



CHESHIRE
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Newsletter

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Inside:

- ✿ Dazzling Dahlias
- ✿ Day one in Portugal
- ✿ Eastern Promise: the AGT Conference in London
- ✿ I is for Icehouse
- ✿ Caldwell ... and Cake!

Some future events:

- ✿ North-West Film Archive – compilation of gardens, landscapes and horticulture in Cheshire – Saturday 30 November
- ✿ Rare and ancient botanical and gardening books (Chetham's Library) – Friday 17 January
- ✿ Early nurserymen of Manchester and the north-west – Saturday 22 February



On a lovely sunny morning on Thursday 4 July, thirty-eight members visited the garden of plantswoman Chris Everett and her husband Maurice in Whitegate near Northwich.

Chris and Maurice bought their 18th century cottage in the early 1980s and constructed the garden themselves. For 25 years they opened their garden under the National Gardens Scheme and raised over

£20,000 for charity. Now it is only open by appointment.

The garden used to be home to the village blacksmith who owned much of the small valley before breaking up his land in the 1920s. Wood End Cottage was built in 1710 to house the workers in the smithy and the Everetts still regularly unearth chunks of furnace glass from it in their borders!

The natural stream at the bottom of the garden, which arises in Petty Pool, never dries out or floods and may have been used to turn a small waterwheel to fuel the smithy. Watercress was grown in the stream and sold at the cottage door.

The half-acre garden, on a light sandy soil, is on several levels and slopes away from the terrace near the house to the stream which is bordered by shade and moisture loving plants on the garden side and mature trees on the other. The blacksmith used to own this land to monitor his son's activities!

The terrace near the house is surrounded by raised beds planted with sun-loving plants and pots of plants. Here members were greeted with homemade cake and tea and coffee on arrival before an introductory talk by Chris and Maurice.



Chris is a long term member of The Hardy Plant Society and her knowledge and love of plants is reflected in the garden. Keen gardeners were in plant heaven! There were so many unusual flowering plants and shrubs in the various beds which you rarely see in gardens.

The main herbaceous border, which is backed by trellis is covered with clematis and roses. Other beds are filled with selected hardy perennials, interesting shrubs and specimen trees. At the time of our visit a magnificent *Cornus kousa* which only flowers in alternate years, was in full blossom.



Each bed was full of 'treasures' so that you needed to go around them several times, each time noticing something different. Notebooks were out in force and Chris patiently answered all our 'what is the name

of that plant?' queries. Some plants which Chris Talbot and I noticed are listed below and I am sure other members could add to this list or confirm names in their notebooks. The RHS Plant Finder (and Google) proved very useful in compiling the list!

At a lower level there was a vegetable garden and a greenhouse. Chris is a keen plant propagator and the sales table of plants she had grown was nearby: lethal for plantaholics.

After our morning visit half the group retired to a nearby hostelry, 'The Plough' at Whitegate for an enjoyable lunch.

Heather Turner and Chris Talbot

Footnote: A big 'thank you' to Chris and Maurice for allowing Cheshire Gardens Trust to visit their lovely garden and for providing such delicious refreshments!



Anemone rivularis

Beesia calthifolia

Campanula latifolia 'Brantwood' (giant bellflower)

Campanula latifolia 'Gloaming'

Cardiocrinum giganteum var. *yunnanense*

Clematis 'Caroline' (photo, below)



Clematis 'Viola'

Corydalis elata

Crambe cordifolia

Several species of the orchid *Dactylorhiza* e.g *grandis*, *foliosa*, *elata*, *majalis*

Diascia personata

Dictamnus albus var. *purpureus*

Epilobium angustifolium 'Stahl Rose' (an unusual form of the willowherb, spreads by rhizomes and can be invasive. Everyone admired this)

Geranium pratense 'Plenum Album' (a rare double white flowering form of meadow cranesbill)

Iris sibirica 'Kingfisher'

Lilium martagon (purple/pink form)

Magnolia liliiflora (this had a second flush of deep pink flowers)

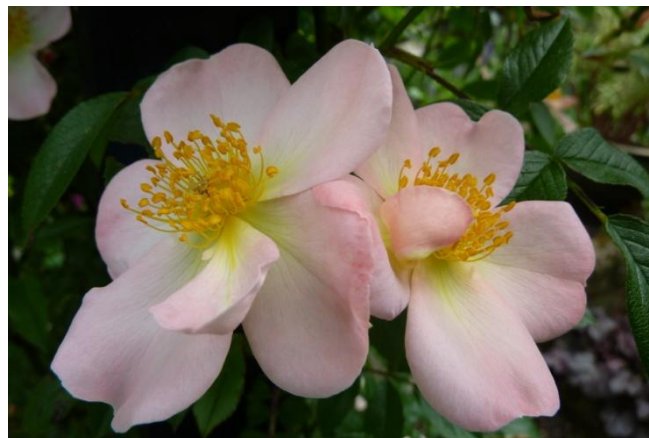
Mathiasella bupleuroides (unusual green plant in the large bed near the plant table which taxed everyone's knowledge!)

Podophyllum peltatum (Chinese mayapple)

Pyracantha 'Sparkler' (AGM) (this silver variegated form was tightly clipped to the wall on the corner of the cottage)

Rosa 'Ghislaine de Feligonde' (rambler rose)

Rosa 'Open Arms' (growing over arch, photo below)



Roscoea purpurea

Sanguisorba tenuifolia var. *alba*

Valerian officinalis (white form)

Verbascum chaexii

Zenobia pulverulenta

Dazzling Dahlias

A group of CGT members gathered on 10 September in Geoff and Heather Hoyle's garden in Osborne Street, Bredbury.

