

CHESHIRE GARDENS • TRUST •

Patron: The Viscount Ashbrook

Newsletter

Inside:

- Fields of corn
- Piccadilly Gardens
- Another side to William Roscoe
- Courting controversy

Some future events:

- All-day visit to Cholmondeley Castle, 22 May
- Tour of Gordon Cooke's garden in Sale plus optional meal – 15 June
- Guided tour of Fryer's Roses, Knutsford and talk on rose breeding – 28 July

Our Spring Lecture, following the AGM, was a tremendous success. We cannot hope to do justice to it here, but we can, perhaps, give a flavour...

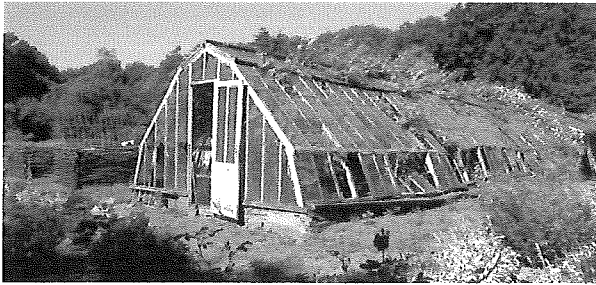


Herman van den Bossche works for the Flemish Heritage Institute in Brussels. His knowledge is extensive, aided by his many years of experience, giving rise to a fund of anecdotes. The audience was taken through several hundred years of history before being (*in the words of our Chair*) 'gobsmacked' by photos of the produce from the kitchen garden at Gaasbeek.

Continued overleaf

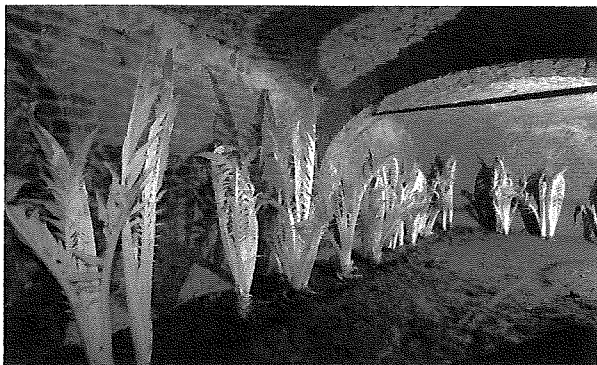
The fate of walled kitchen gardens in Belgium is much the same as in England. Not only are the gardens disappearing, but also the botanical knowledge and horticultural skills needed to keep them going.

The lecture began with some images of neglect...



... before moving to the kitchen garden at Hex, a splendid example of a traditional kitchen garden. The 1.2 ha garden faces south and has a high fruit wall, which protects it from northerly winds. It has been run on organic principles since before they became fashionable (the non-use of herbicides costs half a gardener's salary). The owner, the late Countess d'Ursel once admitted that a lettuce from the Hex garden cost more than one at Fauchon's in Paris or Fortnum & Mason in London!

The cellars beneath the Hex garden are still in use...



...but in the garden the fruit trees are now old and the condition of some is not good. Replacing them with young trees could be done, but the skills needed to train them as the originals were trained have all-but disappeared.

South-west of Brussels, the villages have a long tradition of cultivating top-quality fruit and soft fruit.

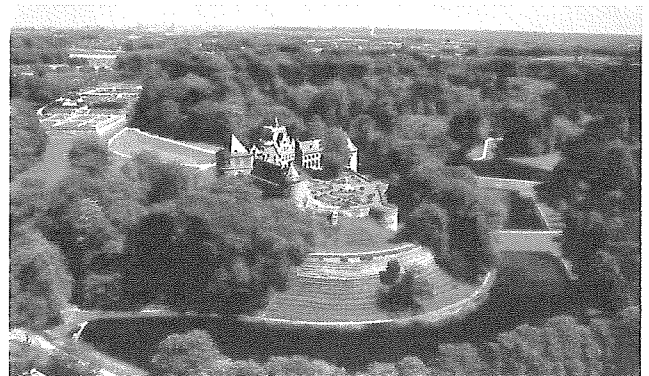


As late as the 1950s top quality pears and apples all came from fruit pyramids and trained fruit trees fastened on open trellises.

Gaasbeek

Marcel Vossen, the Director of the Flemish Nature, Forestry and Green Division, is the grandson of a well-known family of quality fruit growers in Leerbeek and still knows how to train fruit trees and soft fruit shrubs in the traditional manner. When Marcel and Herman met, the result had to be a traditional walled kitchen garden.

The place chosen was the grounds of Gaasbeek Castle which had for some time been a museum.



The Castle is just 10 km south-west of Brussels (visible on the skyline above) and its history dates from 1240. In 1923 the last owner died without heir and the Castle passed into the hands of the Belgian Government.

In 1996 talks began about the theme of the Museum Garden. The inspiration came from the walled kitchen garden at Versailles. The BBC series *'The Victorian Kitchen Garden'* also played its part.

It was decided to create *"a series of productive gardens where beauty is the result of perfect production and immaculate produce, where the knowledge and skills of the Flemish vegetable and fruit growers between 1860 and 1940, being the period when they were the best in the world, were eminent."*

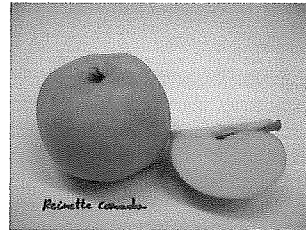
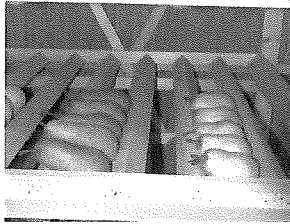
The Museum Garden was made in four phases, beginning in 1996. This included a new terrace garden where the orangery is situated, with exotic fruit in tubs – figs, olives, oranges, lemons, coffee, pomegranates.



The south-facing 17th century high brick wall is perfect for apricots, peaches and nectarines.

