



Gardens of the Côte d'Azur

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Côte d'Azur: an Exotic Paradise for English Garden Lovers

Stephanie Knoblich - writer, journalist, photographer and 5th generation gardener, lifted our spirits from the February gloom with her talk on the gardens in the south of France. The talk was initiated when I met her at Schloss Dyck in Germany and, after a few glasses of wine, Stephanie said 'You know that it was the English who invented the Côte d'Azur?'. So, a challenge was set and, as earlier CGT zoom talks had been so successful, Stephanie was invited to be the first to talk to us from another country, with hopefully more to follow.

A context was set by explaining how the coast developed with the first tourist book published in 1826 and a train line from the north in 1846. What had been a two-week journey now took 30 hours and development followed, particularly as it became a fashionable place for the wealthy and the aristocracy including Queen Victoria. Winter villas in every imaginable style filled the coast along with newly introduced exotic plants. The gardens were a mix of classical formal styles, but the over-riding theme was the English style garden filled with winding paths and exotic plants. And of course, the lawn was a main component although not suitable for a climate with water shortages. More than 18,000 greenhouses covered the landscape in Antibes.



La Fiorentina (above, also see front cover), built for the Comtesse de Beauchamp in the 1920s, is still one of the largest properties of Saint Jean Cap Ferrat. The villa had several owners; Rory Cameron, the son of Lady Kenmare organized extravagant parties with guests including Greta Garbo, Elizabeth Taylor and Somerset Maugham (Maugham called the Côte 'A sunny place for shady people'). After WW2 the gardens were redesigned by Russell Page and finally, with the current owner by the French garden architect Jean Mus. Building on the fabric of the garden, Mus saw it as a structured Mediterranean garden composed of terraces and distant views with three themes: a private garden, a cloister garden and a Moorish garden.

Villa Ephrussi de Rothschild is one of the most visited tourist attractions of the Cote d'Azur. A demanding baroness, Béatrice Ephrussi de Rothschild had the



Villa Ephrussi de Rothschild

garden designed in the image of a ship's deck with a fairytale style French parterre at the end. The fairytale continued as her 30 gardeners dressed in naval uniforms with red pompom hats tended the nine ornamental gardens. It was not only the blue skies that attracted the English and others, but the opportunity to grow plants that would not survive in their homeland. Harold Peto purchased 19 acres in the Val de Gorbio to cultivate seeds and plants from SE Asia, Australia, South Africa, Chile, and the Himalayas. Serre de la Madone allowed Peto to develop his gardens with secret corners and gentle vistas.



Harold Peto Garden

We were also enlightened not only about the exotic plant introductions, but also some of the related issues of using non-native species. Mimosa (*Mimosa dealbata*) arrived in Cannes in the mid 19th century and was in flower for the winter visitors. Along with *Eucalyptus*, mimosa forests have become major tourist attractions and its flowers are sold by weight. Despite being so invasive, the forests are protected principally for their role in tourism. Thankfully, the many species of palm have not proved invasive.

There were so many villas and gardens, so enticing, it left us wanting to travel south, immediately! Our thanks to Stephanie for her knowledge, beautiful photos and enthusiasm along with bringing blue skies and sunshine to us.

Ed Bennis

Photos courtesy of Stephanie Knoblich, more on the CGT website

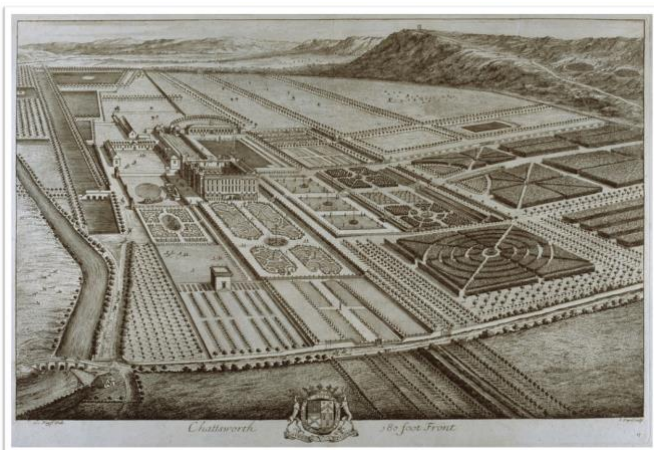
Mick Brown, Production Garden Manager, Chatsworth