For the last decade dahlias have taken over Geoff's life, or at any rate, his garden. Behind this 1920s semi is a riot of dahlia excess, with over 150 varieties bringing Mexican brilliance to a grey Stockport afternoon.



The different shapes, sizes and colours are remarkable. They come, as Geoff says, in every shade of every colour but blue. Neat knee-high-front-of-the-border specimens sit next to plants of truly triffid-like proportions with flowers towering over us at eight

feet. And every shape, from perfectly spherical pompoms, decorative with their Elizabethan ruff petals, through elegant bi-coloured cactus spikes, to giant shaggy lions' manes.



Geoff and Heather have lived in the house since 1977 and for many years were conventional gardeners growing mainly vegetables. However, after being handed down a few dahlia tubers from his father, who had always grown them, Geoff started on the road which has become a grand and glorious obsession.

The lawns have got smaller as the dahlia numbers have got larger and now grass acts as a foil for the wide dahlia beds edged with a ribbon of colour-themed bedding.

Each year, counter-intuitively I thought for such a packed and riotous garden, he begins with a spreadsheet, allocating a space to every dahlia based

on its height and general performance in the previous year. The design depends on a strict gradation of heights. He tried colour-theming and grouping, but found, as he put it, he was dealing with too many different shades of orange which didn't go.



Each space has a stake relative to the dahlia's eventual height and to which the plant is beautifully tied in as it grows, but the mix of colours is entirely anarchic from red so dark that it has black shadows, through purples, pinks, oranges and yellows, enlivened with the occasional white and cream. It all works in spectacular theatrical fashion.



While we enjoyed our tea and cake, Geoff talked fascinatingly about his annual growing routine and cultivation tips.

He digs everything up in late autumn, usually before the first frosts have blackened the foliage, splits the plants and divides the tubers. They are kept in his

greenhouse in cardboard boxes covered with a little just-damp potting compost.

He pots up the tubers in early April and then plants them out at 12 inches high. Everything is rigorously labelled. Deadheading 'only' takes an hour a day. The compost heap with its mounds of discarded still-brilliant blooms is an art-installation in itself.



What a series of tasks! A key tip for those disheartened dahlia gardeners among us who put their tubers to bed for the winter only to find that in Spring they have all rotted, is to cut off and discard the 'mother' tuber (harder than and a different colour from the younger tubers) and to chop off the stalks almost at the base.

In a moment of enjoyable inverse snobbery I was delighted to learn that that most fashionable of all flowers, the dark-leaved and boringly-ubiquitous Bishop of Llandaff, isn't at all rated by Geoff. He tells us that many of the old dahlias, including the equally modish Chat Noir and Arabian Nights, have lost their vigour and are floppy and weak-stemmed. Newer varieties are much better.

I want to get hold of the dark-leaved pink single bi-colour Happy Wink (they all have silly names) and two richly-coloured cactus types, Weston Spanish Dancer and Weston Pirate (bred in exotic Weston-Super-Mare). I now can't wait to start my own new dahlia bed, even though it will sadly be on a far smaller and less impressive scale. There is just nothing better to heat up an English Autumn.

For more pictures of the garden and Gardener's World film clip, August 2012, look on YouTube: Dahliaholic.

Sara Holdsworth

Geoff sometimes has some spare tubers for sale. Contact geoff.hoyle@btinternet.com for more information. His garden (39, Osborne Street, Bredbury, Stockport, SK6 2DA) is open by appointment through September and for the NGS on the weekend of 6/7 September 2014.

How the Dahlia became popular in Britain

Although it has been grown in this country for only a couple of centuries, the dahlia was first discovered by European explorers in the sixteenth century.

Surprisingly, at that time they were thought of as a food source and it may only be a matter of chance that our meals are accompanied by chips made from potatoes rather than from dahlias.¹ (However, Jane Loudon reported that this had been tried in Paris in 1802. Unfortunately the tubers “were found so bitter and pungent, that they ‘disgusted both man and beast’”.)

According to a newspaper report in 1904,² the dahlia first became “really at home” in England in 1815, though it had been grown on the Continent for some time before that and the *D. pinnata* (syn. *D. purpurea*) had been first introduced into this country in 1789 by the Marchioness of Bute. Jane Loudon explained that she had received it from the Abbé Cavanilles, then Professor of Botany of the Botanic Garden at Madrid. He published his *Icones Plantarum* in 1791 and it included this drawing of what he called *D. pinnata*.



The Royal Gardener, William Aiton, published a list of all the plants grown at Kew – the *Hortus Kewensis* – and in the second edition, printed in 1813 there are two varieties of dahlia listed: the fertile-rayed (*D. pinnata*) and the barren-rayed (*D. coccinea*), though each had a variety of botanical names.

One problem was that one person had named them Dahlia (after the Swedish botanist Anders Dahl) and another Georgina (after the German botanist Johann Georgi). The use of the name Georgina apparently caused some further confusion on the continent as “those English” were accused of naming the plant after King George!³



The barren-rayed *Dahlia coccinea* appeared in Curtis’s *Botanical Magazine* in 1804. The drawing was “taken at Mr. Fraser’s, of Sloane-Square, who has the credit of introducing this ornamental plant among us from France”.

