



**CHESHIRE
GARDENS TRUST**

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Newsletter

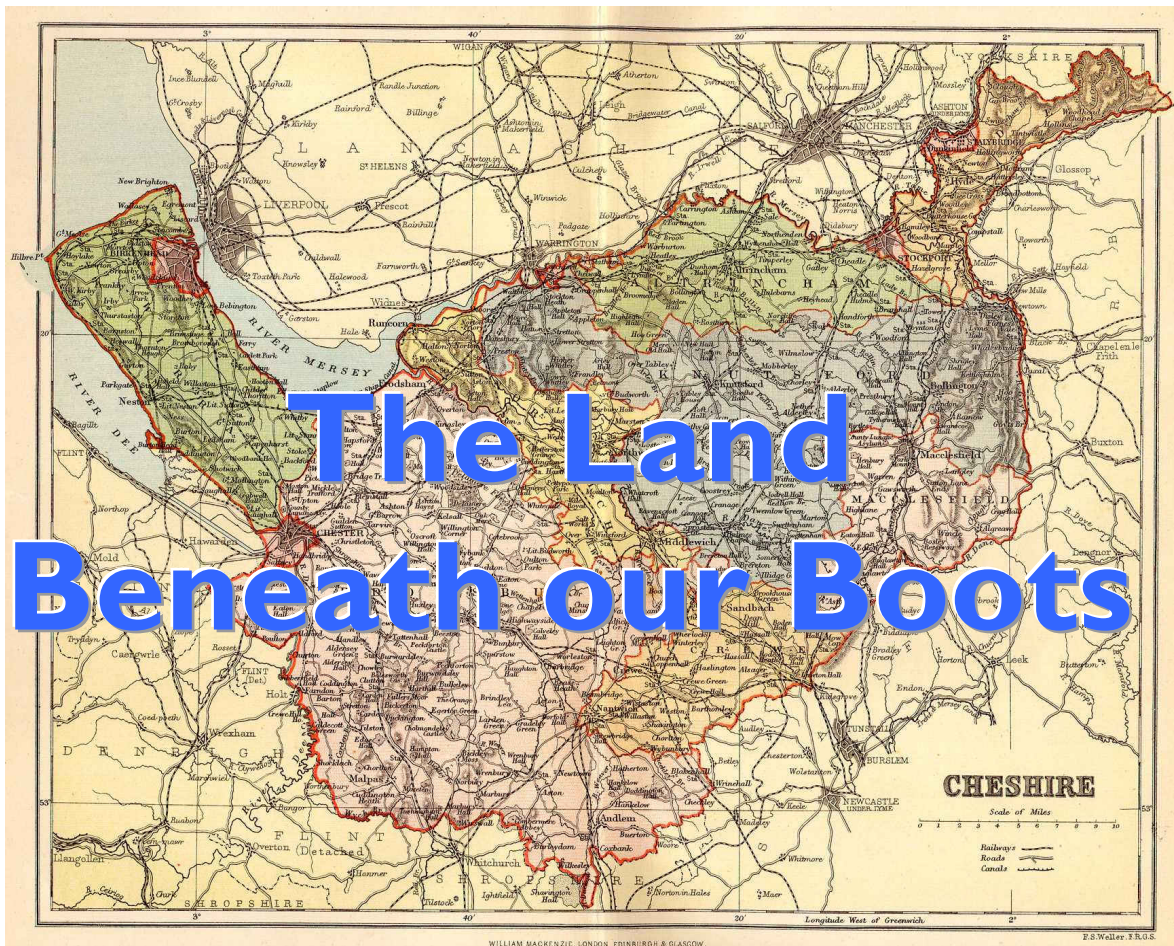
www.cheshire-gardens-trust.org.uk

Inside:

- * The Land beneath our boots – John Handley
- * The Swedish trip Sept 2016
- * Kemps bicentenary

Some future events:

- * The Gardens of St. Petersburg – 11 Feb
- * Edward Kemp and his work – 18 March
- * CGT AGM Norton Priory – 27 April



On Saturday 12th November a group of us gathered at St Peter's Rooms in Prestbury for a learned, well sourced, and fascinating presentation given by Prof Handley, a retired academic, on the Cheshire landscape from an ecologist's point of view. John is a keen walker and has provided an annual ecology walk for East Cheshire Ramblers for several years on which the presentation was based. Whilst there was reference to landscape from a walker's perspective, including that it is better to consult a drift map rather than a

weather map, there was also plenty of interest for the gardener.

Prof Handley introduced his talk by defining the landscape as an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of natural and/or human factors. He went on to show the development of the Cheshire landscape from its origins to the present day, emphasising the following:

- The geological diversity of Cheshire from

the millstone grit of the Pennines to the Mersey Plain, including the mid Cheshire sandstone ridge, the coal measures in the Poynton area



View from Alderley Edge in winter

- The extensive salt beds, brine with mineral deposits, and the organically rich mudstones, with a rich source of methane, raising the possibility of the importance of the source for “fracking” in the future
- The influence of glaciation 25,000 years ago, with the resulting debris of glacial till
- The extent of Cheshire meres and mosses, making it Britain’s third Lake District
- The climatic change around 600BC with increased rainfall leading to the rapid growth of peat and sphagnum moss
- The original extent of woodland, leading to extensive forest clearance as early as 5,500 BC
- The ecological disaster of the Pennine area resulting from forest clearance, followed by wind damage, carrying sulphur dioxide from industrial Manchester in 19th century, combined with overgrazing
- The run-off from the Pennines, with the rivers acting as conveyor belts for surface debris

John acknowledged the majority of the audience’s interest in gardening by focusing on area of



Bluebell wood in Cheshire

restored woodland at Cotteril Clough in honour of T.A Coward, symbolising the move away from collecting nature to appreciating nature. This area of woodland is as nature intended, including areas of wild garlic and bluebells. John also pointed to the importance of Cheshire from a gardener’s point of view, exemplified by the wonderful climate on the Wirral with its sandy soil, the alluvium river valleys and areas of glacial till. He also informed us of the demise of woodland from 26% in Domesday Book to 4% in 1895, yet was hopeful of change with the recent re-establishment of areas of woodland, increasing the diversity of wild life such as dragon flies. John’s contrasting Cheshire vistas were worthy of appreciation.