The garden and parkland team at Chatsworth

In early 2022 Mick Brown gave us a fascinating talk via zoom on the gardens at Chatsworth, their history and significant recent developments. Mick was previously responsible for developments in the main garden but has now taken over management of the kitchen garden. There are 2000 acres of parkland and 105 acres of garden, requiring a huge team. The gardens and parkland teams are led by Steve Porter with 4 managers, Mick Brown himself, Lucy responsible for the ornamental area, a team of 8 for the parkland and a curator who is also responsible for 70 volunteers. There are 25 gardeners in all with 3 full time students/apprentices.

There was a settlement at Chatsworth at the time of the Domesday Book. The Chatsworth story starts in 1555 with William Cavendish and Bess of Hardwick who built a manor house here with a mainly productive garden, including fish ponds and a deer park. In 1694 the 4th Earl, who had supported William and Mary, was given more land and became the first Duke of Devonshire. London and Wise were engaged to design the huge parterres as seen in the engraving by Kip and Knyff (below). Although these parterres have all gone, a recent drought exposed the outline of the design. The current Duke and Duchess and the garden team have to be very sensitive to the layers of history.



In the 1730s and 40s, possibly under the direction of William Kent, the formal garden was grassed over and the kitchen garden moved further from the house. He was followed by 'Capability' Brown who moved a lot of clutter nearer to the house and developed the surrounding parkland. The entrance drive was moved to allow the iconic view of the house that we see today.



View of Chatsworth House and cascade with views to parkland beyond

The next big change was in the 1800s with the 6th Duke. He had amassed a great deal of wealth and was able to double the size of the house and gardens. He employed Joseph Paxton as Head Gardener and big and complex engineering projects, such as the Rock Garden on a monumental scale, the Emperor Fountain and the Great Conservatory (below) were begun. There were an astonishing 130 greenhouses, including a pineapple house and the famous lily house; they produced the Cavendish banana, the predecessor of our current bananas. Over 80,000 visitors a year visit Chatsworth.



In the 20th century there were a lot of changes. The family lost money and had to sell properties but kept Chatsworth. The 11th Duke and Duchess turned Chatsworth into a visitor centre. They were keen gardeners and introduced features like the serpentine hedge, the pleached lime avenue and built the maze on the footfall of the Grand Conservatory which had been demolished in 1920.

The 12th Duke of Devonshire succeeded his father in 2004. The Duke and Duchess wanted to simplify things, keeping modern features but linking the garden to the 'Capability' Brown landscape. They wanted to bring in the 21st century. Over the last 3 years two garden designers have been brought in to open up areas not often visited. Dan Pearson has been working on the trout stream which weaves its way across the top of the garden. He has redesigned the pond at the top of the stream and planted on either side of the stream.

Tom Stuart Smith was bought in to develop 'Arcadia' in the woodland areas above the cascade and the maze. Four open glades appeared here once the *Rhododendron ponticum* had been removed. Originally these areas were to be seeded, but sponsorship allowed plants (250,000 of them) to be used instead. Much of the planting was done during the pandemic, with Tom



Planting in Arcadia above the Maze

Stuart Smith guiding operations on Zoom, not his usual way of working.

At the same time Tom Stuart Smith revitalised the Rock Garden, emphasising the massive rock formations, introducing more planting and changing the layout to make the central area more accessible.



New planting in the Rock Garden

The fourth area of 'Arcadia' was the wildflower meadow, designed and planted by James Hitchmough of the University of Sheffield, Department of Landscape Architecture.