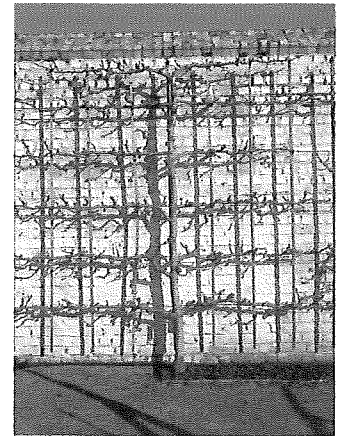
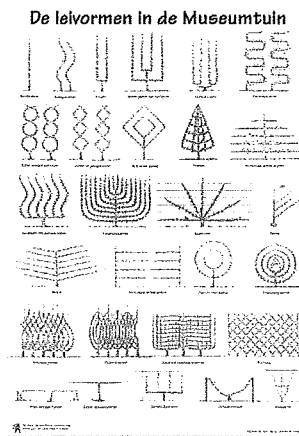
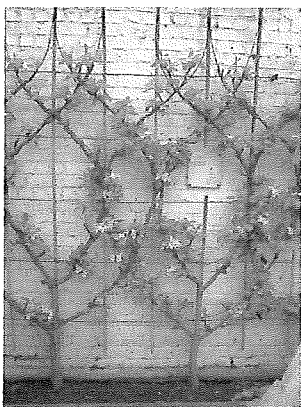
In the kitchen gardens are grown: asparagus, hop, sweet potato, strawberries, artichokes, cardoon, onions, tomatoes, peppers, courgettes, aubergine, cabbages, kohlrabi and sprouts.

The photos of the produce had the audience salivating: it was all so perfect.



Each year one crop is grown in as many different varieties as possible. To date this has included lettuces, tomatoes and onions. Herman is dreaming of showing the remaining varieties of parma violets (60 of them, in various shades of white, lilac, blue, violet, bi-coloured and double).

The Jewel in the Crown: the trained fruit trees of Gaasbeek



The fruit trees are the result of the mid- to late-19th century approach known as 'la taille raisonnée' or 'beredeneerde snoei' or 'rational pruning'.

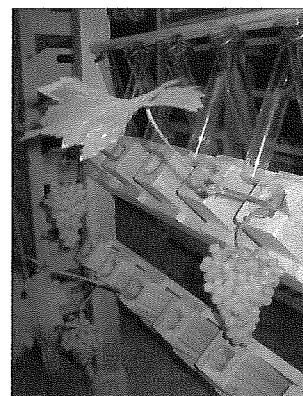
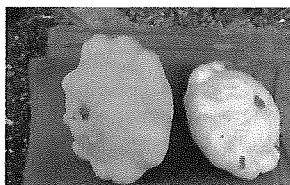
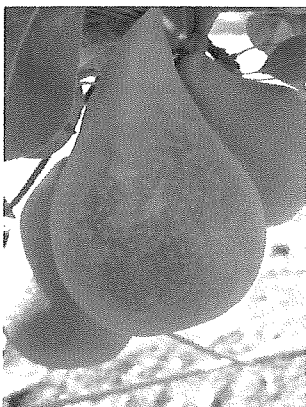
From 1860 onwards classes were held after Mass on Sundays to teach these skills to the villagers, each of whom had at least one tree standing against a wall.

Marcel Vossen knows the theory and has the skills of 'rational pruning'. This concentrates on the 'mother' branch and requires the gardener to think 3 years ahead.

The young fruit trees for the Museum Garden came from the Chottard brothers who are the last generation of propagators using the rational pruning method. Although now retired, the brothers (below) continue to help with the grafting of rare varieties.



The above report contains only a fraction of the information available and cannot give the true flavour of the talk, the text of which is, however, available in a pdf (no pictures, I'm afraid). e-mail joy.uings@btconnect.com for a copy. Meanwhile, more of that luscious produce below...



... broad seas ...

An Installation by Christine Wilcox-Baker (Artist and CGT member)

Lewis Carroll looked at the world in different ways.

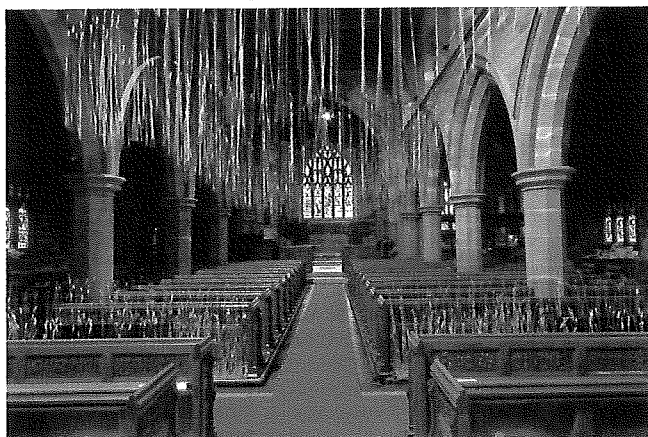
Our interest in the environment is leading us to re-evaluate how we interact with the planet.

As a child growing up in Daresbury 175 years ago Carroll was connected to the land, the landscape, the crops.

But have we lost that direct connection with the plants that feed us and the planet that allows us life?

This installation was specially commissioned for the 175th anniversary of Lewis Carroll's birth (27th January 1832) by All Saints Church, Daresbury and was in place from 26th January to 14th February.

It was designed to challenge us to reconnect with nature and indeed our planet. By elevating fields of corn I was encouraging viewers to regard a plant that feeds us from a new perspective.



The 'seas of corn' were in their midst and we, like the young Carroll, were in their midst.

This was an opportunity to contemplate and reappraise our pact with nature. Will it remain selfishly consuming or should we consider a relationship of respect?

If our planet did not exist then neither would we. Just as nature sustains us so we should do everything we can to sustain our planet. It is a two way process and one that must not be ignored or taken for granted.

The process of making this piece of work enabled me to re-evaluate what we choose to think of as important in life.

The modern world is moving too fast for its own good and though life in Carroll's time will undoubtedly have had its own challenges it may give us some useful pointers to thinking local, growing our own food and becoming more sustainable.



"An island-farm – broad seas of corn.
Stirred by the wandering breath of morn -
The happy spot where I was born".

It was this verse (from 'Faces in the fire' written by Carroll in 1860) that inspired my installation and I selected it in order to celebrate a man who perhaps sometimes looked at life in ways that were different from the 'norm'.

I therefore invited the visitors to look at my 'seas of corn' in different ways. Visitors entered the Church and effectively walked through a field of corn before finding themselves under and amidst 'broad seas'.

Corn (the generic term for cereals such as wheat, barley and oats) has a number of meanings in different societies including bread/food, thanksgiving and hope.