Walking towards White Nancy on the Kerridge Ridge

In the latter part of his presentation, John focused on the drivers for change as listed in 2011, and looking forward to 2060, including economic growth and climatic change. With the recent substantial increase in heavy rainfall, as shown by the recent deluge in Poynton, the new energy in Cheshire’s rivers is becoming an issue for walkers, cyclists and gardeners alike. Specifically he pointed out the resulting danger to footpaths and rights of way.



Macclesfield Canal near Little Moreton Hall

Prof Handley concluded his presentation by a quote from Jennifer Jenkins in 2002: “The one thing that is certain about British landscapes is that they will change and change dramatically, during the next twenty years”. John commented that the forecast was already self-evident by 2016 and requested the audience to discuss whether we agreed with the author’s conclusion that there may be a chance of making changes for the better in both town and countryside.

In the question and answer session that followed, the importance of gardens – and railway lines! - as plant and animal habitats and conduits for their development was stressed. Questions were also posed related to climatic change, high level of run

off resulting in flooding and severe damage to homes as well as natural habitats.

John was positive in his response, citing the creation of flood plain forest areas, thus increasing the capacity of landscapes to retain increase in water levels.

It was an extremely fascinating and informative morning, with each of us provided with a booklet of the presentation (*there may be a few spare copies available on request for non-attendees*), and there was a display of books used as the source material for the presentation for perusal.

Many thanks, John, for your excellent discursive talk and we hope to see you at CGT events in the future.

Margaret Blowey

Swedish Travels September 2016 Part I

It is probably not very often that members of the Cheshire Gardens Trust find themselves standing so close to 20th century landfill, and where for centuries before a hundred herring boats would land their daily catch. It was hard to imagine this as we looked north from the hotel on Norra Vallgatan.

Gunnar Ericson, a landscape architect, was our guide for the first day. He was going to show us the Western Harbour, a community garden in the old castle defences area, a city park with borders designed by one of Queen Victoria’s granddaughters, and a new city edge millennium forest, all in **Malmö**, otherwise known as ‘the City of Parks’. We were in for a feast.

During the 1960s-1980s Malmö suffered a massive decline. ‘Malmö was like Stoke on Trent’ explained Gunnar. The strategy developed was to improve the quality of life for the people rather than just focusing on attracting new industry.

Western Harbour, on 175 ha of old shipyard, was identified as space for modern housing, schools, parks and public space, a new university, and to attract an expanding workforce.

Through competition and an exhibition, in 2001, ‘Bo01’, the Västra Hamnen ‘City of Tomorrow’ was the first stage of the development, a model to promote economic, social and ecological sustainability, an holistic approach as possibly only the Swedes could attempt. Bo means ‘to live’ and 01 is the first phase of development.

The urban plan was developed by Prof Karl Tham who had previous experience including working with Ralph Erskine on the Byker housing project

in Newcastle. High value public spaces and meeting places were to be created, and there were to be no private areas, except for the small back gardens to terraced houses. Water, in the form of ponds, canals (and the sea), as well as open stormwater systems and attenuated on green roofs, was to be an integral part of the design.



Bo01 City of Tomorrow

To create shelter from the sea winds, an outer Bykeresque wall of housing was constructed a distance from the shore. Between these blocks and the sea, the Waterfront Promenade by Jeppe Aagaard Anderson, and Thorbjörn Andersson’s Dania Park, were both created for public use, with extensive wooden decks. A series of stone sheep-fold like enclosures offer more sheltered places, a Titanic movie look-out for romantic moments, and other paved and grassed platforms, stages, and areas provide venues for any number of different activity or festivity.

There is so much attention to every detail, and standards of management and maintenance



Malmö sea defences

are high. Works commissioned by competition add another layer of beauty, or humour. The sea defences are composed of huge boulders. The artist Sigurdur Gudmundsson's work 'Diamonds are everywhere' selected 42 of these boulders and had them highly polished (in China) and returned to their original positions. The result is subtle and exquisite.

Some 26 architectural firms were involved, including Erskine and also more famously Santiago Calatrava with his obtrusive, rather than beautiful, landmark: Turning Torso tower. The housing is highly insulated, and linked to a district heating scheme. Parking spaces for cars are underground or in a multi-storey 'parking house,' and bikes, buses and pedestrians predominate. There was a lot to feel happy about here.



Malmö Turning Torso tower

Nearby is **Slottsträdgården**, a 2 hectare community and demonstration garden located just outside the moat which surrounds the Renaissance castle in the Slottsparken, (the Castle Park). Under the watchful direction, for the past 20 years, of John Taylor (ex- Sheffield, the

Territorial Army and Myerscough College), it offers a lively, creative venue for students, gardeners, the public, volunteers and people who want to grow their own food to eat.



Slottsträdgården

'Spring colour is important for people' says John 'following our wet and windy winters, people love colour.' He established the annual Malmö Garden Show in 2011, a horticultural and plant fair with show gardens and activities for children. This year, 40,000 visitors came (and no entrance fee).