(Keeping to the name Dahlia didn’t please everyone. Since it was named after Dahl, the pronunciation could have been “darlea”, but wasn’t. In 1836 a correspondent wrote to *The Floricultural Cabinet* “it would have been more desirable, to have adhered to Decandolle’s and Willdenow’s name, *Georginia*, in preference to the more common appellation *Dahlia*, particularly as we have the genus *Dalea*, a name by which it is too often improperly called”.)

The Dahlia did not grab attention immediately. In 1807, when the Archdeacon of Winchester, Matthew Woodford, died his collection of exotic plants was put up for sale. These were mostly simply listed by name in the advertisement, but his *Dahlia purpurea* had the following comment:

“This is the true dark-flowered double sort, has never been figured, and only flowered once in England; and is scarce in any collection.”⁴

However, in 1808 the *D. pinnata* was used as decoration on the rather sumptuous, identical, Court dresses worn by two sisters:

“A white satin Petticoat, richly embroidered at the bottom en chenille; the front of the Petticoat a beautiful wreath of *dahlia purpurea*; Turkish Drapery of lilac velvet, trimmed with the same; lilac velvet Turkish Robe and Vest, embroidered en chenille; Head Dress of feathers and diamonds.”⁵

By 1816, the two dahlias grown by Aiton can be found in the nursery catalogue of Thomas and James

Backhouse of York and within a few years dahlias were being exhibited at flower shows: in 1819 James Lee, the nurseryman of Hammersmith, exhibited “a magnificent collection of double dahlia flowers”⁶ and in 1821 J. Salter, nurseryman of Bath, advertised for sale a variety of plants including, “for £1, 10 sorts of Double Dahlias”.⁷

The Dahlia was turning out to be a true “florists’ flower” i.e. one that created a lot of varieties and they were being turned out by the dozen by the leading experts.

However, one problem was that they could be very variable – the same variety grown in different places could be either magnificent or poor and some people discarded theirs only to discover them looking splendid elsewhere. Long discussions began to appear in gardening magazines as to the best way to cultivate dahlias.

Then came the question as to what made a good “show” dahlia:

*“With regard to the opinions advanced on the qualifications required to form a good flower, they are almost as endless in variety as the Dahlia itself, for every grower has his own opinion. However, it must be generally admitted that form must stand first, colour next, and size last.”*⁸

Dahlias were definitely the “in” plant by this time. A writer in the *American Horticultural Register and Gardener’s Magazine* pointed out that once it had been the tulip, then the hyacinth, then the rose, which were the fashionable flowers, but these had all “had their day”. Now it was the turn of the dahlia “a new flower, tall and elegant in its bearing, with its slender and curving stalk, bearing its beautiful and regular crown of rich and ever-to-be-varied tint”. (1836)

At horticultural shows, the dahlia soon went from being a single class “the best dahlia”, to two classes: “the best double dahlia” and “the best single dahlia”. By 1844 one of the classes at the Manchester Botanical and Horticultural Show was for nurserymen and dealers who were required to show “36 distinct varieties”.

One of the most successful dahlia growers in Manchester was the nurseryman William Lodge and in 1844 he provided one of the prizes “a Splendid Silver Snuff Box” at a show specifically for dahlias.⁹

But the dahlia was generally popular, not just with show exhibitors. In August 1832 business at the Stock Exchange in London was rather slow, so to amuse themselves, the members took to bringing in flowers from their gardens, “for the most part dahlias” and great fun was had with this ad hoc competition, with a scramble each afternoon to purchase those shown.¹⁰

The following month a more serious dahlia show was held at the Floral Gardens in Hulme. Mr. Skirving, a nurseryman from Walton, Liverpool, took first prize for “the best twelve flowers”. One of his was Levick’s Incomparable, a dahlia of “fine crimson – tipped at the end of every leaf with pure white”.¹¹

It was the double dahlia that took centre stage in the mid 1800s and only these were shown in Robert Hogg’s *The Dahlia: its history and cultivation*. This included the one shown below:



The single dahlia went out of fashion until, towards the end of the century, it “was practically re-introduced as a novelty. It seems, however, to be losing ground again, and may yet some day be discovered once more”.¹²

Joy Uings

¹ For more information see Chris Beardshaw’s *100 Plants that almost changed the world*, a fascinating book to add to your Christmas stocking filler list.

² Evening Telegraph, 5 August, 1904

³ Footnote on page 3 of Robert Hogg’s *The Dahlia: its history and cultivation*

⁴ Hampshire Chronicle, 26 October, 1807

⁵ Morning Chronicle, 20 January, 1808

⁶ Morning Chronicle, 19 August 1819

⁷ Salisbury and Winchester Journal, 15 October, 1821

⁸ *Floricultural Cabinet*, 1836, p.130

⁹ Manchester Courier, 19 August 1846

¹⁰ A London newspaper report about this was re-published by several provincial newspapers, including the Manchester Times of 1 September, 1832

¹¹ Report of this show was carried by the Manchester Times 15 September, 1832

¹² Cheltenham Chronicle, 5 September, 1896

The CGT Lisbon Trip, 13-15 September 2013

Part One

Quite how we fitted in so much in such a short time is a mystery to most of us. It can only be thanks to the superb organisation of the trip by Ed Bennis working with Raffaella D'Intino of 'Episode Travel with Art' and some other CGT members.