The installation comprised over 2000 ears of corn, most individually hanging from a web of threads and cords, engineered to give the illusion of a suspended field.

The main artist's materials are being recycled and the UK grown corn had already had the grain removed for cattle feed.

When the exhibit was dismantled the corn stalks were 'borrowed' by a close friend to use as decoration for her daughters' wedding and will later be used as bedding material for my sheep and then composted and finally returned to the land.

Christine Wilcox-Baker

Photos courtesy of Andrew Williams. For more of his photos on the installation, visit www.daresburycofe.org.uk. Andrew's own website (well worth a visit, judging by these photos) is www.inspiringimages.biz.

Piccadilly Gardens – Award Winning Eyesore

CGT Chair, Ed Bennis has found himself at the centre of controversy twice in the past three months. *

Late last year, the Landscape Institute announced the winners of its bi-annual awards. This included Piccadilly Gardens, cited as “*setting a benchmark in design for the British public realm*”.

The Landscape Institute had been asked by the Government to organize new annual landscape awards, with the two best projects going on to participate in a pan-Europe award each year.

Well, Ed knows Piccadilly Gardens (he works just down the road) and he was horrified. What if they put forward Piccadilly Gardens?!

He wrote to Green Places, the journal of the Landscape Design Trust:

“One can hardly be more disappointed in the judges’ choice seeing the scheme today: poor drainage, undersized paths, worn out grass, mud and dereliction. The panel said the scheme gives ‘the quality of design that the British public realm deserves and sets a benchmark’. Well the benchmark must be set exceptionally low. The selection of Piccadilly Gardens has undermined the award system.”



Piccadilly Gardens, 2007

Strong words. The story was picked up by the Manchester Evening News. Readers added their own comments, some remembering the garden before its “facelift”.

The gardens as they are today are part of the re-development of Manchester following the IRA bomb in 1996. They were planned by architects Edaw and the pavilion centrepiece is by the Japanese architect Tadao Ande.

Councillor Pat Karney has put the problems down to the number of people using the gardens.

I have dug a little deeper and uncovered the history of the gardens. If drainage is a problem, this may be why...

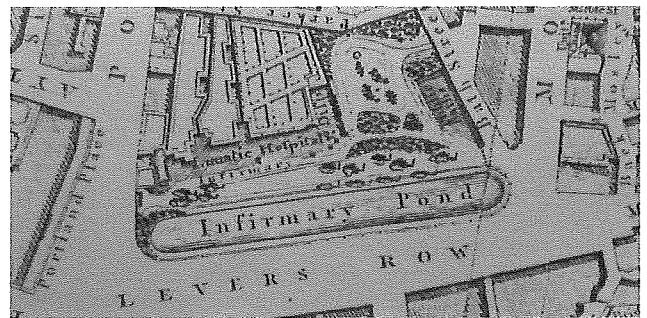
Before 1800, most of Manchester consisted of black-and-white medieval structures. The oak-beams, which formed the frame, were grooved to take withies (*hence Withy Grove?*) as willow branches were called. These

were woven together and covered with daub.

Daub was the name given to a mixture of clay and water. Once it had dried and hardened it was painted white.

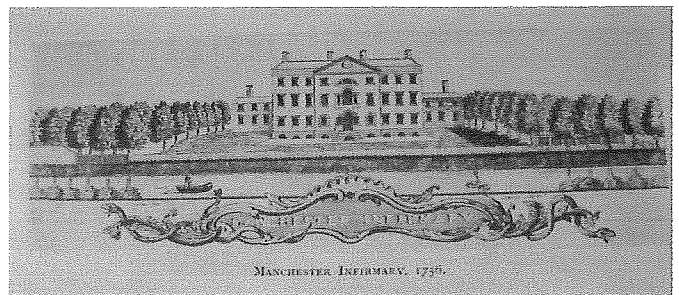
The soil at the top of Market Street in Manchester was particularly suitable for making daub. As the clay was removed it left holes, which filled with water during the rainy season. The clay base meant that the water could not drain away and so ponds, known as daub-holes, existed in the area now known to us as Piccadilly Gardens. The town’s ducking-stool was sited here for many years.

The next stage in the area’s history came with the building of the Infirmary (sited where the buses and trams now congregate). The land for the Infirmary was bought in 1754 from the Mosley family, who donated the land in front, partly open fields, partly daub-holes, to be devoted to the making of a pond with a walk around it. There was only one condition – that it must be open to the townspeople for ever.



Detail from 1795 map. Levers Row is now Piccadilly Gardens

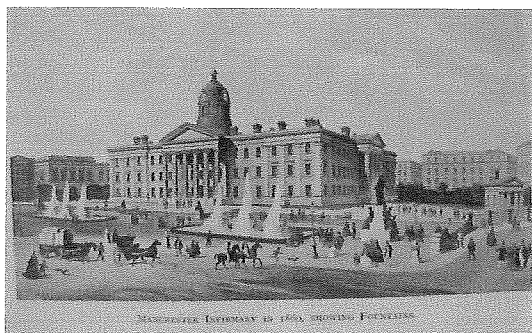
The daub-holes were cleaned and extended to a pond 615 feet long. At the Mosley Street end it was 80 feet wide and at the Portland Street end it was 60 feet. A railing was put around the pond and the grounds around it were laid out in flower beds and walks.



Manchester Infirmary, 1756

For a long time, the pond was used as a water supply. When this ceased, the pond became a nuisance and in 1836 it was proposed that fountains would stop the water from becoming stagnant.

Queen Victoria visited Manchester in 1851. In preparation for this event, the Council had fountains erected, throwing columns of water to a height of 30 ft.



Manchester Infirmary in 1860, showing fountains

But they didn't cure the stagnation and it was decided to fill up the pond. The estimate for the work was £3,000.

Like all public expenditure, the estimates were woefully inadequate (*shades of the 2012 Olympics here*) and the final cost was £6,305.