The community gardens are arranged in a large rectangle broken up into smaller plots, mostly hedged, sometimes with Berberis at the corners. We passed by potatoes, garlic and brassicas. 'We currently have 10 people picking in the cabbage group' he boasted as we looked on enviously at the packed fronds of Cavolo nero.

The compost heaps are all given names, and they are deliberately prominent. 'We are making a statement in building our big blocks of waste in public places' John explained. 'Waste is generally hidden away, but compost is good, and we can all do it.' This year he planted 2000 opium poppies and is pleased with the results. Next year he is planning for 4000 on the basis that 'flowers = happiness,' and more is more.

The 1914 Baltic Exhibition was held in Malmö with events and exhibition buildings located across the city in refurbished parks and other places, including at an unscheduled stop at **Pildammsparken** (Willowpond Park) which Gunnar was keen for us to visit because of the connections with Crown Princess Margareta of Sweden (Queen Victoria's granddaughter) who arrived in Sweden with her husband in 1905. She learnt the language and about Swedish history and social welfare.

The Swedish architect Ferdinand Boberg designed several of the temporary exhibition buildings in Pildammsparken; Crown Princess Margareta designed the main formal sunken garden with

parallel long borders, grass and a central path as the approach to Boberg's Margareta Pavilion. Princess Margareta's ideas were to use dark blue colours at each end of the long borders.

After the exhibition, the area was designed by Danish landscape architect, Erik Erstad-Jørgensen as a landscape park. By 1926 Malmö's first city planner/engineer Erik Bülow-Hübe decided that since Malmö didn't have any natural forests, the design for the 45 ha park at Pildammsparken, Malmö's largest park, should be adjusted to provide a dense forest area surrounding large round open spaces. And of course retaining Margareta's flower garden and pavilion from the Baltic exhibition.



Gunnar Ericson in Pildammsparken

The idea of creating a new recreational outdoor activity park on the outskirts of Malmö, twice the size of Pildammsparken, might sound a bit like one of Noah's biblical projects. But Gunnar showed us that work had started on the park at **Lindängelund**; roads have been relocated and a new huge lake has been created. A tree-planting programme to create the Millennium Forest, using common and exotic species, was started in 2000. Having children and local people involved with the planting and doing this on a scale that involves 4-5000 children every year for the foreseeable future will surely result in a cascade of benefits.

In 2014 the city landscape architect received a phone call to say that 1000 trees in the new park had been cut down. It was unbelievable and shocking. There was a determination that the initiative must survive and the chopped trees were inspected, and those that did not regenerate as coppice were replanted. Surveillance equipment was installed. But by coincidence or sheer bad luck, a hurricane caused the system to fail and two days after that a further 1000 trees were cut down. 'Bloody bastards!' was Gunnar's somewhat controlled comment when he relayed us this story. But their response and



Katrinetorp Manor – temple in the English Garden

determination was undiminished.

We walked up through areas of the forest, past beautifully constructed granite ellipses accessed by steps up into meditation areas under young cedar and pine trees, and walked back along a raw edge of the lake. *Sequoiadendron giganteum* was the most successful tree to regenerate from the coppice, also *Acer saccharinum*. *Thuja plicata* seemed to generally grow best. Perennials will be introduced in 2-3 years' time.



The group at Katrinetorp Manor

Having started on the first phase covering 10ha at a cost of approximately £3m, the politicians couldn't say no to the second phase, but Gunnar is an old hand, and recognised, from his work in the city, that long term funding and responsibility for maintenance and development needs to be a shared objective and vision, held equally by government, business and the people.

The land here previously formed part of the early C19 manor house at **Katrinetorp**, a summer house for a wealthy merchant, owned by the city since the 1960s. Even only as a café it was recognised by some (including Gunnar) that this building had a major role to play in the future of Lindängelund. Thankfully it was preserved, along with the kitchen gardens, ponds and bridges, and planting in the English landscape tradition. The newly restored manor house is available for

weddings, meetings and markets; and outbuildings house skilled working craftsmen, also selling crafts and antiques. Old drawings existed of the gardens here and these have been used in the restoration works. These gardens provide a splendid contrast

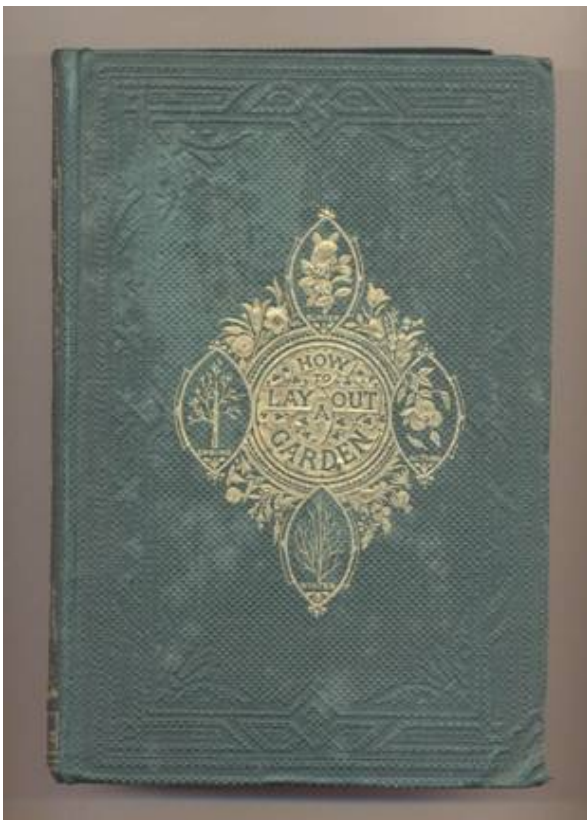
to the young millennium park. It will be very exciting to return to both in a few years' time to see the progress.