Thirty of us rendezvoused in Lisbon, some having spent time there and elsewhere in Portugal before the garden and gastronomic blitz began.

If we had never heard of the 1755 Lisbon earthquake before the trip, then the impact it had – not only on

the city but also on surrounding landscapes and gardens – is implanted in all our brains now. *

Day One saw us visit three gardens of historic importance, two UNESCO-listed ancient monuments, a contemporary garden, buildings and art gallery at the cultural centre; sample Portuguese wines at a wine-tasting and dine finely (twice) in romantic, stunning surroundings.

* 1 November 1755: the earthquake resulted in the deaths of 60,000 and the collapse of 12,000 houses plus public buildings

The National Palace of Queluz



This palace, which started as an 18th century summer retreat for royalty with riches from Brazilian gold, is now owned by the state and is a tourist destination. British landscape architect, Gerald Luckhurst, who has lived in Portugal many years, is our guide here and at Fronteira.

The gardens are laid out in a series of formal, box hedged gardens near the house. The strong focal axis includes a large drop in level, such that the main cascade cannot be seen initially - discovering it as you move along. But '*someone has built a (expletive!) apartment block on the axis!*' points out Gerald – there it is on the horizon. The lead sculptures are the largest collection outside England of British sculptor, John Cheere. King Pedro III wanted his palace decorating, but all the architects were busy with the post earthquake restoration, so the Marquis of Pombal acquired the entire sculpture collection via the

Portuguese ambassador in London. We also saw an amazing 129 metre long tiled canal, designed so you lay back in your gondola and viewed the scenes on the tiles.



Work continues on the restoration of the gardens, '*a detective game*' says Gerald.

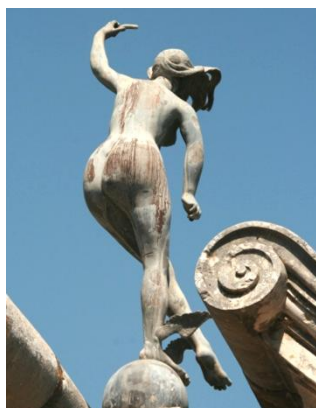
Palácio de Fronteira



Built in 1670 as a hunting pavilion, the house was extended after the 1755 earthquake so the Marquis could live here. The palace is still in private ownership, the residence of the Marquis of Fronteira. The title was given by the king to his illegitimate son, for his support in the restoration wars against Spain celebrating ridding Portugal of Spanish kings and establishing the House of Braganza. The garden is distinguished by its great stairways, water tanks, coloured glazed tiles (azulejo), statues and decorative parterres.

Gerald has his own theories about the politics of the gardens based on Machiavellian philosophy. It is a garden of the 'moment'. Machiavelli says half your life is down to good luck or bad luck and for the other half you are in charge.

The Duke of Braganza took his opportunity in the coup – that was his 'moment'. This is represented in the statue of Fortuna the naked lady – she is precariously balancing on a ball, holding a knife – you can only grab her by the hair from the front because she is bald behind.



There is a wall lined mainly with busts of the Kings of Portugal. The Duke of Braganza is amongst the busts. The Chapel Walk is an outdoor gallery with tiled

panels showing allegories of the arts and sciences. The planets and the signs of the zodiac represent life goes on, the portraits in the tiles are the opportunists. There is an exquisite shell-lined grotto.



None of us are that keen on the contemporary Moorish addition to the garden. (below)



Ajuda Botanical garden

The botanical garden was built in 1768 after the earthquake, when the king moved to this area to live. The previous 5,000 specimens had reduced to only 120 when an inventory was made prior to restoration in 1995. Numbers are now back up to 1,100. Old plans have been found that show the plants were organised by geographical region in stone planters. We were shown around by a landscape architect, who worked with Cristina Castel-Branco when she was director of the botanics.

The organisation of the gardens appeared strange to many of us, with a large formal area of box parterres set aside, whilst the plant collections, which are being established are constrained in the smaller upper area of the gardens.



Belém Tower

Built around 1520, to defend the mouth of the Tejo river and as a ceremonial gateway to Lisbon, it is part of the UNESCO World Heritage site with Jerónimos Monastery. It was also used as a prison in the 19th century. It comprises the bastion and a 30m tower.



Jerónimos Monastery and Jardim da Praça do Império

Started in the 15th century by Henry the Navigator, the monastery and church were completed during 16th century in a richly ornate architectural style that includes complex sculptural themes incorporating maritime elements and objects discovered during naval expeditions, carved in limestone. The monastery's development has been incremental over the centuries. It was damaged very little in the 1755 earthquake.

We wandered around in sun and shadows of the peaceful, poetic, cool cloisters in the late afternoon, taking in the intricate detail of the building against a brilliant and cloud-free bright blue sky. There was an enormously informative timeline exhibition that followed events over 700 years relating the monastery to Portugal's history and to world events.

The geometric with clipped box and myrtle Jardim da Praça do Império provides a formal setting for the monastery and the Centro Cultural de Belém or cultural centre.

Jardim das Oliveiras, Centro Cultural de Belém

Not sure many actually walked around this garden as the wine-tasting on an adjacent Centro Cultural de Belém terrace also overlooking the Tejo River held more allure; as had cups of tea and pastéis de nata (the omnipresent Portuguese egg tart), at the Casa dos Pastéis de Belém cafe nearby, which has sold the tarts since its foundation in 1837.