Joy Uings

Information and pictures taken from *Manchester Streets and Manchester Men (Vol 2)* by T Swindells, 1907; 2007 photo courtesy Ed Bennis

* for the second controversy, see page 9

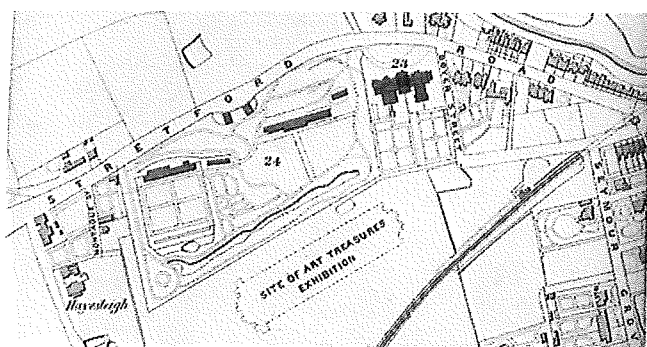
The Manchester Botanical and Horticultural Society- A Reprise

Ann Brooks clarifies the report in the January Newsletter

During my research on the Garden, I found that two myths have arisen over the years; myths that are still mentioned today.

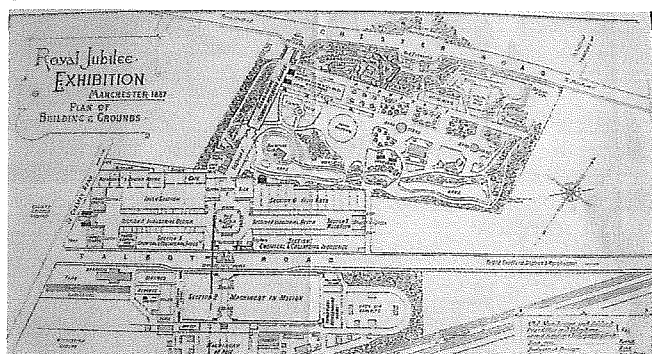
The first is that the Art-Treasures Exhibition was held in the Botanic Garden.

It is clear from the map that the site for the Exhibition was adjacent to the southern boundary of the Garden. There was a gate into the Garden from the North court of the Exhibition.ⁱ



The confusion may have arisen as the Queen's Jubilee Exhibition was held on almost the same site in 1887.

This time the Garden was incorporated into the site and an exhibition, Old Manchester and Salford, held in the gardens next to the Chester Road.



I showed both these slides, which may prove my supposition, in the lecture.

i The second myth concerns John Dalton and the choice of the original site of the Botanic Garden. I have found no evidence for this myth, either in the John Dalton Archives or those of the Manchester Botanic and Horticultural Society, though it is true that Dalton studied Manchester's weather patterns.

The story appeared in *Manchester as it is* by Benjamin Love, published in 1839. He stated that; 'Before deciding on the site of the Gardens, the directors, to secure a situation free from smoke, applied to Dr. Dalton, who furnished them with the results of his experience on the winds of forty years.'

As these comments were made within living memory they have the appearance of verisimilitude. A different version of the story appeared in August 1896 in 'Memorial Notices', *Manchester Guardian*, 17 June, 1896.

The obituary of Bruce Findlay, who had been Curator to the Botanic Garden, stated 'Dr. Dalton went round the suburbs of the town, testing the comparative cleanliness of the leaves ... the purest atmosphere ... being found at Old Trafford.'

Evidence from the archives shows that the site in Old Trafford was examined by John Shepherd, Curator of the Liverpool Botanic Garden, at the invitation of the Society's Council.

He approved of their choice and, on the Council's recommendation to the membership, the site was purchased.

The Council mentioned Shepherd's endorsement in their publicity when recruiting possible subscribers and, if the Council had consulted Dalton, they would surely have capitalised on his name, too, in their advertising.

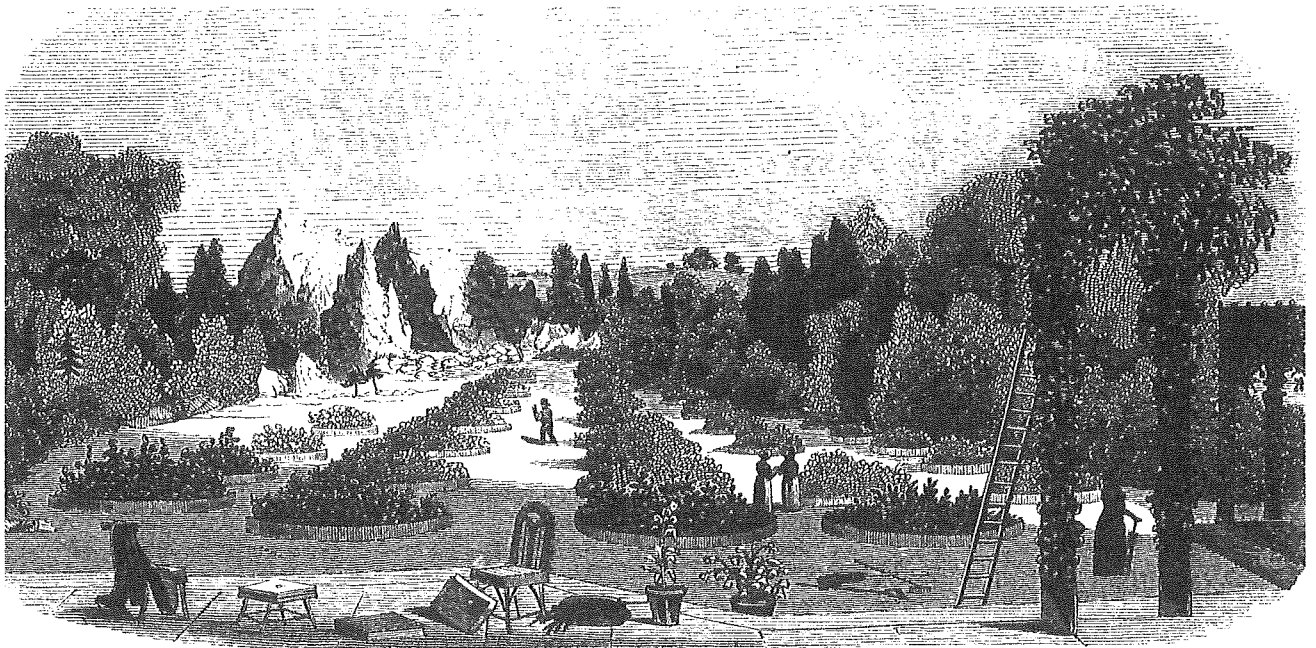
It remains an intriguing story yet to be proved.

