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Newsletter

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Some future events:

- ✳ Snowdrop Talk and Walk at Rode Hall – 12 noon Wednesday 11 February
- ✳ Cottage Gardens: Fact & Fiction, Spring Lecture and AGM – 6 p.m. Thursday 26 March
- ✳ Adlington Hall & Gardens – 1 p.m. Wednesday 22 April



In November members of the CGT met in the Grant Room at the National Trust property of Quarry Bank for a talk which was given by Sarah Witts, the head gardener.

Following Tina's introduction, Sarah explained that she was a 'hands on' gardener dealing with day-to-day management and planning, assisted by a small garden team and 50 to 60 volunteers.

A brief history of the property was given explaining that Samuel Greg was born in Ireland in 1758.

He came to England and leased the site at Styal from Lord Stamford of Dunham Massey. He built his mill, next to the River Bollin, and it opened in 1784.

Samuel married Hannah Lightbody in 1789 and built Quarry Bank House where the family would live close by the mill. A Greg family portrait was shown.

Hannah influenced the development of the garden, which could be seen from the house. It ran alongside the river and she created it in a picturesque style in which nature was dramatic and wild. A walled

garden was built on a plateau at the top of the hill, with a head gardener's house at the corner. In 1834 Samuel's son, Robert Hyde Greg, built Norcliffe Hall. The produce from the walled garden at Quarry Bank House was shared with Norcliffe Hall.

Robert Hyde Greg enhanced the planting in the garden and north woods with trees and shrubs including rhododendrons.

The Greg spinster sisters lived at Quarry Bank House from 1834 until 1858, followed by Edward and Margaret Hyde Greg until 1910. During this time tennis courts and a toy railway were added to the garden. The house was then let until 1963 when it was bought by the Locock family, who maintained the garden and built the terrace. Norcliffe Hall and the walled garden with house were sold in 1947.

Quarry Bank is an early industrial heritage site. It was usual for mill owners to live alongside their factories, so the acquisition by the National Trust of the lower garden in 2006 and the upper garden in 2010 not only completed the site, but offered a more complete picture for visitors.

The main (lower) garden is an example of the picturesque movement which was espoused at the end of the eighteenth century. The kitchen (upper) garden was placed in the only practical place – the flattish area at the top of the ravine.

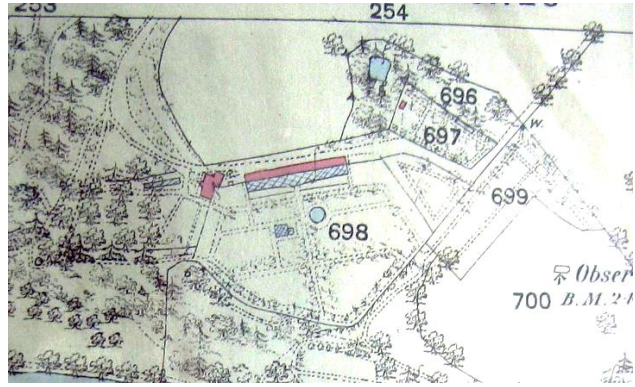
Sarah described how Quarry Bank House and garden had been funded. She detailed the previous owners of the upper garden and the state of both the garden and glasshouse when purchased by the National Trust. It would now need £1.4million to restore them.

Research has taken place on both the upper and lower gardens utilising the Quarry Bank archive for maps, letters, records, ledgers, photographs and paintings. There have been comparisons with other gardens, archaeological surveys and specialist plant surveys. Sarah showed maps, the first being 1836.

The 1872 map (see top, right hand side) is the most useful for restoration as it shows details such as an orchard, glasshouse, pineapple pit and melon house. It also shows a walk between the houses landscaped by Robert Hyde Greg. The 1909 map shows the tennis court and footbridge across the river. Sarah also showed earlier pictures of the garden.

Professional reports and documents have been drawn up to plan the garden and the chairman of the Garden History Society, Dominic Cole, made a statement as to its importance.

Sarah gave a description of the initial steps taken for the restoration of the lower garden, which involved tree management, cutting back and clearing and making paths to give accessibility to visitors. Pictures showed the extent of the work needed to clear



1872 map – the gardener's house and the glasshouse are marked in red (Cheshire Archives and Local Studies)

rhododendrons over the river and rubbish below the cliff. Shrubs were moved, drainage was added and a new rustic bridge was made over the river. A new area to the garden was acquired along the river in 2010.

Pictures were shown of the overgrown upper garden in 2010 with trees growing out of the Victorian glasshouse and the large glasshouse in a very sorry state. Restoration of the small glasshouse has taken place, a dipping pond has been discovered, paths and borders and a vegetable area have been made.



The dipping pond in the upper garden, with the restored small glasshouse to the left and the skeleton of the large glasshouse to the right

Archaeologists excavated the large glasshouse to find evidence of an underfloor heating system from the 1830s and a later hot water system. Sarah pointed out the vine arches and described plants and grapes which would have been grown.

Mature trees on the Quarry Bank site helped with humidity for the cotton mill. Of the 600 rhododendrons in the garden, 180 have been surveyed by Michael Leer.

He found early ponticums around Quarry Bank House and early hybrids planted by Robert Hyde Greg from the 1830s to the 1870s. In the 1930s Exbury hybrids were planted to provide some newer colours. An 1884 book by Robert Hyde Greg is in the archives, listing rhododendrons, some of which are unique to the site. There is a plan to propagate these.

Sarah finished her talk by outlining the plans for the upper (partially walled) garden, the timing being dependent on funding received from the lottery. The restoration of the large glasshouse forms the most important part of the restoration followed by a return to full fruit and vegetable production. There would be more entry points for visitors with a new catering facility, a new garden compound and restoration of the east and west slips.

After a couple of questions and thanks from Tina for an interesting talk, Sarah led a walk through the garden.



Quarry Bank House. In the foreground, Sarah draws our attention to a garden feature.

After pausing on the tennis lawn opposite Quarry Bank House, the group walked over the rustic bridge and along the river before following the winding path up past the sandstone cliff to reach the upper garden.

From the upper garden Sarah pointed out the view down over the lower garden towards the mill. She explained how the temperature of this part of the garden was warmer than the valley below, having walls to three sides, making it suitable for growing fruit and vegetables.

People inspected the new alpine house and dipping pond (see previous page) and the vine arches in front of the large glasshouse. Sarah gave further details of how the vines would have been grown and the grapes handled and stored.

