability' Brown. She compiled a photographic record of his landscapes and architecture and hopes to publish an illustrated book to convey the scale of his legacy.

To date she has visited more than 180 of his 200 plus works, with over 5,000 photographs on file. She has been consulted on restoration and management plans for various Brown parks and contributed to the Channel 4 TV "Great Estates" 2001 programme on his work at Blenheim.

On 5 February 2007, Steffie will be in Bowdon as the Guest Speaker for the Bowdon 60 Club – her subject Capability Brown.

If you would like to attend, you would be welcome. The Club meets at the Altrincham Prep School for boys in Marlborough Road, Bowdon, WA14 2RR. However, please phone the membership secretary, Philippa Nicholls beforehand – 0161 941 1335. Philippa will give you details of time and cost.





We are just about half-way through the History Matters – Pass it On awareness campaign. You may have heard about the One Day in History blog on 17<sup>th</sup> October.

As members of the Gardens Trust, we are all very aware of the part garden history plays in our lives, though not necessarily so aware of other things of historical importance.

You can still take part in the Campaign. Visit the web-site [www.historymatters.org.uk](http://www.historymatters.org.uk). There you can add your name to the many who already support the campaign.

You will be able to read the entries from people around the country recording the everyday events of their lives as experienced on the 17<sup>th</sup> October.

You can see whether an event is taking place in your area (though we don't seem too history-minded in the North-West – but perhaps you have an event that can be posted to the site to change that perception).

Join in the debate as to why history matters. Answer the points made by others.

Just one point: on my computer I needed to scroll across to pick up all the links. Remember to do this or you could miss something of interest.

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A number of Gardens Trust members are doing the MA course in Garden History at Bristol University. This includes an element of research.

Ann Brookman is basing her dissertation on John Webb a landscape gardener from Staffordshire who lived from 1745-1828.

Several of his known commissions were in Cheshire: Tatton Park, Eaton Park and Rode Hall (at all of which he worked on the lakes), plus Cholmondeley Hall, Poole Hall, Bradwell Manor, Tabley and Somerford Booths Hall.

Ann would really appreciate it if any Cheshire Gardens Trust member could pass on any relevant information on these – or any other sites John Webb may have worked on. She would particularly like to find out more about how he got the commissions, the workforce used, etc.

If you are able to help, you can e-mail Ann at [ann.brookman@googlemail.com](mailto:ann.brookman@googlemail.com).

## Cheshire Gardens Trust upcoming events

Full details will be with you soon, meanwhile, make a note of the dates so you don't miss out

Saturday 27 January 2pm Tatton Park

**Out of Africa: Tatton's plant legacy.** A lecture by Sam Youd.

Sam will be talking about Lord Egerton's links with Africa and how various plant introductions have shaped Tatton's gardens and vice-versa.

Sam can always be relied upon to give an interesting and informative talk, so do come along.

Wednesday 14 February 6.30 Venue to be arranged.

**A Passion for Trees, the legacy of John Evelyn.** A

Lecture by Maggie Campbell-Culver. Discover a different side to the diarist John Evelyn, by taking a stroll through the woodland world of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

Learn about his ideas for landscaping, and his design and gardening skills, and how relevant Evelyn's knowledge is to the garden world today.

Maggie Campbell-Culver is a Garden and Plant Historian, and a Fellow of The Linnean Society. She has worked on a number of gardens in Sussex and Cornwall, and was the Garden Conservationist at Fishbourne Roman Palace nr Chichester

The University of York and the Association of Gardens Trusts are looking for a writer and an editor for the HLF-funded project Parks & Gardens UK. Both posts will be home-based and can be combined in one individual.

The writer will write key text and web content including sections of the database or educational resources that will also be found on the website. Both posts need the same set of skills - including writing for the web, the use of plain English, editing material for the web and organising themselves.

An understanding of issues regarding historic Parks and Gardens in the UK is needed. If you are interested, you can get more information by contacting Janet E Davis at [jed506@york.ac.uk](mailto:jed506@york.ac.uk). Pay is £20,000 pro rata. The closing date for receipt of applications: 17<sup>th</sup> November 2006



So, make a date in your diaries and come and join us in March. In addition to our guest speaker, there will be the chance to meet the Committee and fellow members over refreshments and a glass or two of wine. And to enjoy Ness Gardens in the Spring.

If a group gets formed, we'll let you know. It's over to you, folks.