Ann Brooks

Apologies to Ann for errors in the original report. Notes taken on the night were padded out with information available on the internet. This just proves that we need to be careful when we use published material, whatever the source. *JU*

“In design altogether unique, this has been the most celebrated garden in the county for the last ten years.

“The rockwork is planted with a selection of the most rare and beautiful alpinæ, particularly with all the close-growing kinds, each placed in a nidus of suitable soil, and the surface protected from the weather by broken fragments of stone, clean-washed river gravel, the debris of decaying rock, moss or other suitable



Barbara Wright

A Passion for Trees, the legacy of John Evelyn

A lecture by Maggie Campbell-Culver at the Friends Meeting House, Manchester on Wednesday 14 February

Valentine's Night saw a large group of Cheshire Garden Trusters gather together to hear Maggie Campbell-Culver talk about the 17th Century diarist John Evelyn.

Not a very romantic lot, are we? To come and listen to a lecture rather than go out with our loved ones for a starry-eyed tryst – but then again, perhaps there was something about the man and his passion for trees that aroused our passions too.

Certainly, Maggie Campbell-Culver left us in no doubt that here was an extraordinary man deserving of our admiration.

Most of us know him for his diaries, which he kept in minute detail throughout his life and which make fascinating reading. They were never published in his lifetime though his book on trees was.

"Sylva – a discourse of Forest-trees, and the Propagation of Timber" – was a practical treatise on managing woodland at a time when forests were being stripped to provide timber for an expanding Royal Navy and when agriculture was also changing the face of the landscape.

The first book to be published by the Royal Society in 1664, *Sylva* was a great success and considered a work of national importance remaining in print as late as 1825. In it, Evelyn not only wrote about practical aspects such as the growing, propagating and felling of trees, he also strongly advocated the need for re-planting to replenish diminishing timber stocks.

He encouraged conservation and diversity and introduced the idea of planting trees to decorate the edges of fields, wanting the countryside to be both beautiful and productive.

Sylva was an important book written in response to the national shortage of timber, but it was more than just a practical treatise. In it we see evidence of his underlying love of gardens and landscape that goes back to his younger days.

Born in Wotton in Surrey in 1620, John Evelyn spent most of his childhood in Lewes with his grandparents.

His formal education was somewhat lacking – though not from want of opportunity.

He was unhappy at Eton, left Balliol with no degree and the Temple with no legal qualifications – but he kept his diary throughout his life and his passion for trees became apparent early on – at 21 he was writing enthusiastically about a pomegranate hedge.

Living through the turbulent times of the 17th Century, Evelyn became close to the newly restored monarchy and was soon at the centre of the social, political and

intellectual world of his day, but he preferred his gardens to life at Court.

John Evelyn's own garden was at Sayes Court in Deptford. He designed his brother's garden at Wotton and it is suggested that he advised Charles II on the design of Greenwich Park. In his diaries he notes that 'someone' lifted his elm trees and he later found them being planted in Greenwich Park.

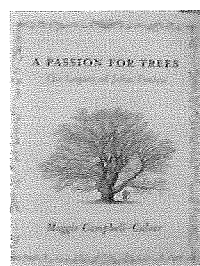
During his travels, Evelyn had visited many gardens and villas in Italy. Their controlled, formal style was alien to the English style of the time and he brought those influences back with him.

He favoured hedges – the great holly hedge at Sayes was 600 feet long – and double avenues of lime and walnut.

In his garden, he included a sacred grove intersected by eight main walkways with 14 small glades; an oval garden and bowling greens and his diaries note the purchase of 120 varieties of cherry tree as well as numerous apple and pear trees. In *Sylva*, he further recommends the inclusion of pomegranate, yucca, quince and mulberry as trees of beauty and significance.

Our speaker, Maggie Campbell-Culver entertained and informed us about John Evelyn for over an hour and it is difficult to do justice to her excellent talk in this short account. She successfully brought to life this man of integrity who was greatly admired by his peers and rightly continues to be admired today for his modern approach to gardens, landscape and the countryside.

Maggie is a writer, lecturer and garden and plant historian and a Fellow of the Linnean Society. She was the Garden Conservationist at Fishbourne Roman Palace near Chichester and in Cornwall, Maggie was in charge of the garden restoration and running of Mount Edgcumbe for fourteen years. Maggie is a founder member of the NCCPG, and has been involved for many years with the Garden History Society and latterly the Gardens Trust movement, and we were delighted to have her as our guest speaker for our February lecture.



A Passion for Trees, the Legacy of John Evelyn is Maggie's new book which was launched during The RHS Chelsea Flower Show last year. The book focuses on Evelyn's 1664 book '*Sylva A Discourse of Forest Trees*' and commemorates the tercentenary of his death.

Tina Theis

From Bangor to Belgrade

Can we *should* we.... save these gardens?

CGT Chair Ed Bennis is a man not afraid of courting controversy. In January he was the guest lecturer at a Garden History Society event.

His topic "From Bangor to Belgrade" drew on his vast experience of gardens in this country and throughout Europe and his contentious conclusions were reported in Horticulture Week

"... most parks in the UK are not worth restoring... restoration projects are technically very good, [but] I'm not sure that they capture the spirit, needs or ideas of modern society."

Lavishly illustrated by his own photos, the talk looked at gardens restored and gardens neglected, gardens old and gardens new. It asked the question – *Can* we conserve these gardens? But at the conclusion the question was *Should* we conserve these gardens?

There is no doubt that some gardens are of historic importance, but, says Ed, "the majority of landscapes are not of significant historic importance to warrant restoration.

"Parks and gardens should be defined in terms of their potential social, cultural, aesthetic and ecological merit – not purely their historic merit. Past ideas should act as a catalyst, but not the solution – we must move forward".

Surveys of visitors to parks and gardens found that they attract more return visitors than their related buildings, but that only a minority of visitors (one in twenty) is interested in the horticultural or historic elements of a garden.

However, there was no one "magic ingredient" which could be identified as vital to success. It is (or should be) axiomatic that the parks and gardens that offer the



*Designed by Israeli Artist, Dani Karavan is The Garden of Remembrance in Duisberg: modern garden, sculpture or land art? **

broadest range of facilities will attract the broadest range of visitors, with special events being an important element in bringing in new visitors.

The restoration of a park or garden can be an emotive affair, but it should be social, economic, aesthetic, historic and cultural considerations that decide its future, not emotion. Only if these are addressed can it be decided whether or not a park or garden *should* be restored.