She pointed out where shelving may have held strawberries and the central curved part of the glasshouse which would have housed tropical plants.

It was evident what a huge undertaking it would be to restore the glasshouse and the expense that would be involved in getting handmade glass panes from Poland. Walking behind the glasshouse Sarah explained the plans for the back buildings to house an interpretive room, toilets, a shop with plant sales and café beyond.

The walk from the walled garden went past the new nuttury recently planted with bulbs and wild flower seeds among the filberts. A winding path took the group down to the river through Ferney Brow and back across the mill meadow.

Having seen the garden in November, Sarah suggested that it would be worthwhile for people to revisit in the Spring, when there would be plenty of colour.

Janet Horne

Getting ready for Spring: Bulb planting event at Grappenhall Library

On 20th September 2014 a select few members of CGT met in Grappenhall Library for a bulb planting workshop led by Ruth Brown and Jacquetta Menzies. This was comprehensive, a sort of “Everything you need to know about bulbs but were too ignorant to know you should have asked”.

Firstly Ruth explained the difference between the various “bulbs” marketed in bulb catalogues, some of which are not true bulbs at all but corms, tubers and rhizomes.

True bulbs, such as alliums and hyacinths have an embryonic flower bud surrounded by fleshy scales (modified leaves) which provide a food store for the developing plant. They are protected by a papery skin, (think of an onion) and reproduce by offsets to the parent bulb.

Corms, e.g., crocus and gladiolus, are the swollen base of a stem, so have no scales. A corm shrivels



after flowering but at the same time new corms are formed above or beside the old one.

Stem tubers, like cyclamen and begonia, are swollen underground stems with buds (eyes) scattered over their surface.

Rhizomes, such as canna, agapanthus and iris, are also underground stems but with a main bud at the tip and others along the sides. Roots develop from these.

Root Tubers, like dahlias and alstromeria are swollen roots, rather than stems.

(For convenience the word “bulb” will be used in this report to cover all the above).

Bulbs act as storage organs for the plant. When the plant is actively growing, glucose (produced during photosynthesis) is transported to “sink” organs where it is converted to starch and stored in the bulb. When the plant begins to grow this starch is converted back to glucose and transported to the new leaves and flower buds.

The in-built store enables the plant to grow and flower before larger plants and trees are in leaf and the bulb is, therefore, able to make the best of the light and sun available. It is important not to remove leaves after flowering as this will limit the amount of glucose a plant can manufacture and store, leading to a weaker bulb the following year.

The next point to consider was what to plant the bulb in. We all felt the different types of composts which are available. Ruth and Jacquetta advise using a good quality multi-purpose compost with additional nutrients (these should be shown on the bag); they do not recommend bulb fibre.



Although a bulb has its store of food this depletes as it grows, so some back up is needed. After a while any compost will also lose its nutrients and if a plant is grown in a container for a length of time additional fertilisers will be needed to maintain a good display.

Next it is necessary to decide what kind of container should be used. All manner of containers are possible, as long as there are drainage holes to prevent the compost becoming waterlogged. Plastic containers are cheap and light to move. Clay pots are

more attractive but heavier. Other containers, like wooden window boxes are also attractive and can be found, or painted, in different colours. There is no need to put crocks in the pot as modern soilless composts are designed to be free draining.

Bulbs should be planted as soon as possible in the planting season. It is always worth choosing top quality bulbs as poor bulbs will produce poor plants. A good buy is a bulb which feels firm, with a clean surface, and that has no root or shoot growth. Bulbs which are already showing growth, are soft, diseased or damaged, mouldy, shrunken, or light for their size, should all be rejected.

There are several ways to buy bulbs, including mail order catalogues, garden centres, supermarkets and other shops. Mail order catalogues from specialist bulb growing nurseries are reliable and offer good quality and variety, often including the unusual or rare. General mail order catalogues, offering shrubs and plants as well as bulbs, generally carry popular varieties and may market new introductions. Jacquetta cautioned against buying bargain offers from these.

Garden centres have the advantage that one can see and feel the bulbs on offer. Larger garden centres have a good range available and staff are usually knowledgeable and can answer queries.

The disadvantages of shops such as supermarkets are that choice is limited, staff less knowledgeable and, while bulbs may be of good quality initially, they can be stored in a poor environment and quickly deteriorate.

Loose bulbs should be bought early in the season before they have been handled by lots of people. This is less of a problem for packaged bulbs but one pays for the colourful packaging. Jacquetta cautioned against buying bags of mixed bulbs but collections of separately packed varieties, e.g. labelled varieties of dwarf narcissi, or mixed bulbs of one type were all right.

Bulbs sold as “prepared bulbs” are those specially treated to flower at a specific time in the year, notably Christmas. All bulbs need a long period at a cool temperature after planting, then warmth as they near flowering. Growers can artificially regulate temperatures to achieve flowering at a particular time. All bulbs can be forced in containers by artificially controlling the amount of light and warmth they receive but they must remain evenly moist throughout.

Hyacinths should be planted with their necks showing and the compost should be packed round the bulbs. These should not be twisted into the compost, as this consolidates it, making it difficult for the roots to penetrate, so that they divert upwards towards the rim of the container. Bulbs should be placed close

together but not actually touching.

Crocus, narcissi, tulips and irises should not have their necks exposed but be covered with compost and this should be levelled off at least half an inch beneath the rim of the container.

Once bulbs are settled in the compost it should be firmed but not packed hard. A pot looks better if planted with an odd number of bulbs. Different colours of the same type of bulb cannot be guaranteed to bloom at the same time.

If a mixed display is desired it is best to grow the bulbs individually and then they can be matched for size and stage of development when potted up together. Jacquetta did not advocate planting layers of different bulbs, which would bloom at different times, as is often seen in magazines and TV programmes but this will work with a single variety. Bulbs can be teamed with other plants, e.g. tulips and wallflowers, or bulbs and a small shrub.

Once planted the pot should be watered gently with a watering can with a fine rose. This should be swung gently over the pot from side to side, so the moisture is even and the pot does not receive a final splash.



Ideally all bulbs should then be plunged under 6 inches of soil or compost and left in the garden for 6-8 weeks to encourage good root formation.

When the flower bud can be seen emerging between the leaves the bulbs can be brought inside into a light but cool place. The white shoots will turn green and grow vigorously but the pot should not be placed in a warm room till the flower is well out of the bulb. Most failures are caused by bringing bulbs into a warm place too soon.