Annabel Downs
Photographs Chris Driver and Ed Bennis

Kemp's bicentenary 2017

This year is the bicentenary of Edward Kemp (1817 – 1891), a local hero in landscape history who left his mark on the parks and gardens of Cheshire.

Kemp was very much a man of his time, rising from humble beginnings to occupy a position of trust and prestige as Joseph Paxton's assistant at Birkenhead Park, the first publicly funded park. He also wrote an influential book '*How to Layout a Small Garden*' which ran to three editions, and ran a thriving consultancy as a landscape gardener.



2nd edition of Kemp's '*How to Layout a Small Garden*'

It is not known what influenced Kemp to become a gardener or how he came to undertake his training at Chiswick Gardens, which was leased by the Horticultural Society from the Duke of Devonshire. From there he went to Chatsworth to work under Joseph Paxton, a move that launched his career. Clearly capable, trustworthy and hardworking, he became Paxton's right hand man at Birkenhead, gaining invaluable experience in a new area of work – the design and

development of public parks. Kemp appears to have taken full advantage of opportunities to network, publish and advise, to demonstrate his experience, his knowledge of the latest exotic plants and how to place them - all in the best possible taste.



Kemp's plans for Grosvenor Park

Despite his fame and success, few records survive; no portrait so far, limited plans and correspondence, scant reference in newspaper accounts and council minutes. Cheshire Gardens Trust research and recorders have been on a mission to see how much of his work survives, and the answer is – a surprising amount. Though labour intensive flower gardens have gone, together with ranges of glasshouses and the gardeners to attend them, the overall design layout often remains with drives, paths, water

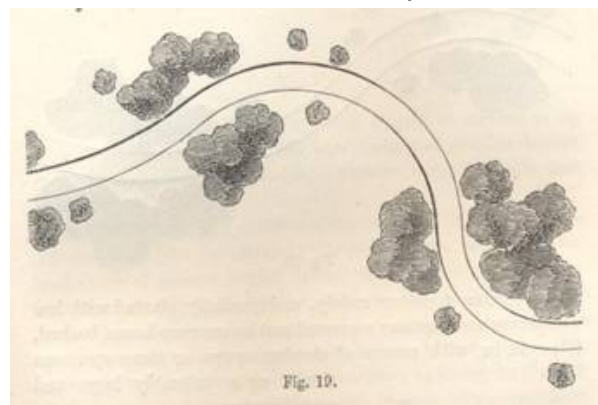


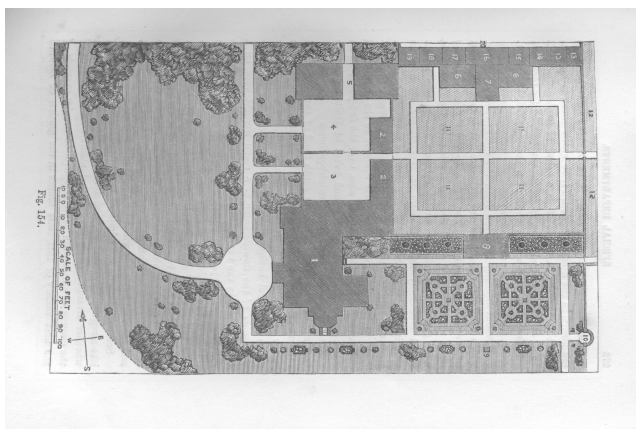
Illustration from Kemp's book "*How to Lay Out a Garden*"

features and planting.

Kemp's book is an important source of information for his private villa gardens of which we have researched nine. It has been fascinating



Halton Grange with site of the flower garden in the foreground to discover how much the aspirational designs that are illustrated became a reality. Two of his commissions were for private places that have since become public parks – Halton Grange in Runcorn and Park Place, now Castle Park, in Frodsham.



Plans for Halton Grange

Of his other public parks in Cheshire, Grosvenor Park Chester is the best documented, thanks to the Duke of Westminster's patronage and the Eaton Archive. Kemp is reputed to have had a hand in the design of Congleton Park and Queen's Park, Crewe. While the extent of these commissions is uncertain the evidence of his involvement can be seen on the ground - making the most of each site's natural characteristics, the location of principal features, the path layout, ground modelling and planting design.

Our March 18th event with talks on Kemp and his work will also mark the start of a series of Kemp Walks in Cheshire parks to celebrate his

bicentenary and raise awareness of our heritage of landscapes designed by Edward Kemp.

The Kemp Walks

Grosvenor Park and Queen's Park, Chester

Saturday 18th March 2pm

Meet at the approach to Queen's Bridge in the Groves

Contact: events@cheshire-gardens-trust.org.uk

Tel: 07785 955 823

Castle Park, Frodsham

Saturday 22nd April 2pm

Meet at the main (or front) entrance to Castle Park

House Contact: Frodsham Town Council: 01928 735150

This walk is part of Frodsham Festival of Walks

Queen's Park Crewe

Saturday August 19th 10.30am tbc

Meet beside the clock tower

Contact: 01270 686708 or elaine.webster@ansa.co.uk



Queen's Park Crewe

Congleton Park, Congleton

Saturday 24th September 2pm

Meet outside Stock at the Pavilion, the cafe in the park

Contact: 01625 383673 or ruth.morgan@ansa.co.uk

Web site: <http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/home.aspx>

All walks will take 1 1/2 to 2 hours, and while generally on firm or paved surfaces will include some walking on grass and moderate gradients. All walks are FREE, but donations are welcome - for walks in Grosvenor and Castle Parks to Cheshire Gardens Trust and in Queen's and Congleton Parks to respective Friends groups.