Keep the best for future generations. Let the mediocre wither in whole or in part.

Or, in other words, don't restore for the sake of restoration.

Joy Uings

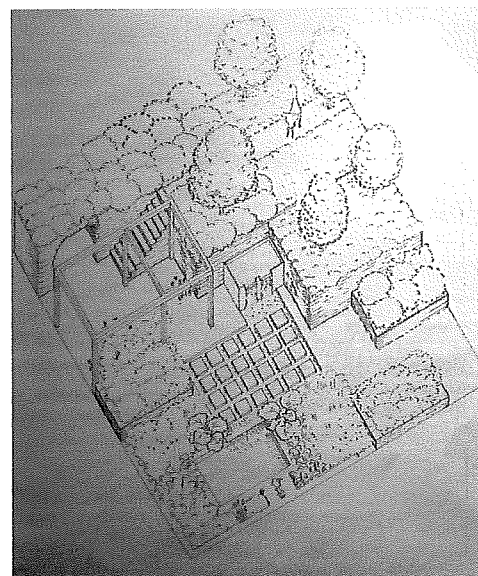
** for more information on the Garden of Remembrance visit <http://cmsen.eghn.org/etcg-erinnerung-garten>*

Cheshire Year of the Garden, 2008

The Trust proposes to host a show garden at RHS Tatton Flower Show 2008 as part of its contribution to Cheshire Year of the Garden. The garden's design will be inspired by Cheshire's landscape, history, artists, character. In order to attain a high standard of sustainable use of materials and energy we will be attempting to source all plants and hard landscape materials from within the county.

The team will be led by myself as designer. Christine Wilcox Baker will be designing installations/sculptures to go within the garden. Sophie Adams, Jane Roberts and Neil Collie will be helping with planting and support. We are still looking for further volunteers at this stage to help with book keeping/accounting and management.

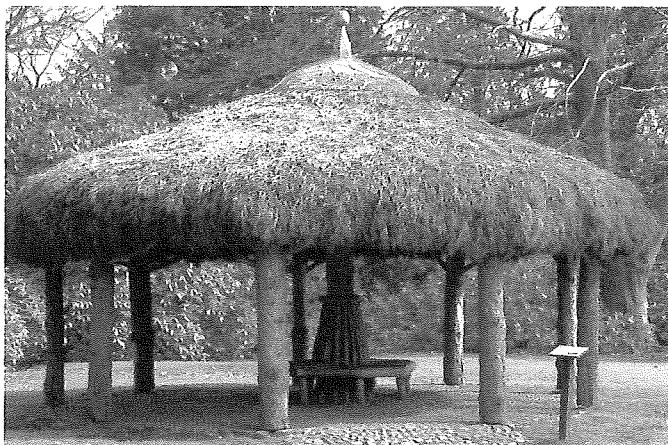
This is a major undertaking - the RHS say show gardens can cost from £50-70,000. Businesses that might be interested in supporting us will gain valuable exposure and benefits from sponsorship. Trust members with any ideas or contacts should contact jacquettamenzies@mac.com.



Out of Africa: Tatton's plant legacy

It was a cold Saturday in January when Sam Youd transported members of CGT to the warmer climes of Africa as he took us in the footsteps of Maurice Egerton.

The last of the family to own Tatton Park, Maurice Egerton was entranced by Africa. He went in 1928, eventually owning 25,000 acres in Kenya. There, 3 hours drive from Nairobi, just south of Nakuru, he built a 52-room castle, using stone brought all the way



The African hut at Tatton: built to keep Maurice spiritually in touch with Africa while physically in England

from England. Maurice was one of the few white men who did anything positive for Africa. He was (and is) very highly thought of, even loved.

He built Egerton school (twinned with the one of the same name in Knutsford). Back in Tatton, Maurice would grow peas and beans in order to gather seed to take to Africa. His castle was bequeathed to the Kenyan government and is now an Agricultural University.

On his visit to Africa in the footsteps of Maurice, Sam also went to South Africa, visiting Kirstenbosch with its wonderful array of flora. He also showed us photos of scarecrows on a 'pick-your-own' strawberry farm. This display of native art is as big a draw as the strawberries and maybe inspired the wonderful scarecrows in the kitchen garden at Tatton!



Joy Uings

One of Tatton's scarecrows

Tour of Japanese Gardens

Visitors may be surprised that besides the minimalist sand and stone gardens of Japan, there is another sort, equally as traditional, the stroll garden of the Edo period (1615-1867). Though they may resemble our 18th century parks with ponds, rivers, islands, bridges, pavilions, open spaces, circular paths and borrowed landscape, they actually represent a travelogue, evoking famous sights either real or literary, rather than a Classical story. Kristina Taylor shall be taking a tour to Japan in November and March 2008, organised by JAL tours, to visit the most famous of these stroll gardens near Kyoto, along with other historic gardens old and new. If you would like to join her please contact whitejasmine@tiscali.co.uk or renato@ectuk.com for further information.

AGM Report

The AGM was well attended. The two resolutions were put to the meeting and each was passed on a show of hands. The changes will be registered at Companies House and Charitable registration should follow.

The number of members standing for election did not exceed the number of vacancies, so no vote was necessary.

Council members for the coming year are: Ed Bennis (Chair); John Edmondson (Vice-Chair); Rachel Devine (Treasurer); Joy Uings (Secretary); Barbara Wright (Research & Recording); Tina Theis (Events); Barbara Moth (Conservation & Planning); Patrick Swan (Gardens Forum); Heather Turner; Ruth Brown; Jacquetta Menzies and Kristin Reichenfeld.

Minutes of the AGM are enclosed with this newsletter.

CGT members who were planning on taking up the offer of a Jekyll / Lutyens visit (see January newsletter) should note that Joy Jardine's e-mail address has changed. She can be reached on joyjardine@heathhouse.eu or info@heathhouse.eu. Alternatively, write to Joy Jardine/Huter, Heath House, Alldens Lane, Godalming, Surrey. GU8 4AP. Visits are scheduled for 14-17 May and 9-12 July. An Arts & Crafts garden tour will be held 11-14 June.

William Roscoe – botanist abolitionist

We all have many facets to our lives. Sometimes, one becomes so well known that the others can be forgotten.



William Roscoe is known to gardeners via the flowers that bear his name - Roscoea. Garden historians remember him as the founder of the Liverpool Botanic Gardens.