If a plunge bed is not an option the newly planted bulbs should be put in a cold dark place like a shed or cellar.



After bulbs have flowered the dead blooms should be cut off, otherwise the plant will put energy into producing seed, which is not required. The leaves should not be removed or restricted as, if they are, the plant cannot photosynthesise and thus will not produce the glucose needed to store for the following year. Leaves should be left until withered and brown. The plants can be planted out in the garden, or, in the case of dahlias, lifted and stored over winter, or left to dry out in the pot, the usual practice for cyclamen.

Generally bulbs are not prone to pests and diseases when used for short term display but lilies may be attacked and ruined by lily beetle. Any beetles seen should be squashed immediately and any larvae likewise.

Using our new knowledge we were then able to choose and plant our bulbs from a selection which, along with pots and compost, were provided by Ruth and Jacquetta. We left the library clutching the results and looking forward to Spring, after a very enjoyable and instructive afternoon.

Jenny Wood



Christine's bulbs in January

Snowdrop day

If you are feeling in need of a horticultural fillip, why not go along to Henbury Hall on Sunday 15 February and enjoy the snowdrops. Open from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., the entrance charge of £8.50 includes a welcome hot drink.

Entrance is from School Lane, Henbury. www.henburyhall.co.uk/news.

Garden Shows and Festivals

Over nine months, I had one of those projects that you dream about: researching garden shows and being able to visit them.

This was for an EU project called Hybrid Parks, a study (involving ten countries) into how parks and gardens could diversify their use and attract a broader visitor base.

What was unusual is that there appears to be little if any research done on garden shows, yet they are found across the Americas and Europe and extend across the globe to places such as St. Petersburg, Christchurch and Singapore. They are truly international in appeal and major in financial terms.

While the further flung sites could not be inspected, a diverse range of sites (12 in total) across France, Germany, Switzerland, Holland and Philadelphia formed the basis of the study.

A key question from the start was, is there a cultural difference between the shows?

There are certainly physical differences in terms of locations, emphasis and scale. The smallest and shortest are the one day plant fairs which we are familiar with in the UK.

One with a difference was at Nordpark in suburban Düsseldorf. Held in an orangery, there were a few stalls of professional and amateur growers and many people arrived on bicycles with plants for a plant swap. And rather like CGT events, coffee and cake were for sale as food and drink seems to be an important part of any event.

Next up the scale are the weekend shows which are essentially outdoor shops such as the Gartenlust at Schloss Dyck near Düsseldorf, and Arley's Garden Festival which is broader in terms of entertainment and supporting events. These use the existing gardens as a basis for the event while many of the larger shows lack this connection. Sundays are often the busiest days as families have commitments on Saturdays, and in Germany the shops are closed on Sunday. Both of these shows have been running profitably for some years.

The Florales in Nantes is unusual in that it only happens every five years, and is a rotating show with Budapest, Gent and other cities. It is essentially a flower show with five large indoor exhibition halls. There is very little for sale in terms of garden furnishing and it appears that it relies on high visitor numbers (they claim 500,000) and regional government subsidies.

Similarly, Chaumont in the Loire Valley relies on visitor numbers and government support, but this is a show that stands out from the others. It is in the grounds of a visually striking chateau and parkland



Nantes, Florales

overlooking the River Loire with art installations in the park and converted farm buildings.

There are 24 display gardens which are semi-permanent from April to November, each in its own setting. There is a strong sense of philosophy underpinning the displays (in 2014 the theme was the 'seven deadly sins') and thankfully there are explanations of the gardens in French and English. At €16, this is the best value out of all of the shows.



Chaumont

If there is a prize for theatricality, it belongs to the PHS Philadelphia Flower Show, an indoor event at the beginning of March. It is the entrance feature that takes your breath away, a 30 foot high display of live and dried flowers in huge frames based on the paintings of Alexander Calder, a Philadelphia native.

There were some very inventive displays and many related to 12 museums from across the country that supported the event. The Bank of America, the main sponsor, displayed their collection of Andy Warhol flower paintings.

This is the only flower show which has links to outside events. Run by the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS), it is the oldest show in

the USA (1828, pre-dating the RHS shows) and is also the largest with 250,000 visitors over nine days. Cultural differences became more apparent at Giardina in Zurich which followed on from Philadelphia. Indoors, it had the highest quality of construction and materials of any show and attracts 60,000 visitors but had a different feel to the others.

Each garden exhibit had the usual information leaflets, but also tables and chairs where visitors discussed their own gardens with the designers and contractors. In a sense it was very local and a temporary showroom for people wanting to improve their gardens. My German colleague said that this was the quality level that they aspire to in Germany; I said we aspire to the German quality!

At a completely different scale are the Landesgartenschau which take place across Germany and are about land reclamation and after-use, rather like the Floriade in Holland. I went to the one in Zülrich where a new public park, with a permanent lake, beach, outdoor concert arena and water sports, has been reclaimed from a brown coal mining site.



Landesgartenschau

The show runs from April to October and attracts 400,000 visitors. There were temporary display gardens and the park links to the historic town centre with more display gardens in the old moat area that surrounded the city. One was for cemetery plots with remarkable sculptural headstones and miniature plantings. These were fascinating and very German; I then made a point of visiting a cemetery in Cologne, Melaten-Friedhof, where you can see how these plots are designed and managed.

The RHS shows (Chelsea, Hampton Court and Tatton) were visited but as many are familiar with these shows, I have not included them. Perhaps the most surprising and inventive was Dig the City in Manchester. Outdoors, and the only purely urban garden festival, it runs for 10 days in August, had a

few display gardens and interactive events particularly for children.



Manchester Dig the City

It is small but it really did hit a different market from the other shows. There is no demographic information for this show, but it seems a safe assumption that few that visited would have gone to the Tatton show shortly before this event.

This is part of the problem with the shows – they attract middle-aged and middle/upper income visitors (Chelsea has the highest A,B,C1 attendance).

Some exhibitors object to the emphasis on families and children as these are the lowest spenders at a show, but these are the gardeners and spenders of the future.

Most shows rely on trade stands often selling products completely unrelated to the garden; but as the director of the Philadelphia Flower Show said, the trade stands are the 'cash cow' of the event. That show returns a profit of \$1.5-2 million each year which is reinvested in the horticultural society and also into food growing projects in the inner-city area of Philadelphia along with training and education programmes.