Designed by Francisco Caldeira Cabral, the elevated terrace garden incorporates old olive trees in a contemporary, geometric garden with long reaching views to and over the river with the 25th April Bridge (after 1974 Revolution) in the background and the Henry the Navigator sculpture in the middle distance. There is a cafe under the shade of pergolas and young people relax on the lawn areas in the shade of the old trees and in wire mesh sculptures. Water gurgles over swathes of black and white pebbles in a rectilinear canal.



Dinner was outside in an enclosed garden facing the candlelit building facade at the Clube dos Jornalistas.

Annie Coombs

Annie's report of days two and three will appear in the next issue of the newsletter.

Eastern Promise:

Transforming London's Landscapes from Abercrombie to the Olympics

The Association of Gardens Trusts Annual Conference 2013

I was delighted to learn that the AGT Conference, this year hosted by the London Parks and Gardens Trust, was being based at Queen Mary College, University of London. As an undergraduate at Queen Mary College in Geography, albeit in the last century, the East End of London was always a special place – hence my decision to study urban geography in an area still bomb damaged and in extreme poverty at that time.

The cleverly managed narration and visits of the Conference took us from the first attempts to improve the appalling living conditions, caused by the rapid urban development of the docks and industry in the 19th century, by the development of Victoria Park created by Act of Parliament in 1841 and on to the present day and the development of the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park.

Vision and opportunities for open space

Two opening lectures, the first given by Ken Warpole on The Changing Public Landscape of East London and the second by Alan Powers on Abercrombie, set the historical background for the Conference. Supported by the excellent Conference Pack, provided by the London Parks and Gardens Trust, we were given many reference points to understand the changing landscape of the East End of London.

The East End remained overcrowded with poor health and low life expectancy throughout the 19th and early 20th century. Apart from Victoria Park (created with a very necessary public bathing pool), no new public open space had been created, that is until the WW2 bomb damage gave that opportunity.

The former London County Council commissioned the 1943 County of London Plan under the direction of Sir Patrick Abercrombie (1879-1957), architect and landscape architect. The 1943 Plan additionally sought to reduce the population density of the East End, through the development of the Lansbury Estate, where Geoffrey Jellicoe was one of the principal designers.

Since the end of the war the closure of the docks has created the opportunity for further development by the later establishment of the London Docklands Corporation in 1981.

The plan was to develop a green corridor of existing and new green spaces that would ultimately link out to the Green Belt. Mile End Park was proposed as a parkway, running from the existing Victoria Park into the Lea Valley that would form another parkway into Hertfordshire and Essex. In 1968 a special Act of Parliament created the Lea Valley Regional Park Authority, which developed a plan to develop the Lea Valley.

The green corridor

Victoria Park

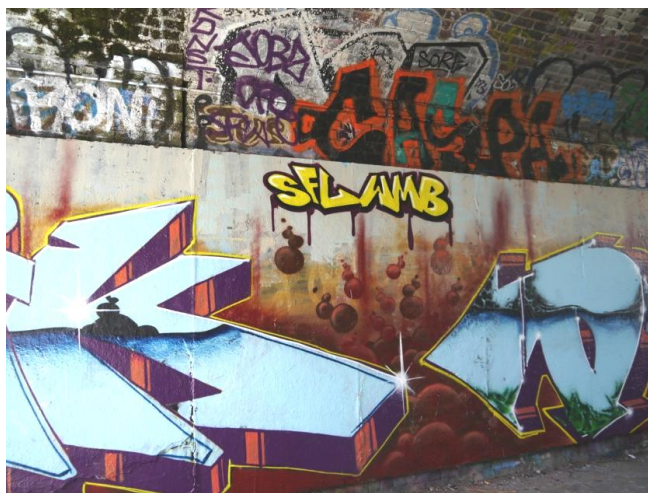
The significance of Victoria Park, constructed in the 1840s and 1850s is well established, providing an area of 220 acres where the public could take exercise and even bathe. Up to this time bathing had to take place in the Regents Canal or the River Lea – both very polluted leading to further disease.

Damage to the park caused by WW2 bombing, loss of trees to Dutch elm disease and also in the storms of 1987 and 1989 led to the development of a Masterplan by LDA Design in 2007 to redevelop significant parts of the park, many are now completed. A guided walk through the park on the opening afternoon of the conference showed the substantial works undertaken.

Mile End Park

Queen Mary College is situated alongside the Regents Canal, so following the Saturday morning lectures we took a brisk walk across the canal to the new Mile End Park, for a guided tour led by Michael Rowan. The park now forms a significant green corridor from Victoria Park, running alongside the canal southwards, towards the former docks.

The site of the park was identified in the Abercrombie Plan as suitable for a 90 acre development of green space and the King George's Field opened in 1952, but then little development occurred until the Millennium Commission's call for projects to mark the Millennium gave that opportunity. A combined partnership bid between the Tower Hamlets Environment Trust, the London Borough of Tower Hamlets and the East London Business Alliance made a successful bid for £12.33m of funding from the Commission, enabling the successful completion of the park that we saw.