But he was also a poet, historian, art collector, lawyer, politician and philanthropist.

This is the year to consider one other of his claims to fame.

Two hundred years ago, the British Parliament voted to abolish the slave trade. Like all such milestones, it was the culmination of decades of gradual change in public attitudes.

Roscoe was born in 1753 in Liverpool, a port inextricably linked to the slave trade. Unlike many in the town, Roscoe saw the inhumanity of the trade. In 16 he wrote a poem against it.

When he was 35, he had two books published. *The wrongs of Africa*, a poem included a preface, which began with the positive view:

“... the progress of knowledge... leads to the establishment of virtue, freedom, and happiness. ... discoveries in science are very rapidly increasing the power, amending the condition, and enlarging the views of mankind; ... those important truths which are the result of reason and reflection... have spread widely into society, and begin to influence the councils of statesmen, and the conduct of nations.”

The second book - *A general view of the African slave-trade, demonstrating its injustice and impolicy: with hints towards a bill for its abolition*, did exactly what it said on the title page.

It was addressed to Parliament “with a full reliance on their attention to the interests of humanity, and the true honour and prosperity of their country” and included a 100 year old quote from John Locke “Slavery is so vile and miserable an Estate of Man, and so directly opposite to the generous Temper and Courage of our Nation; that it is hardly to be conceived, that an Englishman, much less a Gentleman, should plead for it.”

Roscoe didn't mince words.

- “80,000 men are annually destroyed”;
- in addition “between 20 and 30,000 generally die in the passage”;

- punishments for crimes was “severe and frequent.... even to dismemberment and mutilation”;
- the slave trade “owes it existence and support to the ill-judged parsimony, folly and wickedness of the planter” who, able to replace with fresh slaves, considers it “a matter of prudence to wear out and exhaust a slave in five or six years”; even though
- “... a slave born on the plantation is .. of double the value of an imported slave”

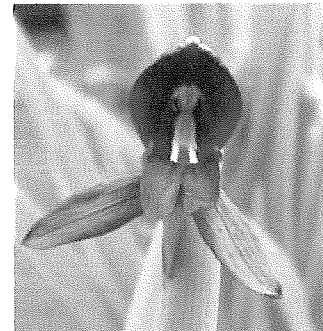
Having made his case, Roscoe went on to suggest what might be included in an Act of Parliament for Abolition.

This included

- the abolition of “all torture, and lingering and painful modes of putting criminals to death”;
- Fixed hours of work and Saturday afternoons and Sundays free;
- Allocation of land on marriage;
- Parents to be given a half day off work for each child once the child was old enough to work. Parents of seven children capable of work to be totally exempt from working themselves;
- Parents so freed from work to be able to hire themselves out for pay;
- Slaves able to purchase their freedom, a day at a time.

It is clear from this that Roscoe was demanding an end to the slave trade rather than an end to slavery, although, with individuals able to gain their freedom, he perhaps anticipated that it would gradually die out.

He probably didn't realise it would take nearly twenty years before Parliament finally abolished the trade.



Above: two of the plants that bear Roscoe's name: on the left is a *Roscoea purpurea*; on the right is *R. scillifolia*. Photos courtesy of Crûg Farm Plants.

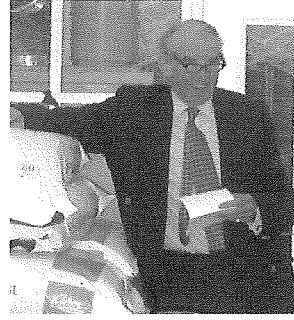
Visit their website at www.crug-farm.co.uk for more information

The Welsh Historic Gardens Trust will be holding their Plant Fair at Crûg Farm on Saturday 5 May. In addition to lots of specialist nurseries and garden-related crafts, WHGT will be serving cream teas. Why not indulge your passion for plants with the conscience-soothing knowledge that you are supporting a fellow Gardens Trust.

Arley and Tatton bring the 18th into the 21st century

National Trust Archaeologist, Jeremy Milln, has been involved in work at both Arley and Tatton in the past few months.

A wall, dating back to around 1790-1820 and described by Jeremy as "really significant" has been incorporated into the new greenhouse at Arley Hall & Gardens, which was officially opened on Wednesday 28 March.



Smiles all round at the official opening...

Known as a "hot wall", these could be found in walled gardens built before 1835. Generally their flues were hidden within the wall itself.

Back in Georgian times, they were an essential part of the glasshouse and used for growing exotic fruit such as pineapples.



Young plants already making use of the greenhouse

Unbelievably, the wall survived for 150 years, serving no purpose. Now it is an integral part of the new greenhouse, which will be used to support 12,000 bedding plants each year.

At Tatton, the changes to the walled kitchen gardens have been considerable. Latest venture is the Pinery-Vinery. This has been built using 18th century technology – so is a real museum piece, even if it is brand new. Plate glass hadn't been invented then, nor had easy-opening lights.

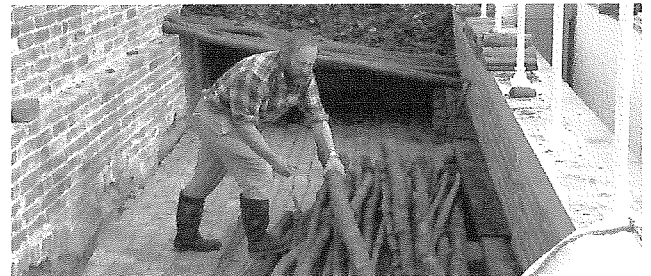
A pinery was a glasshouse dedicated to raising pineapple plants. These needed plenty of heat to ensure fruiting and the usual approach was to use tanners' bark, a waste product of the leather industry. (Animal skins were soaked in an infusion of water and oak, or other, bark – known as tanning hide.)

However, the leather industry has moved on and tanners' bark is no longer available. What to use instead? The answer was in a book by William Speechley published in 1786. On pages 51-52 he wrote:

"Insects excepted, no greater misfortune can befall (sic) a stove of pines than an overheat of the tan..... during the time I used nothing but tan .. no effectual means could be found to remove so great a grievance: But by substituting Oak-leaves in the place of tan, this mischief is absolutely annihilated..."

So, not only an authentic 18th century approach, but a better one.