While garden shows provide inspiration, access to purchase some unusual plants and ephemera, they could return more to society such as the social commitment seen at Philadelphia, or the land reclamation and new recreation facilities in Zülrich. The Manchester show takes place through the pedestrian areas of the city during school holidays and was cleverly focused to attract a new market.

There are missed opportunities such as linking the shows to gardens in the area and offering joint tickets, training programmes or links to associated cultural and environmental assets. However, shows are also festivals and provide entertainment and pleasure and I would encourage you to move beyond the RHS shows that we are so familiar with.

Ed Bennis

N is for Nursery

When you buy, or otherwise acquire, some seeds, place them tenderly in a seed-tray and care for them until the seedlings are ready to plant out, you are following a gardening tradition that led to the founding of commercial nurseries.

For most of us, with our small gardens, a few seed-trays are more than sufficient to produce plants to fill in the gaps in our borders. Imagine though, if instead of a small back garden, you owned hundreds or even thousands of acres. Creating gardens and plantations within grounds of that size meant the raising of huge quantities of new plants and that could mean having your own nursery and employing your own nurseryman.

We can find references to these private nurseries in 18th century gardening books. Philip Miller wrote in his 1735 edition of *The Gardener's Dictionary*:

"There is no such thing as having a fine Garden or Plantation, without a Nursery both for Trees and Flowers, in which there are continually new Varieties of Fruits, Timber, or Flowering Trees, and choice Flowers, rais'd for a Supply of the several Parts of the Garden, Orchard, and Wilderness. The Size of this Nursery must be proportion'd to the Extent of your Garden, or design'd Plantation."

By the mid-18th century commercial nurseries were springing up all around the country and later editions of Miller's *Dictionary* made reference to these and Abercrombie (*The Universal Gardener and Botanist*, 1778) wrote of nurseries "for private use, or for public supply". Advertisements in early 18th century newspapers for the sale of plants from nurseries, can be read as either meaning a commercial nursery or the sale of excess plants from a private one.

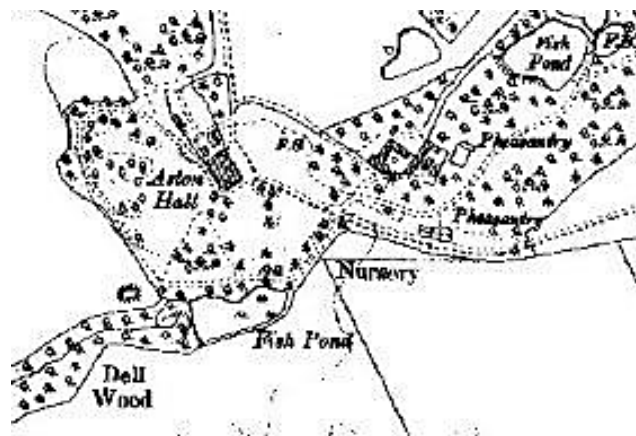
So the transition from the one to the other is unclear, but we do know of some of the more important commercial nurseries. At the end of the 17th century there were important ones around London, such as those at Brompton (London & Wise) and Hoxton (Thomas Fairchild). But by the mid-18th century there were several in the provinces – Callender (Newcastle), Baldry (Norwich), Sandys (Ashbourne, Derbyshire), Joyce (Gateshead), Telford (York), Perfect (Pontefract) and Turner (Manchester) are examples.

In Cheshire, there were commercial nurseries at Chester, Nantwich and Middlewich as well as

Knutsford, though the dates of their foundation are not known. But it appears that private nurseries had not completely disappeared.

A search in the Cheshire Tithe Maps database¹ for "nursery" as a plot name, provides a list of 134 pieces of land amounting to more than 350 acres in total. How many were being used as nurseries is unclear as for many of them the use is not recorded and some that were called "garden" we know were nurseries (e.g. those occupied by William Caldwell). Apart from Caldwell, there were the commercial nurseries of the Dickson cousins at Chester.

However there are others, where the owner and occupier of the ground are identical, from which it may be fair to assume that the ground was at some time, if not by the time of the tithe maps, used as a private nursery. Examples are Thomas Legh of Disley (Lyme Park), Earl of Stamford (Dunham Massey) and Lord Stanley (Alderley). One landowner who was recorded as using his nursery AS a nursery was Randle Wilbraham of Rode Hall, although the nursery was on his property at Tarvin.



This map of 1910 shows the Nursery at Aston Hall

In researching this article, I have found a previously undiscovered advertisement for Turner's Kersal Moor nursery (see next page). It appeared in the *Manchester Mercury* of 28 October 1755. It is a useful example of the breadth of stock carried by early commercial nurseries. As large estates gave way to villa residences and then suburban gardens, the future of the commercial nursery was assured.

Joy Uings

¹ <http://maps.cheshire.gov.uk/tithemaps/>

Social Media

Your Council of Management knows that "social media" is what we should be using to spread the word about CGT. Unfortunately we are none of us keen to discover what it is all about. So if this is something that "floats your boat" why not get in touch. We need your help!

ROBERT TURNER
NURSERY-MAN and KITCHEN-GARDENER,
Kersal-Moor near Manchester

HAVING a large Collection of fine Fruit and Forest Plants, of most sizes, fit for Planting, and a very curious sortment of Fruit Trees, each Kind, by itself and in good Order, *viz.*

Variety of Fruit Trees, as Apples, Standard or Dwarf; Pears Ditto, Ditto, Plumbs Ditto, Ditto; Cherry's Ditto, Ditto, Peaches, Nectarines, Apricocks, Vines, Quinces's, Mulberry's, Barberry's, Raspberry's, Goosberry's, Currans, Filberds or Spanish Nuts.

Forest Trees, *viz.* Wallnuts, 8 or 9 Feet high, Horse Chesnuts, 6 or 8 Feet high. Spanish Chesnut, 8 or 10 Ditto. Limes, from 4 to 9 or 10 Feet high. Beech, from 4 Inches 100's or 10 Feet high. True English Elm, either Grafted or from Layers, from 4 10 12 or 14 Feet high. Wych Elm, from 6 to 15 Feet high. Hornbeam for Hedges, 2, 3 or 4 Feet high. Poplar and Huntingdon Willows, from 6 to 15 Feet high. Larches 10 or 12 Feet high. Yew for Hedges, 2, 3 or 4 Feet high. Sycamore, from 4 to 12, or 14 Feet high. Oak, 6 or 8 Feet high, Striped Holly's, White Thorn and Crabs for Quicksets: And also, a large Collection of Flowering Shrubs, as Roses, Trumpet Honey-Suckles, Tulips Trees, Frutex, Jessamy, Lauristinas, Mezerians, and many other Sorts.