To keep up to date – see our website - www.cheshire-gardens-trust.org.uk/

V is for Vinery



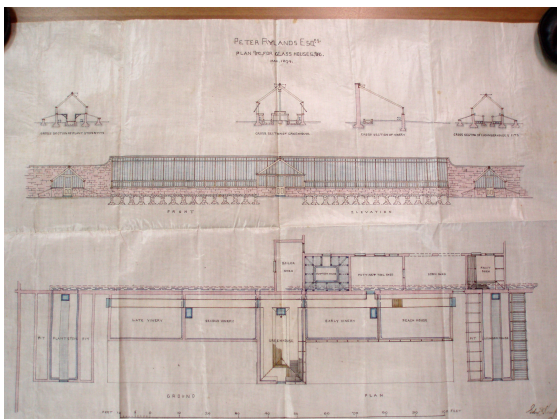
Many of us, I am sure, enjoyed a glass or two of wine in the Christmas and New Year period, but how many enjoyed wine made from grapes grown in Cheshire? This is not so outlandish as it may sound. But let us start at the beginning – in this case with the Romans.

Roman gardeners were extremely skilled and knowledgeable plantsmen. They arrived at a time when our islands were experiencing a mild climate which enabled them to grow many species brought from the Mediterranean.

In the early years of the first millennium, vineyards were established and by AD 270 restrictions on British wine production were lifted by imperial edict.¹ It is thought the first vineyard was established in Hampshire.

Once the Romans withdrew from Britain, their villas and gardens fell into disrepair and it would be many centuries before the cultivation of exotic plants once more become popular.

In the late seventeenth century the greenhouse appeared. This was a building which provided protection for tender plants but would not have looked like our modern-day structures. Glass was expensive and taxed. Also it could not be produced in large sheets such as we see today. These 'greenhouses' therefore had glass windows in just one side, as we still see in orangeries (e.g



Design for Massey Hall vinery, photo courtesy of Barbara Moth

Dunham Massey). In the first half of the nineteenth century, great advances were made in the production of sheet glass and the tax on windows was lifted. Now structures could be made using substantial amounts of glass, and heating meant tender plants were better protected. These 'glass houses' often leaned against walls within the kitchen garden.

During the Victorian era grapes were a staple of the dinner table. Vines were planted outside and fed through holes in the wall to the inside where they were trained on rods below the sloping roof. Over a hundred varieties were grown. Massey Hall, Warrington, had a vinery and Tatton Park has recently restored its vinery/pinery. Doubtless there were many other Cheshire estates which grew vines for grapes.

By the end of World War I the English country house was in decline and once again the cultivation of grapes ceased, although amateur gardeners occasionally grew them – I remember my father growing a Black Hamburg grape in the 1960s (not terribly successfully – he did much better with a peach!). Cheap imports of fruit means there is less incentive for us to grow exotics on a large scale, but in recent years this has started to change. A warming climate has encouraged people to develop vineyards once more in our country, and there is a 3-acre site near Chester at the Carden Park Hotel. This was set up in 1988 then reinstated in 2008.² Today it produces up to 6,000 bottles of Carden Old Gold sparkling wine a year from the 2 grape varieties grown – Seyval Blanc and Pinot Noir. The wine is served in the hotel, although you could buy a bottle if you wished.

Julia Whitfield

¹ Uglow, J. 2004, *A Little History of British Gardening*
² www.cardenpark.co.uk (text and photo)

Winter Wonderlands

The first bulbs of Spring are always magical, after long cold, wet winters, in particular the snowdrops in February and early March. Last year, the National Garden Scheme ran its first Snowdrop Festival and is repeating it this year, with more than 80 gardens opening their gates for visitors (<http://ngs.org.uk/gardens/snowdrop-festival.aspx>).



Three gardens in Cheshire will be open:

Briarfield in Burton, Neston, Cheshire (open 25th and 26th February)

Bucklow Farms in Plumley, 2 miles south of Knutsford (open 26th February)

This has a carpet of snowdrops and spring bulbs, with leaf, stems and berries showing the colours of autumn and winter

And **West Drive Gardens**, Gatley, with snowdrops and hellebores (open 19th February).



In addition, of course, there are the winter gardens that we know and love, among others:

Dunham Massey's winter garden is open throughout the season, but also open for the National Gardens Scheme on 26th February. It has many winter shrubs, trees and evergreens, many scented, such as witch hazel (*Hamamelis mollis*), viburnums and Christmas or sweet box

(*Sarcococca confusa*). There are thousands of bulbs, with irises and cyclamen in addition to snowdrops. The birch triangle, with its white silver birches, black stem dogwood and white cyclamen, is iconic.



Dunham Massey winter garden

Rode Hall, known for its snowdrops for many years, will be open in 2017 from 4th February to 5th March (closed Mondays). It has over seventy different varieties of snowdrops that can be seen in the magnificent setting of Rode's Humphry Repton landscape.



Rode Hall

Arley Hall gardens will be open for the first time in January and February this year, so this will be an opportunity to visit the Grove and woodland area in winter. The woodland walk is quite magical in February and March, with hellebores snowdrops and other bulbs (narcissi, *Chionodoxa*, anemones, fritillaries) at the edge of the path.

Ness Botanic Gardens is open daily except for the Christmas holidays and has an incredible range of plants at any time of the year. It has a wonderful collection of snowdrops (over 60 varieties) and camellias, many in a beautiful woodland setting, as well as witch hazels and trees known for their bark.



Henbury Hall, Macclesfield will be open for snowdrops for the first time on 12th, 19th and 26th February, 11am – 4pm. Admission is £5, children free, dogs welcome on a lead. Regrettably the gardens are unsuitable for those with mobility issues due to the slippery and uneven terrain.