The Graffiti archway, self managed by the artists. Mile End Park

Hugo Nowell of the Environment Trust undertook the landscaping, with native planting providing a low key and calm environment. New facilities are zoned into an Ecology Area, Arts Park, the Green Bridge crossing the Mile End Road, a formal water garden with more exotic planting and children's play areas. The former King George's Field now houses the Mile End Stadium Football Pitch and leisure centre, the Hockey Club, Kart Track, Skateboard Park and even a popular graffiti archway.

Thames Barrier Park

Travelling southwards to the river the Thames Barrier Park forms part of the docklands redevelopment. Initially proposed by the former Greater London Council no progress was made until 1995 when the London Docklands Development Corporation held an international competition for the design of the new park.

The winning designs were by Groupe Signes Landscape Architects, led by Alain Provost, working with the horticulturalist Alain Cousseran and Patel Taylor Architects, and was completed and opened in 2000. We were stunned and delighted by the landscaping of the Green Dock – an evocation of a dry dock - and the wider planting within the park, but not forgetting the spectacular views of the Thames Barrier.



The dry dock, Thames Barrier Park

Canary Wharf

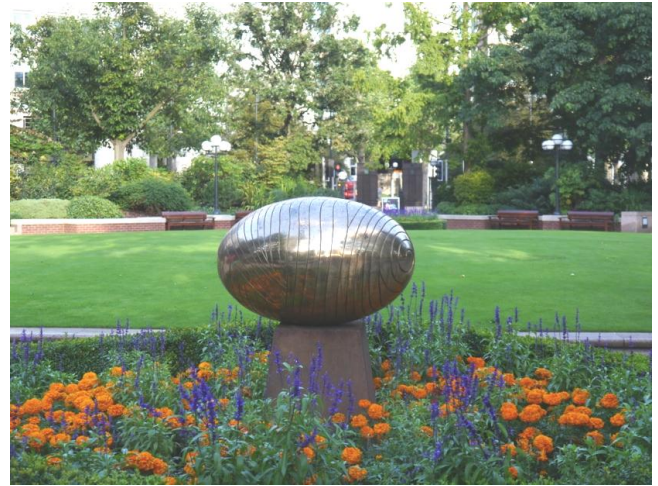
Finally on Saturday we were treated to an evening visit to Canary Wharf both to see the landscaping and for our delicious conference dinner.

The docks in the area had ceased to operate by 1980; the London Docklands Development Corporation was established in 1982 and by 1984 initial plans had been developed for the medium and high rise development that we now have.

In 1987 the Canadian property developer Olympic and York took over the site and a masterplan was developed. This was significant as, by planning skyscrapers, land at ground level was released for open spaces and squares. At this time Sir Roy Strong was brought in as an advisor on the open spaces.

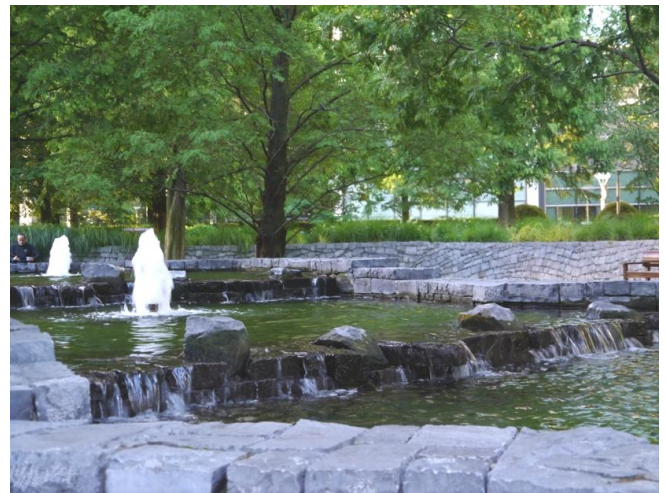
Hanna/Olin, the American landscape and urban design practice, developed the final landscape plan with a

series of linked open spaces of gardens, squares and, significantly, water for the former dock.



Waterferry Circus Gardens reflects a traditional London Square. With sculpture by Do Vassilakis. Canary Wharf

The final development reflects London, through the traditional squares, but also the outward looking international links of the docks and the new financial centre with landscaping that reflects that international community, past and present. For example, the Jubilee Park, was designed by the Belgian landscapers Jacques and Peter Wirtz, and contains dawn redwood, Japanese cherry, swamp cypress and Turner oak trees.



Jubilee Park designed by the Belgian landscapers Jacques and Peter Wirtz, Canary Wharf.

Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park

The final day was devoted to the development of the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, the visit forming a spectacular conclusion to the conference. The park covers some 250 acres, sitting on the east side of the River Lea, flowing south to the Thames, and is the largest urban park to be built in the UK since the 19th century.

Andrew Harland, landscape architect of LDA Design, followed by Des Smith, horticulturalist of Willerby Landscapes, generously shared their Olympic Park narratives leading up to the opening of the Olympic Games and also the legacy masterplan. This is now

complete in the ecological and green North Park, which is now open to the public. The transformation work will be completed in the entertainment focussed South Park in 2014, when it will open to the public and be open for events again.



Late season colour in the South Park. Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park

Within the South Park four gardens run over half a mile linking the spectator venues, and telling the horticultural story of Western Europe and Asia Minor, The Temperate Americas, The Southern Hemisphere and Temperate Asia.