Also Tulips, Ranuncula's, Anemomy's, Martigon's, Lilly's, Narcissus, Polyanthus, Crown Imperial, Iris's, Carnation Seedlings and Layers, and most other Sorts of Flower Roots, of whom may be had Choice of Cabbage and Colliflower Plants, Peas, Beans and Garden Seeds; with Variety of perannual and bi-annual Flower Roots, or Annual Flower Seeds and great Choice of Asparagus Plants.

Those Gentlemen who please to favour him with their Orders, may always depend, at every Season, to be served with the best Plants of every Sort, and at low Prices.

Manchester Mercury, 28 October, 1755

Caldwell Project News

The first two of the Caldwell Nursery ledgers to be transcribed (which date from the 1790s) have been completed and we have moved on to a third one, which begins in June 1833 and runs to October 1837. It is a Sales Book, recording sales made day by day. Some records have been overwritten "Paid, paid, paid", from which we may infer that the customer paid on the day, with other purchases being on credit and transferred to a Sales Ledger.

Unfortunately, the overwriting can make it difficult to read what the sale was! That is not the only transcription difficulty. In the 1790s, most of the sales were for fruit and veg, but by the 1830s there had been a change in gardening habits. Many new decorative plants had become available commercially and were in great demand. They were often recorded in the ledger by their botanical names.

In 1849 the Manchester and Botanical Horticultural Show introduced a new prize category of "*Best written and correctly-spelled labels*" and studying the ledger one can understand why. Probably plants were often exchanged between nurserymen and gardeners with names being transmitted orally. This resulted in some ingenious spelling. In addition, the nurserymen were rather cavalier when it came to Latin, with species names being given the wrong gender – such as alba instead of album.

As if that wasn't enough, the handwriting is less than perfect, with one hand, in particular, causing a great deal of trouble. The writer had the habit of separating the down strokes of letters such as 'a' and 'd' from their beginning. It took me some time to realise what this particular word was meant to be. ¹



So the work on this particular ledger is definitely challenging! However, there are a couple of very useful websites which help translate the scrawl of those long-gone nurserymen. The first is the International Plant Names Index (www.ipni.org/). There you can search for names by genus and species. Provided you have the initial letter of one or the other, the use of wild cards enables you to try out various possible letters – though it is important to remember that a clearly legible species name may have the wrong gender!

Having worked out what the entry must be, one can then move on to another website. The Plant List (www.theplantlist.org/) will tell you whether or not the name you have deciphered is "accepted" a "synonym" or "unresolved". Then it is only necessary to decide under which modern name to record the

plant on the database. Should one stick with the ledger name, which is familiar to all gardeners, or go with the revised name, which no-one has heard of? A final difficulty comes with cultivar names. These can often be checked by searching 19th century books on Google. These also help when it comes to deciphering the name of the raiser – as very often plants would be known as Widnall's Perfection (a dahlia) or Monk's Codlin (apple) or Herbert's hybrid (rhododendron).

To help all the transcribers I am deciphering and entering these tricky names on the plants database.

If you would like to join the group and help us complete the transcription, why not get in touch with Pat Alexander (patriciaalexander@tiscali.co.uk) who will tell you what is involved and help get you started.

Joy Uings

¹ It says "Caldwell's"

New Roads through Old Landscapes

Drivers using the A50 or travelling along the A556 may have noticed reduced speed limits, earth moving machinery and site cabins. This is the start of construction of the new A556 Knutsford to Bowdon Improvement, a dual carriageway road that will connect the M6 at junction 19 and the M56 at junction 8.

Good news for drivers perhaps but less good for the historic designed landscapes the road passes through. Two sites – Over Tabley Hall and Mere Hall – are directly affected by the road. We have recently recorded them before change took place.

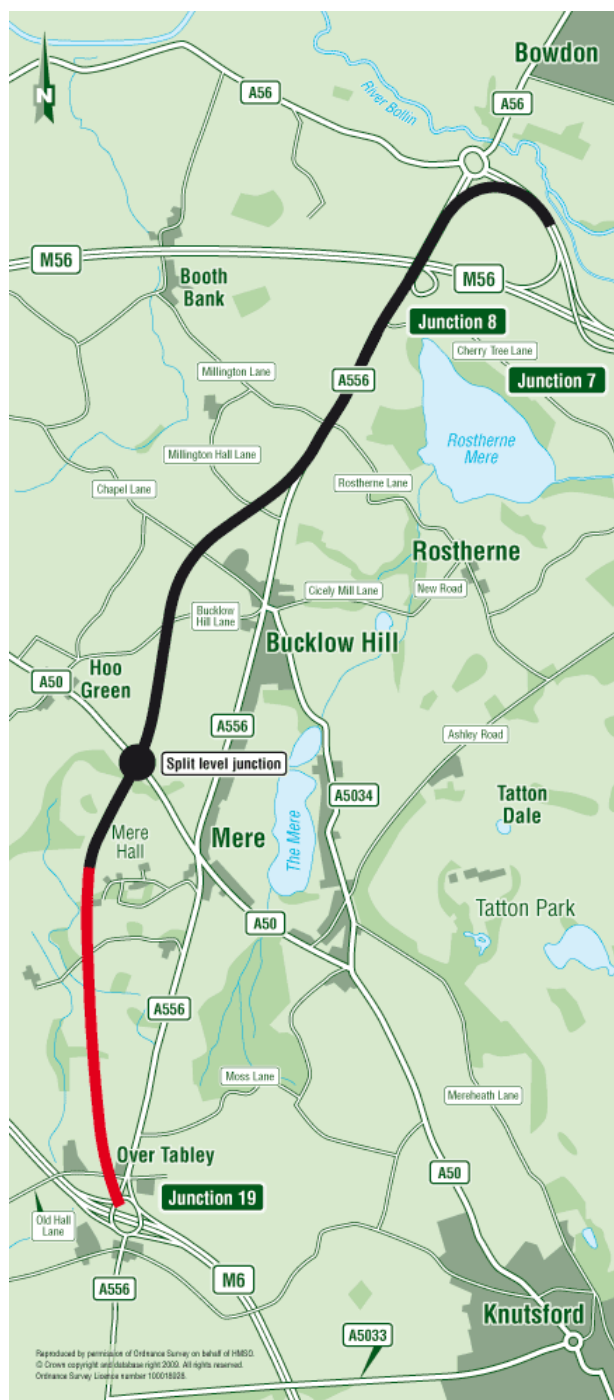


A survey drawing of Over Tabley Hall in 2002 prior to restoration



The east elevation of Over Tabley Hall in 2011, after restoration

Over Tabley Hall can be spotted from the M6 roundabout at junction 19. It is a curious building, renovated and restored to its original width from 2007, and an early and rare example of the 'Strawberry Hill' Gothick style, Cheshire's "only exterior that could be called Rococo".¹ Dated 1760 and listed Grade II, it is the only known surviving building by the painter/architect John Astley.