Further afield, we have received information on a free conference run by **The Gardens Trust at Hodsock Priory, Blyth, Worksop, Notts.** **Knowledge is Power: using research to conserve historic parks and gardens** It will include lunch and a snowdrop tour. For further information visit The Gardens Trust website

<http://thegardenstrust.org/event/knowledge-power-using-research-conserve-historic-parks-gardens-historic-landscape-project-hodsock-priory-blyth-worksop/>

These are just a sample of the snowdrop/winter gardens open in February. For further information on winter gardens in Cheshire and further afield, look at the NGS website <http://www.ngs.org.uk> or their book, available from February 2017.

RHS Bridgewater

As you will know the RHS is planning a new garden in Salford on the site of Worsley New Hall, to join its other gardens at Wisley, Rosemoor, Hyde Hall and Harlow Carr. It has just announced the appointment of Marcus Chilton-Jones as curator of the new garden, thought to be one of the largest gardening projects in Europe. He moves from the Dorothy Clive garden in North Staffordshire, where he was Curator for 8 years. He was previously Deputy Garden Manager at Trentham Gardens, and Head Gardener at both the National Trust garden at Nymans in West Sussex and the BBC Gardener's World Garden at Berryfields.

He will join the Programme Director, Anna da Silva, who is leading the development of RHS Bridgewater and Tom Stuart-Smith, who is charged with creating and delivering the masterplan. Tom has worked with Manchester based

architects to create a concept for the new welcome building and restoration of existing buildings, as well as many garden features.

The first phase of the new garden, the restoration of the 11 acre walled kitchen garden (including the Paradise Garden, community allotments and a therapeutic garden), is due to open in 2019. This is subject to planning permission, currently being sought. Other highlights will follow, including the recreation and development of historic features, such as the tree-lined garden approach and reworking of the lost terraces. There is now interesting information about the garden available on the website.

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/gardens/bridgewater>

The CGT Events group has been in touch with the administration and hope to involve them in our programme in the future.

Alpine flowers on the Swiss/Austrian border



In Summer 2016 we were lucky enough to have a walking holiday in Ischgl in Austria, an area we

haven't visited before, very trendy in the skiing season but rather more sedate in Summer. In fact we struggled to find any shops open. One of the joys of the area is that it's right on the Swiss border. It's possible to take a mixture of gondolas and chairlifts up to the ridge on the border and then take chairlifts down to Alp Trida. From there you can take an amazing double-decker cable car down to Samnaun in Switzerland, which is a mecca of duty free goods. We did do this one day but only managed to buy a lipstick between us. Somehow singing toy marmots have lost their

appeal.

But the views from the summit are fabulous. On our first day in the area we took chairlifts to the top, but then walked down the hillside to Alp Trida. When we're walking we're always on the lookout for wildflowers, but I don't think I've ever seen so many different varieties in such a short distance. Since we were over 2000 metres, these were true alpiners, plants that survive above the tree line and below the permanent snowline. Many of them are jewel like flowers nestled into scree, others grow across high alpine meadows.



Yellow mountain saxifrage (*Saxifraga azoides*)

This is why, when we grow them in our gardens they are best grown in rockeries or alpine stone troughs, with excellent drainage and grit mulch. In the wild they are protected in winter with a covering of snow. They also have adaptations that protect them from high winds, bright sunshine and extremes of temperature, such as compact habit, deep roots and leathery or fleshy leaves.



Moss campion (*Silene acaulis*)

You would recognise these flowers. They are the parents of the alpiners in our gardens. Identifying them precisely is another matter. There were umpteen varieties of saxifrage, such as the white mountain saxifrage (*Saxifraga paniculata*) and the yellow mountain saxifrage (*Saxifraga azoides*). Very similar is a tiny white alpine, which might be a saxifrage (*Saxifraga caesia*), but might be

Cerastium alpinum or *Cardamine alpina*. Then brightest of all, the tiny mauve moss campion (*Silene acaulis*). All of these are jewel like, their bright colours contrasting with the grey rock.

Then there are the blue flowers, tiny blue/mauve veronicas (*Veronica alpina*) and forget-me-nots and occasional gentians. Away from the scree, in the high alpine meadows, there are fields of monkshood (*Aconitum napellus*), apparently one of the most poisonous plants out there. We saw even better examples, later, on the shores of the Silvretta lake. Also growing in the high meadows are tiny mauve scabious (*Scabiosa montana*) and harebells (*Campanula rotundifolia*).



Scabious (*Scabiosa montana*)

Some of these plants are very unusual such as the spectacular thistle, *Cirsium spinosissimum*. A meadow of these is quite a sight.



Spiniest thistle (*Cirsium spinosissimum*)

If you want to see these flowers, you could just go to the alpine section in your local garden centre. But for a more intense experience, visit one of the alpine specialists, such as Aberconwy Nurseries in North Wales, off the A470, not far from Bodnant Gardens Slack Top Nurseries in Hebden Bridge, Yorkshire, <http://www.slacktopnurseries.co.uk/index.php>; or The Alpine Centre in Calver, Derbyshire, <http://www.alpineplantcentre.co.uk>

Caldwell news

Work continues on the Caldwell ledgers and we have moved on to the orders from the 1820s. This has provided some items which have not appeared elsewhere.

In August 1822, Wilbraham Egerton of Tatton ordered 6 Spelk Baskets. I was pretty sure that was what was written down, but the name was unfamiliar. However, google came to the rescue. Apparently a Spelk Basket – also known as tatty baskets, tatty swales, oak swales, oak spales, spale-oak, scuttle, slop, skelk, wisket, swill, skep, skulls or sculls – were made from woven wood and used for a huge variety of purposes, including harvesting potatoes. You can watch an oak spelk basket being made in the video at <https://vimeo.com/107803539> (approximately 2 minutes in, lasting just over 2 minutes).