Eastern Promise

Well, the tantalising title of the conference was well chosen. The Abercrombie Vision of 1943 in creating a green grid for the East End of London has been achieved, although perhaps in a piecemeal fashion. The



Work underway on the Legacy Masterplan in The South Park. Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park

economic circumstances immediately following WW2 and subsequently, together with prioritisation of the need to rebuild London and house people, has meant that the development has been opportunistic and political.

The East End of London has always welcomed people from across the world and it is striking that the green developments have continued in the open spiritedness, consultation and accommodation, forging links, and enabling accommodation of the diverse population. The Olympic Park seemed to summarise this spirit.

The former undergraduate was delighted both to return to Queen Mary College (the former People's Palace for education and learning in the East End) and to be privileged to learn of the developments that have been enabled since Abercrombie. My thanks to London Parks and Gardens Trust for a superb conference.

Jane Gooch



The Association
of Gardens Trusts

Cheshire Gardens Trust will be
hosting next year's AGT Annual
Conference and AGM.

**Volunteer
Opportunities**



AGT Conference

Continuity and Change in Cheshire Gardens

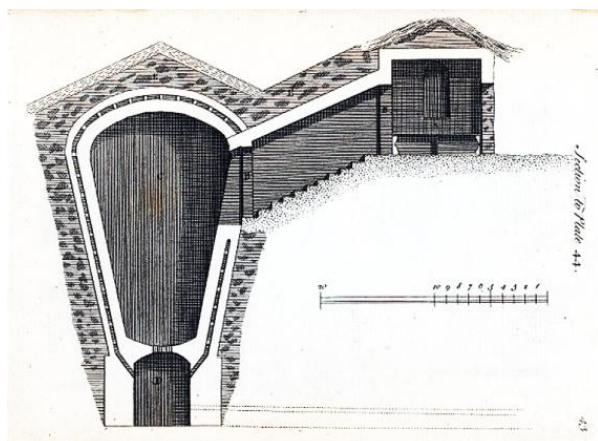
The Queen Hotel, Chester
5th, 6th & 7th September 2014

**Watch this space for further details of next year's conference
and volunteering opportunities**

I is for Icehouse

An icehouse is a building for the collection and storage of ice during the winter season, typically situated partly or wholly underground. They were usually free standing with a vaulted ceiling covered by earth or thatched roof. They were often sited near the stable yard, walled garden or within the boundaries of lakes and ponds. Drainage was of most importance so location near the house or source of ice was of less consideration.

Distinctive elements of icehouses were the entrance, the passage, the chamber, drains and a vault. The passage led to the ice chamber which could have different forms: the conical brick shape being the most common to maximise ice capacity.



Icehouse section showing entrance, passage and chamber, circa 18th century

The vault was covered with earth or a timber-framed roof. Some icehouses were carved within existing rock as seen in Burton Manor, Cheshire, where an unusual subterranean icehouse is partly set on the rock and partly built from local red sandstone.



Burton Manor, steps to N entrance of icehouse

The luxury of ice was available only to the wealthy gentry, with the first accounts of icehouses beginning in the early 17th century as social and economic changes started to rise and construction methods

become more available.¹

The duty to fill the icehouse from natural or artificial ponds or lakes on the estate, usually fell to the head gardener. His duties included keeping the chamber dry before storage and keeping the freezing pond as clean and clear as possible prior to collection.

Few of these structures were considered an important decorative building within the landscape of an estate. Most were hidden from view, although a fine and rare example of an icehouse used for decorative effect is found here in Cheshire – at Ramsdell Hall. A man-made outcrop of rocks surrounds the pointed-arched entrance topped by carved figures. Another example is Great Moreton Hall where the entry to the icehouse is marked by a six-sided tower decorated with carved heads.



Above: Entrance to icehouse, Rode Hall. This icehouse has had a Grade II listing for nearly 50 years.

Below: Conical shape brick chamber, icehouse Rode Hall



By the mid 19th century most country houses would have an icehouse on the estate and which would still be in use by the end of the century. Gradually after WWI with the decline of country estates, icehouses fell into disuse. In recent years some have been rediscovered in different stages of disrepair, buried or bricked-up.

Elizabeth Goodwin

¹ Buxbaum, T. 1992. *Icehouses*. Oxford, UK. Shire Publication Ltd, 5-7

Caldwell ... and Cake!

Over the past few years more and more members – and others – have become involved with the Caldwell Project, from John Edmondson who photographed the first ledgers and Pat Alexander who began the process of transcribing; Barbara Moth who wrote the funding applications; Ruth Brown, Jacquetta Menzies and Christine Wilcox-Baker who created gardens at Arley and, with help from so many others, at RHS Tatton. Then there is the team who trained and undertook oral history recordings and the many people who have been transcribing ledgers into the database.

So many people! And then we realised. We'd never had everyone together all at once.

An invitation went out to all volunteers, funders and supporters and on 2 September nearly thirty people gathered at Marthall Village Hall.

We began with the project team taking turns to give presentations covering:

- the Project history – our staged approach: commencing activities with Oral history, the heritage most at risk;
- funding from The Royal Botanical and Horticultural Society of Manchester and the Northern Counties which allowed for setting up of a database and training of transcribers;
- the decision to create a garden at RHS Tatton – volunteer support, public response, publicity and outcomes;
- our successful application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for funding for 'Sharing the heritage of Caldwell's Nurseries' – to share information via a website, exhibition, talks/workshop and book, and to include training in presentation skills and powerpoint in order to facilitate this;
- and where we are up to with this stage – we have given some talks, commissioned a website, have outline ideas for a book, set up training and are now at the point of developing all elements further.