<http://www.highways.gov.uk/roads/road-projects/a556-knutsford-to-bowdon-improvement/>

To the south of the hall is a 17th century walled garden and 17th century stables Grade II. It is presumed that these were constructed in association with an earlier hall. North of the hall are remains of a dam retaining a lake that appears to have been drained in the early 19th century.

The historic landscape has been degraded through construction of the M6 and an earth bund associated with Old Hall Lane, and as result of sale into divided ownership. The new road will pass immediately east of hall and have a significant negative impact on its setting.

It is understood that the property owner has gone into receivership and the 17th century stables, which have been scaffolded and on the At Risk Register for some time, are also of concern. The walled garden has no statutory protection and the walls remain our concern.

Mere Hall can be glimpsed among the trees near the junction of the A50 with the A556.



The present hall (Grade II), associated stables and walled kitchen garden (Grade II), were built for Thomas Langford Brooke around 1813, probably to plans by Samuel Wyatt that were subsequently modified by his nephew, Lewis Wyatt. (Sir Peter Brooke, who was the second son of Thomas Brooke of Norton Priory, and was an ardent supporter of Cromwell, purchased the Mere estate from John Mere Esq in 1652).

So the present hall sits within an older landscape, the parkland forming the most westerly of the parklands around Knutsford. This park and estate land once formed a continuous ring around the town – Mere Hall (Langford Brooke), Tatton Park (Egerton), Booths Hall (Legh), Toft Hall (Leycester) and Tabley Hall (Leicester).

At Mere a portion of the old parkland north of the hall is recognised in its designation as “wood pasture and parkland”. Within this area is a veteran oak tree, (*above right*) perhaps larger in girth than the veteran oak by the moat at Dunham Park.



Nearby and in the gardens around the hall there are tree stumps of comparable age, and a pond which has been identified as probably being part of an earlier moat. It appears that the older hall, which occupied the same site as the current hall, may have been moated and had a formal landscape from which these venerable oaks survive.

Thankfully the hall and its immediate environs are not directly impacted by the new road though their setting will change and the hall will be severed from its wider parkland to the west.

Notwithstanding twenty years of reports and studies while the road has been in the planning stage, archaeological and heritage reports have failed to pick up two important facts:

- that the historic layout of the fields noted by consultants all probably lay within a deer park, indicated on Burdett's county map of 1777, of which some boundary earthworks may remain undisturbed
- that the A50 has been straightened, a turnpike improvement, resulting in realignment of the road on the northern boundary of the park in the early 19th century

Our recording was undertaken literally as contractors in fluorescent jackets were walking the road line. Happily we have been able to inform planning officers liaising with the contractors about the above matters, so that as the contractors undertake initial

trial trenches and scrapes they are aware of areas of potential interest – the former A50 and deer park boundaries. Had Cheshire Gardens Trust been in existence 20 years ago perhaps our researches could have helped inform the chosen route.

As ever we have been amazed at the richness of the historic landscape uncovered by our activities and by the sources of information – John Rylands Special Collections and the Caldwell ledgers to mention but

two. We are grateful to members of the Mere Hall Management Company for allowing us to visit the site and for assisting our research and recording. Thanks also to our researchers on these sites – Jacquie Williams, Joy Uings, Barbara Wright and Barbara Moth.

¹ Pevsner, N., Hartwell, C., Hyde, M. Hubbard, E. 2011. *The Buildings of England: Cheshire*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press. p. 35

The Best Things in Life are Free ...

... but unfortunately that doesn't include CGT Events! Over the past 10 years we've visited many fascinating and unusual places. Sometimes the prices we charge may seem to veer from amazingly good value to being ... (ouch!) ... a bit pricey. This coming year, for instance, we have a lecture priced at £6 and a garden visit at £25.

So, we thought it would be a good idea to explain what goes on behind the scenes when we cost our events. First, we have to cover the actual costs – speaker's fees, expenses, venue charges, entrance fees, garden tours and refreshments.

Understandably, these costs vary from venue to venue, garden to garden and speaker to speaker. We are fortunate that some speakers and/or venues waive their fees – we pass that saving on with a lower-priced event. But most speakers or venues are not in a position to do this.

In addition, we have overhead and administration costs: printing, postage, photocopying, stationery as well as expenses associated with organising events such as purchasing everything needed when we provide refreshments ourselves.

Apart from ensuring that the events are not a drain on CGT's very limited finances, we try to ensure that a modest amount from each event goes towards the general budget. Without this, the annual subscription would need to be very much higher.

We try hard to find a balance between offering good value for money – without 'cutting corners'. CGT members and their guests have made an effort to attend, so we want to make sure we put on an

enjoyable event with added value. That could be anything from a tour by the Head Gardener or time to socialise over a coffee. We never underestimate the value of a good cream tea!

As a charity ourselves we recognise the immense value of donations. So on occasion we support good causes and other charitable groups. Some gardens ask that we include a charitable donation as part of their charge; in other cases we want to acknowledge a particularly worthwhile cause, especially when no fee has been asked for. In the past 12 months, we have made donations to Chetham's Library, the National Gardens Scheme, Quarry Bank glasshouse restoration fund and the Friends of Burton Manor.

Some organisations have a fixed, standard price for all their events. We feel this would limit where and what we offer. Instead, our flexible approach means a wide variety of lectures and visits that we hope will continue to appeal to all interests. So, when you look at our forthcoming programmes, we hope you will understand a little better why prices can vary so much. Our events are all carefully costed – we do not pluck the figures out of the air!