In October of the same year, John Potts, one of the workers at Caldwell's, travelled down to the Lime House Estate in London to give directions. The charge was 10/6.

In April 1823, Caldwell's supplied 819 trees and shrubs to the Committee of the New Burial Ground in Manchester at a total cost of £8 12s 6d – an average cost of less than 3d. per plant.

The following month a delivery of 3 geraniums, a red clematis, a mule pink in a pot and a large blue violet was made to Dr. Newbold in Macclesfield, using the Prison Cart.

But the most fascinating thing of all, to me, was the discovery of songs written by Rowland

Egerton of Arley Hall. I was searching for mention of the Rev. Henry Tomkinson of Rease Heath (as it was then written) and found it in Egerton's book. First published in 1834 as 'Hunting Songs, Ballads, &c.' complete with illustrations. Verse 5 of the first song 'The Woore Country' reads:

*"There's Henry, the purple-clad Vicar,
So earnestly plying the steel;
Conductor conducting him quicker,
Each prick from his reverend heel.
Were my life to depend on the wager,
I know not which brother I'd back;
The Vicar, the Squire, or the Major,
The Purple, the Pink, or the Black."*

A note explains that the Vicar was the Rev. Henry Tomkinson, Vicar of Davenham; the Squire was the Rev. James Tomkinson (squire of Dorfold) and their brother the Major lived at The Willingtons. By the time the book was republished he had been promoted to Colonel.

The edition published in 1868 included many additional poems. I particularly liked the one headed:

ADDRESSED TO A LADY

Who told me that, being ignorant of Botany, I could not enjoy my Garden.

He put her right!

Joy Uings

CGT Newsletter

Yet another New Year has rolled around. Ever since the millennium they seem to have arrived faster and faster. It hardly seems possible that it is thirteen years since the first CGT Newsletter put in an appearance – and it is fourteen years since a group of people first got together to plan for the creation of the Cheshire Gardens Trust.

Tempus fugit, it is true, but we cannot ignore the fact that those of us who were there at the beginning are fourteen years older: less alert, less active.

I was never in a paid job for even ten years and now I look back and realise that nearly 30 per cent of my adult life has been devoted to Cheshire Gardens Trust. I've also reached my allotted three score years and ten. It is time to hand over to the next generation (even if they are not much younger than me).

So this year, we have a new Newsletter Editor and I trust that you will give her the same support and encouragement that you have given me.

I'm not yet withdrawing completely from the roles I have played in the CGT, although I do want to spend more time on the Caldwell Project. Yes, I know that it seems to have been going on for ever, but there is still much to do.

Joy Uings

New Blood needed

And I am not the only one who feels that it is time to hand over the reins to others. This year the Council of Management is losing four members. Some want to spend more time on other aspects of the Trust's work; others are having to cope with their own or a loved one's illness.

Our Rules state that we must have at least seven members of the Council of Management and not more than fifteen. We have never managed that large a figure, but we have always – until relatively recently – been in double figures. At the last AGM the number was down to nine.

Two have resigned during the year, so we are currently at seven. Of those, two will be standing down at the AGM and with one on extended leave of absence we will have only four still active. With one person having agreed to stand, that will still only take us to five.

We have achieved such a lot over the past fourteen years and all those who have served on the Council of Management during that time have been instrumental in that achievement. We will have to severely limit activities over the coming months – new members need time to settle into their role.

So if the Trust is important to you – and I hope it is – we need your support. We need you!

**Please don't let the Trust fade away:
it will do if no-one fills the gaps.**

Joy Uings

CGT Events group – A huge thank you



The Three Graces at the Gardens and Tourism Conference 2007- Tina Theis, Jacquetta Menzies, Barbara Moth

Unfortunately nothing ever stays the same. Tina Theis, who has led the CGT Events Group so ably over the last 10 years has decided that she will now have to stand down from this responsibility. She will continue to be part of the group, sharing her experience and wisdom (and a great deal of good fun), for which we are very grateful.

Barbara Moth, who does so much for Cheshire Gardens Trust (in particular leading both the Caldwell project and the Research and Recording Group), is leaving the events group. She originally led the CGT Events group, before Tina took over, and has been part of the group for 13 years, since the CGT's inception. We will miss her depth of knowledge and understanding of garden history and related areas. So thank you to both of them for their tremendous contribution.

As people move on, it means that we really could do with one or two new members of the Events Group. No particular expertise is required, everyone brings something different to the group, just a keenness to get involved and preferably access to a computer for compiling information and emailing out to members. So, if you want to have a go, speak to one of the group (Jane Gooch, Tina Theis, Ruth Brown, Jacquetta Menzies, Jacqui Jaffe, Sue Eldridge) or email our current leader, Jane Gooch (janegardendesign@aol.com).

Thank you to Joy



How is it possible to thank someone like Joy for the newsletter which she has edited, and written many of the pieces, from the very start of CGT. That is 13 years and longer than she ever stayed in any job! Those that have written anything for the newsletter have an idea about the amount of time and effort she has put into it, and if you have ever seen newsletters from other Trusts. She has the ability to gently persuade you to contribute something while never feeling highly pressured. This resulted in a newsletter that had serious academic articles, to general information and often light-hearted articles. There was a sense of seriousness balanced with humour. Joy has produced one of the best newsletters of any garden trust in the country. Not only has she produced the newsletter, but she is the Trust's company secretary and treasurer, and somehow she managed to find the time to gain a PhD during these years.