Then it was time for a break, with tea and cake – or that should be several cakes, provided by the wonderful Janet Horne.

What a buzz of conversation broke out as names were put to faces; thoughts and ideas were exchanged.

We had provided four tables – one each for the



website; the exhibition; the book and talks and training. Each table was equipped with pens and paper, a sheet for offers of help and a list of the principal questions:

- What do you think about the approach?
- Do you have suggestions about what should be included?
- What have we missed?



By the time we called a halt we had received many suggestions.

For the website –

- Include a search box on the website
- Include information about social history - staff conditions, rates of pay especially pre 1837 - for family and social historians
- Include comparative pricing and the dates when plants were introduced

For talks –

- Contact Wilmslow Guild garden club
- Contact Hardy Plant Society - Cheshire Branch, whose members are likely to include former Caldwell customers and be interested in the project

For exhibitions –

- Have a stand/exhibition at local plant fairs, e.g. Dunham

For the book –

- Properties of Lord Derby with Caldwell records and plants that could be photographed

There was excitement too, about further involvement with the project.

- 3 more people volunteered to help with transcribing the ledgers
- 1 person's partner has offered to support volunteers in putting together powerpoint presentations and to create a 'house' style using project logos etc
- 5 people offered to assist with proof reading
- 4 people offered to help with research
- 1 person offered to work with us in developing project activities with children

- 1 person offered to make contact with Reaseheath College whose students may be able to assist with the design of the exhibition and printing of exhibition boards

It was a very successful afternoon. One thing we need to do is to keep everyone in touch with what is happening and – maybe – to meet again for more cake.

Joy Uings



Are you able to help us with the Caldwell Project?

The Caldwell's Nurseries Project is progressing, but as we make progress we also identify additional areas where help is needed. So if you would like to make a valued contribution to this important Cheshire Gardens Trust project – now is your chance! The activities are:

1. Scanning a number of 20th century Caldwell's catalogues so that the images can be added to the website, complementing information from the historic business ledgers.
2. Searching the records of local newspapers for information about the Caldwell family and the nurseries, information that can be added to the website, and help inform the exhibition, talks and book. This might be gathered from advertisements, reports of flower shows, personal information, accounts of events where Caldwell's provided the floral arrangements, and so on. For example we know that Caldwell's provided the flowers for the Knutsford May Queen for many years but need more details and facts about this.

There are microfiche records of local papers covering periods from 1874 at Wilmslow Library; from 1893 at Knutsford Library and a small holding from 1875 to 1890 at Northwich Library. We can supply further details and will help people who would like to try searching – there is no need to commit to looking at a whole run of papers. So why not spend a few happy hours in the warm and dry during the winter months, happily immersed in days gone by? It's surprising what you find.

If you could help with either activity, please contact Barbara Moth on 01606 46228 or at barbara.moth@btinternet.com



Left: The May Queen (thought to be Monica Drinkwater, 1949) receiving her bouquet outside Caldwell's florist shop

The May Queen's bouquet and basket were made by Caldwells (my Dad for many years), then by Daniel's Florists (again my Dad until his death in 1974). As you know the basket (always made up of carnations) was presented to the queen by Mr Collins the owner of the fairground. The bouquet (again carnations) was a gift from Caldwells.

Patricia Simpson



“The pretty ground about Mrs. Garrick’s villa at Hampton was disposed by Mr. and Mrs. Garrick themselves, without much, or indeed any regular help. All that Brown (the Capability) did, was to choose the precise spot, and put in the ground the weeping willow, now a very fine one, on the margin of the river. This single addition Brown compared to punctuation, and not without some felicity of phrase, called it a dot, the presence and operation of which, as it were, made sense of the rest.”

Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser

December 13, 1780

CGT Website – Help Needed!

Our website needs some TLC – we would like to update the content and improve the way it operates. We are not looking for a major re-design – just some help with managing existing and new content. Do you have experience using WordPress to create and manage websites?

Could you spare some time to help us improve our current website and perhaps even give a view on current software and possible up-dating?

If so, please contact Tina Theis – tina@tinatheis.com

Council Changes – Thanks to Heather and a Welcome to Sam and Barry

It hardly seems possible, but next April we will be celebrating ten years since our official launch. Two of those who were at the original meeting to consider whether or not we should form the Cheshire Gardens Trust are Heather Turner and Sam Youd.

Heather has just retired as a member of Council, having given ten years’ sterling service, not just on Council, but also as a member of the Events Group and one of the organisers of the trips abroad. Sam Youd, a constant supporter through the years, has just joined, both as a new Council member and also as the new Chair of Cheshire Gardens Trust.

Also joining the Council is a brand new CGT member: Barry Grain is the new head gardener at Cholmondeley Castle and we shall all be seeing a lot more of him in the months to come.

All members are welcome to attend Council meetings, which are held in the Coach House at Arley on Wednesdays at 6.30 p.m. The dates for next year have just been set: 29 January; 5 March; 30 April; 11 June; 30 July; 17 September and 12 November. Let us know if you are planning to come and find out more about how the Trust is run so we don’t start without you. Refreshments are provided – this task is now undertaken by Gordon Baillie, head gardener at Arley, who is as enthusiastic and as skilled with baking as he is with gardening.



Copy date for January newsletter is 31 December

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.uing@btconnect.com.