And the usual postscript – if you'd like to get more involved and help organise an event - or simply want to share your ideas - please do get in touch. Maybe you'd even like to become an active member of the Events Group – we are happy to welcome anyone who might like to join us.

Tina Theis

on behalf of the Events Group
tina@tinatheis.com

Painting Paradise: The Art of the Garden

Opening on Friday 20 March 2015 and running until Sunday 11 October, this exhibition, revealing the way in which gardens have been celebrated in art across four centuries, will be at The Queen's Gallery at Buckingham Palace.

It will bring together paintings, botanical studies, drawings, books, manuscripts and decorative arts, exploring the changing character of the garden from the 16th to the early 20th century. It will include works by da Vinci and Fabergé and some of the earliest and rarest surviving depictions of gardens and plants.

Grönt Nytt År *

(Green New Year)

CGT is planning its next garden study trip for September 2015 – this year to southern Sweden.

As always, we have great contacts there to help members get the best out of the trip from the gardens, museums and restaurants. There is a provisional itinerary at this stage with parks and gardens in Malmö including the main historic city park which has some very modern areas. If you are interested in modern, it is hard to beat BO01 (known as the City of Tomorrow) which started in 2001 and has some amazing modern gardens on the seafront. Depending on time, we might take in Malmö's Community Garden run by an Englishman.

Leaving Malmö, we head to Gothenburg stopping at Helsingborg to see the gardens of Sofiero. We will be led through these gardens by the landscape architect Cecilia Liljedalil who has been responsible for its restoration. We finish in Gothenburg where we will see the botanic gardens, the city planning office and a private garden. You might wish to extend your visit to Stockholm or return via Malmö and onto Copenhagen.

Pencil in 3-7/8 September 2015 and register your provisional interest with Ed Bennis (embennis@gmail.com). We will run the trip as we have done in the past: make your own arrangements to get there (flights are to Copenhagen, then the train to Malmö); and, we will recommend some hotels for you to book.

Costs, as yet undetermined but more expensive than Portugal, will cover coach travel, admissions and most meals. Numbers will be limited to 30-35. An itinerary and costs should be ready by the AGM in March. We hope to see you in Sweden.



BO01: a regenerated industrial site, a large team of architects worked here. The gardens along the front were designed by well-known landscape architects including Jeppe Anderson and Torbin Anderson (not related).



Sofiero Castle: this was a country mansion for Sweden's royal family. Built in the 19th century, it has recently restored gardens and will look much better than this photo which was taken at the end of a very hard winter! On the death of King Gustaf Adolf VI, it was left to the city of Helsingborg.

* This statement was found on a Christmas card that Ed received from a Head Gardener in Sweden. It is a play on the words Gott Nytt År which means Happy New Year. So perhaps the Swedes have a sense of humour after all.



Capability Brown. – This ingenious man, who was well known in the last and former reign for his taste in the arrangement of pleasure grounds, acquired the epithet by which he was distinguished, for having, whenever he was consulted on the subject, always said that the place had “capabilities”. One day as he was helping the late Earl of Chatham into his coach, the Earl having entered said, with an air of lofty courtesy, “Thank you, Mr. Brown; now, Sir, go and *adorn* your country”. Brown, assuming the same dignified manner, immediately answered, “Go, Sir, and *save* it”.

Fife Herald, 8 September, 1825

Keep up-to-date with the plans for Capability Brown's Tercentenary in 2016 by visiting the website www.capabilitybrown.org.

Wanted – a Voluntary Conservation Caseworker

This important role involves coordinating the Trust's activities to enhance and sustain the County's heritage of parks and gardens through planning policy and decisions on planning applications. It involves:

- Liaising with local authorities
- Liaising and exchanging information with the Trust's Researchers and Recorders
- Coordinating CGT responses to planning consultations
- Reporting to the Trust's Council of Management
- Taking opportunities to raise awareness of historic designed landscape conservation
- Maintaining or contributing to an existing mapped database of Cheshire sites.

The Voluntary Conservation Caseworker will require some knowledge of the planning system and awareness of historic parks and gardens, a computer with access to the internet, and good communication skills. Cheshire Gardens Trust will provide an induction, can arrange training and has a number of Conservation volunteers who will support the caseworker in their role. There will be opportunities to visit some of Cheshire's hidden landscapes.

Annual General Meeting

The 2015 Annual General Meeting will be held before the Spring Lecture, as usual. Following last year's very successful event, we will be returning to the Hall at Marthall and employing the same caterer – so the food will be excellent. There will also be plenty of time to mingle, meet with other members and catch up on news.

However, we must not lose sight of the main purpose of the AGM which, apart from accepting the Annual Report and Accounts, is to elect members to the Council of Management. Over the years we have had a number of changes to the Council, but we have never yet had to have an election. My dream is that one year we will have so many people standing that it will be necessary. There are 15 places on the Council and we only have 11 members at present.

All those standing down will be offering themselves for re-election, so another 5 names and we will not be able to simply accept the nominees.

In this General Election year, it would be appropriate to hold our own election, so why not put yourself forward or persuade someone else to stand. New members and new ideas are needed to prevent us from getting stale.

Council meetings are held every 6 weeks or so on Wednesdays at 6.30 p.m. in the Coach-house at Arley. If you want a taste of what is involved, why not come along to our next meeting on February 25th?

Contact Minutes Secretary Sue Bartlett (0161 445 1924 or bartlettbs@googlemail.com) and she will ensure that you receive a copy of the papers.

The Garden as Battlefield

Birkbeck Garden History Group has organised a Study Day to be held in London on Saturday 14 March. The day will consider the influence of military engineering (e.g. fortifications) on garden design and the presence of motifs of battle in the garden. Speakers include Suzannah Fleming, Caroline

Dalton and Patrick Eyres. The cost is £30 and the day runs from 10 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.

If you are interested in this, you can contact Maxine Eziefula on maxineeziefula@hotmail.com or 07769 631 449. Or contact Joy Uings (for details see back page) who can provide a pdf with full details.

AGT/GHS Conference

As we have reported in previous editions of the newsletter, the Association of Gardens Trust (AGT) has been considering a merger with the Garden History Society (GHS). In anticipation of this move, the two organisations are holding a joint Conference this year from 24th to 26th July (bad choice of dates as it clashes with RHS Tatton!)