550 sacks of oak leaves were collected, but proved to be insufficient to fill even one of the pits and a new approach had to be found. The creation of a false floor, half-way up the pit, made by coppiced alder, meant that the oak-leaves would go further. It also meant that all 550 sacks-worth had to be moved.



Above, Jeremy Milln builds the false floor. Below, oak leaves being moved by CGT volunteer Jacqui



Thanks to help from volunteers (including CGT members), all the work was accomplished in time for the opening of the pinery on 18 April, when a vine was planted outside the pinery, thus turning it into a pinery-vinery. The vines will be trained through the wall and up the glass to provide necessary shade for the pineapples, once the vine rod system has been sourced. (Today's galvanised ductile steel wire just wasn't around 200 years ago!)

Then just wait for the pineapples to grow....

More information from
www.cheshire.gov.uk/PR/2007/april07/142-07.htm.

The oak leaf working party will reconvene in the Autumn. Any help CGT members can give would be most welcome. Look out for more details nearer the time.

Your Gardens Trust needs *You*

Year of the Garden 2008

2008 is Cheshire Year of Gardens (see page 9 for the proposed CGT garden at the Tatton Show) and we want to make sure our Programme of Events next year reflects the full range and diversity of gardens in Cheshire.

And we need *your* ideas for visits and lectures - events that *you* feel will celebrate our horticultural heritage.

Please come to an open meeting on Wednesday 16 May at Knutsford Civic Centre from 6pm-8pm. The greater the number of people, the more ideas there will be. We shall be able to spark off each other.

Let me know if you will be able to come along and contribute - don't worry, you won't have to organise anything (unless you want to), but we do need your ideas and input. And don't stay away because you think you have no ideas - sometimes it is only once the discussion starts that the 'little grey cells' burst into life.

If you can't make it, e-mail, write or telephone me. Tina Theis, Chair, Events - tina@tinatheis.com. 1 Highfield Park, Heaton Mersey, Stockport, SK4 3HD. Tel: 0161 442 0657

CGT Plant Sale Saturday 15 September

Fill those gaps in your herbaceous border and, at the same time, swell the coffers of the Cheshire Gardens Trust.

We are holding a bring and buy plant sale at Castle Park in Frodsham. You will be able to buy interesting specimens at very competitive prices. *But only if we receive donations of plants.*

We are relying on you, our members, to help out by supplying suitable material. Now is a good time to prick-out, pot-up, and put aside plants for the sale.

More information nearer the time. Meanwhile, please start to collect together items that can go into the sale.

There will be tea and cake and a tour of Castle Park gardens as well and - who knows - you might go home with a prized azalea having brought some alchemilla mollis. All specimens welcome - but please label clearly.

A CGT stand at Hulme Park on 27 July

We have the opportunity of having a stand at an event in Hulme Park in July. Hulme is an inner city area with plenty of potential gardens but few gardeners.

Can you remember how you first became interested in gardens / gardening / history of gardens? Do you have any ideas of how to present parks and gardens in a way that will grab the attention of a multi-cultural population? Would you like to share your enthusiasm with the next generation?

If so, contact the Secretary at joy.uings@btconnect.com or tel: 0161 969 3300.

Special Rate for CGT members to Arley Garden Festival – 23-24 June.

Complete and send the coupon below to the Estate office, Arley Hall, Northwich, Cheshire, CW9 6LZ. Mark your envelope "Garden Festival". One ticket per member (i.e. Joint Membership = 2 tickets). Additional tickets available at the pre-booked rate of £7.00. State day required.

**CHESHIRE
GARDENS**
• T R U S T •

Please send me ticket(s) for Arley Garden Festival @ special price of £6 each (one ticket for single members, two for joint members) plus ticket(s) at £7.00 each. Tickets are required for Saturday 23 June / Sunday 24 June *

** delete as required*

I enclose a cheque (made payable to "Arley Trustees") for £.....

Name:

Address:

.....

Keukenhof Gardens

It is difficult to imagine any park with 7 million spring flowering bulbs. That it is only open for two months of the year is all the more astonishing.

Originally an estate designed by J.D. and L.F. Zocher in the 19th century in the English style, and a very good example of the style except that it is exceptionally flat, (but then it is western Holland).

Initiated by the mayor of Lisse in 1949, the park was developed as a showcase for the Dutch bulb industry in the post-war years. Those 7 million bulbs, although I am certain there were more, now attract 750,000 visitors over its eight-week opening period.



Particularly crowded at weekends, the park is an explosion of colours and patterns that light up the landscape. Tulips, daffodils, hyacinths, grape hyacinths, scilla, fritillaries, and more stand in great sweeps across the gardens, often with the most garish of colour combinations.

They can be packed so tightly that you could almost walk across the top of the flowers. Other plantings combine the bulbs with spring flowering herbaceous plants giving a softer and more casual look. It makes you think afresh about how to use bulbs and plants.

Most of the beds are backed by evergreen shrub borders, or are set in perfectly manicured lawns.

Should you need to give your eyes a rest from a surfeit of colour, there are a number of pavilions with cafes,

gift shops, demonstrations and art exhibitions, and of course areas to order your next season bulbs. These also have special exhibitions of plants – tulips, orchids, etc.

There are sculptures in various parts of the garden for sale, as well as the Keukenhof's own permanent collection on display in the gardens. There are themed exhibitions to celebrate the birth 300 years ago of Carolus Linnaeus, the Swedish physician and botanist. Tulips are still classified on his systems developed in the 18th century.

A special exhibition of photographs is in one of the pavilions and IKEA has sponsored a number of unusual garden areas. Despite the sales areas, there is no sense of hard sell; this place is about spring flowers and everything else is secondary.

If you have not ventured to Holland before, it is an easy trip and easy access to the gardens. You can even take a bus straight from the airport and leave your bags at a check-in point at the garden entrance. For the less able, wheelchairs are available and it is an easy flat site to get around.

Ed Bennis



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 or e-mail joy.uings@btconnect.com.

A new website has been recently launched – www.growsonyou.com is an online community for gardening and horticultural enthusiasts. Members can proudly display their gardens and seek advice from other members. The website is free to use and join. Each member receives their own 'plot' to write about their garden and display their photographs.

The site will be an interesting, friendly, and fun place to share your love of plants and gardening.

The founders are focused on making Grows on You simple and intuitive, so there is no need to be a computer whizz.

Why not take a look.