We have been fortunate to read about her research work on everything from Edward Leeds and his daffodils, to the early gardens of Manchester and of course the Caldwell archives. She assures us that there is much more work to do on the archives, and the interpretation of the research will provide more fascinating articles for the newsletter as well as find their way into another book on Caldwell. Joy was very pleased when Sue Eldridge offered to take over the newsletter; she knows the newsletter will change and looks forward to new ideas giving her time to concentrate her efforts on Caldwell. Look out for future articles from Joy. They are always well researched, articulate and interesting and give us greater understanding about our Cheshire gardens. CGT owes so much to her and not just for the newsletter.

Many thanks from all the members of Cheshire Gardens Trust

Planthunters Fairs



Just a reminder that dates for Planthunters' Fairs for 2017 are now published.

There are new venues at:

Bramall Hall, Stockport back after 2 years break

(Sunday 2nd April)

Hoghton Tower, Lancashire (Saturday 8th April)

The first events in March 2017 are:

Sat 18th National Memorial Arboretum Alrewas Staffs DE13 7AR 10am-4pm

Sun 19th Dearnford Lake, Whitchurch, Shrops. SY13 3JQ 10am-4pm

Sun 26th Ness Botanic Gardens Wirral, Cheshire. CH64 4AY 10am-4pm

For further information Phone: [01270 811443](tel:01270811443),

Email: janet@planthuntersfairs.co.uk Full details of all their events are on their website:

www.planthuntersfairs.co.uk



The Gardens Trust Winter Lectures, 2017

London: The Gallery, 77 Cowcross Street, EC1M 6EL

Birmingham: The Birmingham & Midland Institute, 9 Margaret Street, Birmingham, B3 3

Brian Dix, Consultant garden archaeologist

Awakening from Slumber: Recent archaeology and restoration at Boughton House Gardens, Northamptonshire.

6.30 pm, Wednesday **8 February**, The Birmingham & Midland Institute, 9 Margaret Street, Birmingham, B3 3BS

Brian Dix, Consultant garden archaeologist

Awakening from Slumber: Recent archaeology and restoration in the gardens of Boughton House, Northamptonshire.

6.30 pm, Wednesday **22 February**, The Gallery, 77 Cowcross Street, London, EC1M 6EL

Kate Felus, Independent garden historian and consultant

The Secret Life of the Georgian Garden

6.30 pm, Wednesday **8 March**, The Gallery, 77 Cowcross Street, London, EC1M 6EL

Paul Howarth, Research volunteer & Website Manager, Kent Gardens Trust

The diverse heritage of Medway parks and gardens

6.30 pm, Wednesday **22 March**, The Gallery, 77 Cowcross Street, London, EC1M 6EL

Karen Fitzsimon, Chartered Landscape Architect, garden historian and horticulturist

Drawing on Denmark – the mid-to-late twentieth-century landscape practice of Preben Jakobsen in Britain

6.30pm, Wednesday **5 April**, The Gallery, 77 Cowcross Street, London, EC1M 6EL

Individual tickets: £10 The Gardens Trust members, £12 County Gardens Trust members, £15 non-members. Ticket includes a glass of wine. You can book by post or online. Full details and a booking form are posted on The Gardens Trust website. <http://thegardenstrust.org> Tickets can also be purchased at the door on the night. For further information, contact Sally Jeffery:

sally.jeffery1@btinternet



PROVIDING TRAINING FUNDS FOR NORTHERN PROFESSIONAL GARDENERS

Of the many threats facing the nation's heritage of magnificent gardens and landscapes, concern about the future of the horticultural profession is one of the greatest. There has been a significant drop in the number of career gardeners entering the profession early in their working lives. The emergence of contract gardening and outsourcing has led to a decline in traditional work-based training, particularly apprenticeships, previously such a strong attraction to young people. With an ageing workforce and a shortage of young entrants to the profession the transfer of knowledge and skills to the next generation is being lost which, in turn, threatens the future of our prized public gardens and plant collections.

The challenge of confronting this threat led to the formation of the Professional Gardeners' Trust in 2004. It is the charity that provides professional gardeners in the UK and Ireland with funding for essential horticultural training. The PG Trust is an independent organisation supported by private donations, providing grants to working gardeners to acquire expertise and gain qualifications.

One particular benefactor has given a significant sum of money to the Trust which is to be



Horticultural qualification e.g. RHS Level 3

reserved exclusively for funding the training of professional gardeners in the North of England. In the twelve years since it was established, the PG Trust has been able to assist over 300 applicants throughout the UK amounting to a total sum something in the order of £120,000.

Applicants usually work in private gardens or gardens open to the public, but many are self-employed. Employers tend to be very supportive by either making a contribution or by giving time away from work. Applicants must demonstrate that they derive the majority of their income from gardening. The application process is quite simple and is accessed through the Trust's website <http://pgtrust.org>



Certificate for use of equipment e.g. chainsaw or sprayer

The scope of the Trust's activities is wide. Many of its awards provide practical training, such as the use of pesticides and chainsaws or tractor driving. With the disappearance of apprentice schemes, the Royal Horticultural Society's diplomas are particularly valuable. Many of the awards are for part-time or specialist courses, such as plant identification or wildflower meadow management.

An important part of the Trust's work is to fund short term placements. This enables gardeners to experience working in different gardening environments to their own.

Cheshire Gardens Trust members can help by spreading the word, particularly about the fund specifically for Northern gardeners. Members may also like to consider supporting the Trust financially in a way that might bring benefits to Cheshire gardens and gardeners.

Jeremy Garnett, Chairman, PG Trust

Jeremygarnett100@hotmail.com

<http://pgtrust.org>

Copy date for April newsletter is 31 March

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, 148 Chester Road, Hazel Grove, Stockport SK7 6HE or email sue_eldridge@hotmail.com