The conference is based at Newcastle University, (so student accommodation – single rooms with or without *en suite* facilities) and begins with the GHS 5th Graduate Symposium on the Friday morning followed, after lunch, by a talk from Fiona Green who is chair of the Northumbria Gardens Trust. Two separate AGMs will then follow, where the members of each organisation will be asked to vote on the proposed merger.

Visits on the Saturday will be to Croxdale Hall and Hardwick Hall, followed by several small 17th and 18th century gardens in Durham. Sunday visits are to Alnwick Castle and Hulne Priory and, after lunch, to Belsay Hall. There is an optional extra day (Thursday) which includes a visit to Seaton Delaval, a baroque house by Vanbrugh which dates from 1719-1730 with a 20th century garden. Then on to Northumberlandia, the recently completed land sculpture fashioned out of soil and clay from a local surface mine.

Further information and booking forms can be downloaded from either the AGT website (<http://www.gardenstrusts.org.uk/#Annualconference>) or the GHS website (<http://www.gardenhistorysociety.org/post/events/annual-summer-conference-newcastle/>).

‘Early Gardens & Designed Landscapes in Cheshire and Beyond’

This talk by Paul Everson, an Honorary lecturer at Keele University will take place on Saturday, 7th March 2015 at 3pm at Goostrey Village Hall. The entry charge of £6 includes refreshments. Contact Brian Rich: tel: 01538384713 or email: brianrich457@btinternet.com.

Plant Hunters’ Fairs

Spring seems to be already upon us. Despite the cold and the occasional snow shower, snowdrops were already out at Burton Manor when we gathered there for John Edmondson’s talk on the Liverpool Botanic Gardens in mid-January.

So, like me, you are probably already looking forward to seeking out new plants to fill those gaps in the garden and the Plant Hunters’ Fairs are a good place to look. You can find all the details on their website www.planthuntersfairs.co.uk, but here are just a few of the days to choose from.

You can stay within Cheshire by choosing to go to Cholmondeley Castle (12 April), Adlington Hall (10 May) or Abbeywood Gardens (23 August). But why not travel a little further afield to see what our neighbouring counties have to offer.

There will be free parking and free entry to the fair to be held at Dearnford Lake, Whitchurch (22 March and 2 August) where you can enjoy the lakeside walks for free. Or why not visit the working smithy and sculpture park at the British Ironwork Centre nr. Oswestry. The £1 entry to the plant fair will go to the Hope House Children’s Hospices.

In Derbyshire, there will be a fairs at Carsington Water, Ashbourne on 4 April and 26 July, while Staffordshire boasts fairs at Middleton Hall, Tamworth (18 April) and Consall Hall Landscape Gardens (19 April). At Sugnall Hall Walled Gardens – 25 April and 5 July – entry to the fair and the garden is £1 but a £2 guided tour, taking in the garden and the kitchen wing of the hall and the grounds is also on offer.

Why not travel into Worcestershire to visit the fairs at the Bodenham Arboretum (11 April; 5 September) or the Arley Arboretum (4 July). Ideal for those who have attended Jane Roberts’ course on Trees!

If you have not already done so, why not sign up for the CB300 newsletter. You can do this by going to the website www.capabilitybrown.org/contact. The November newsletter included articles on Coombe Country Park in Warwickshire; the joys of swimming in a Brownian landscape and much more.

Trees – their identification and use in Historic Gardens & Landscapes

Jane Roberts is continuing her fascinating talks this year, looking at how trees have been used through the ages. As before, there are a number of venues to choose from. Prices vary depending on location and whether or not morning/afternoon tea and lunch is included.

Date	Time	Place	Cost	Tea	Lunch
Thurs 30 April	10 – 5	Lindeth Fell Country House, Windermere	£62	Yes	Yes
Wed 13 May	10 – 4.30	Gawsworth Hall, nr. Macclesfield	£36	Yes	No
Thurs 21 May	10 – 4	Chatsworth House, Bakewell	£56	Yes	No
Thurs 4 June	10 – 4	Biddulph Grange Gardens	£45	Yes	No
Thurs 25 June	10 – 4	Arley Hall & Gardens	£43	No	No

Discounts are available for Friends of Chatsworth House, National Trust and RHS members at Chatsworth, Biddulph and Arley respectively.

The usual series of autumn talks, which will trace the history of trees in Britain since the last Ice Age, will be held at Gawsworth (Tuesdays) and Arley (Thursdays) from 10-12.30. These are held weekly, for six weeks, beginning 8/10 September. Cost is £68.

Places are limited, so early booking is suggested. Contact Jane by phone (01260 271186) or email (botanical.surveys123@btinternet.com).

Study Day at St Giles House, Wimborne, Dorset

This Research & Recording Study day on Wednesday 6 May is being jointly organised by the AGT, the GHS and Dorset Gardens Trust.

St Giles's House and several extant park features have recently undergone extensive repairs and re-instatement. This programme of works has been guided by comprehensive research and archaeological investigation, carried out in collaboration with English Heritage and the Shaftesbury Estate. The Study Day will combine a talk and walking tour with a focus on the historical development of the site as well as an opportunity to discuss the more recent restorative scheme.

The day will begin with a welcome and introduction by owner, the Earl of Shaftesbury, and will be followed by three speakers before lunch, after which attendees will break up into small groups to visit the Pleasure Grounds.

More information is available on the AGT website: www.gardenstrusts.org.uk/. Or contact the AGT co-ordinator, Teresa, at gardenstrusts@agt.org.uk or by phone 020 7251 2610.

GHS Winter Lectures

The Garden History Society Lectures are held in The Gallery at 70 Cowcross Street, London, EC1M 6EJ at 6.30 p.m. on Wednesdays. Their programme for February and March is as follows:

- 11 February: Therapeutic Landscapes: The role of gardens in English hospital settings since 1800.
- 25 February: Gardens in the Romantic Era: The Associative nature of the Reception of Gardens at the End of the 18th Century and beginning of the 19th Century
- 11 March: Order in the Landscape: Rediscovering Preben Jakobsen
- 25 March: Gardens Fit for a Queen: the Elizabethan Gardens at Cowdray and Bisham

For more details see: www.gardenhistorysociety.org/events. Cost for each lecture is £8 for members (booked in advance), £10 for non-members or on the door.

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, 26 Sandford Road, Sale, M33 2PS, tel: 0161 969 3300 or e-mail joy.uings@btconnect.com.