This was a fabulous overview of the gardens at Chatsworth. We just can't wait to visit in 2022.

With grateful thanks to Mick Brown.

Sue Eldridge

Photos Mick Brown, more on the CGT website

Andrew Degg, Combermere Abbey Sixteenth in our Head Gardener Series



Anrew Degg, right and Ben, to the left of the fruit tree maze

Andrew Degg started as Head Gardener at Combermere Abbey, near Whitchurch, only four months ago but he thinks he has found his dream job. He was born in Stone and grew up near Cannock Chase, where he loved spending time with his family. The biggest influence on him was his grandma, who kept an immaculate cottage garden. She was self-taught but she introduced Andrew

to propagation, taking cuttings and other horticultural expertise.

He went to Kingsmead School, Hednesford and from there went to Cannock College for business studies, an unlikely start for gardening but ideal background for his role as a head gardener in the twenty first century. After college he worked in a supermarket but also worked part time gardening, mainly domestic work but also on some industrial estates, even doing small design jobs.

This led him to think about garden design courses. He went to Reaseheath College, starting on a part time BTEC National Diploma in Horticulture and then continuing to a full-time degree course in Garden Landscape Design. Even though it was full-time he managed to continue with some small gardening jobs. The course suited him very well, combining his interest in art and architecture with practical work at Reaseheath.

Although Andrew already had a great deal of horticultural experience, he felt he needed more



Combermere Abbey in gothic style

experience on larger estates, so he started at Upton House near Banbury in Warwickshire where he learnt a great deal. From there he went as Head Gardener to a private estate with a walled garden and old mulberry trees where he was able to redesign some of the flower beds. He stayed there for 3 or 4 years.



Hayley in the central walled garden

But, he was drawn back to historical places and joined English Heritage where he was Head Gardener at Stokesay Castle and Boscobel House. Stokesay Castle in Shropshire was constructed at the end of the 13th century and is one of the best-preserved fortified medieval manor houses in England. It has remained unchanged for over 700 years. There Andrew was responsible for redoing the cottage garden. But it was at Boscobel House that he had the best experience. The picturesque timber-framed hunting lodge was where King Charles II famously took refuge in 1651 after fleeing for his life following Civil War defeat. There Andrew was responsible for a complete redesign of the gardens. A once in a lifetime opportunity, this involved planting 75 oak trees, as well as planting an orchard and redesigning a mixed flower garden in the walled garden. A lot of this was done during lockdown, working on his own.

Andrew was with English Heritage for around 3 years, but eventually it was time to move on. Combermere Abbey was the ideal job, with plenty of history and design elements and owners who are passionate about the garden. He is dying to see what the garden looks like in spring and summer. Andrew has two full time Staff, Hayley and Ben, who have been at Combermere for

some time and know the garden well. There are also two part time contractors who are experts in trees. Overall, they are a multi skilled team who can deal with everything and kept things going during lockdown.

The Abbey was built as a Cistercian monastery in 1133. Following the monastery's dissolution in 1536 the Stapleton-Cotton family owned it for over 400 years. In 1820 the first Viscount Combermere remodelled the Abbey in gothic style. The estate was bought by Sir Kenneth Crossley in 1919 and now it is Sarah Callender Beckett, his great granddaughter, who is reviving its fortunes. It is a 1000 acre estate, with about 75 acres of maintained garden and grounds. Restoration of the garden areas was undertaken by Sarah and her husband Peter. They planted an amazing maze of espalier fruit trees in the semi-circular area, alongside the conservatory. The main walled area is beautifully designed and is now used extensively for weddings.



The white border in the walled garden

There is topiary and magnificent herbaceous borders. The walled garden nearest to the stable blocks and abbey is more informal, though with a geometric design, designed by Peter Beckett. But this, of course, was winter and most was dormant, though it was all looking immaculate, especially the carefully pruned fruit tree maze. Beyond the walled garden, leading down to the mere is the 'Pleasure Ground', looking stunning in the weak winter sun, with mature trees and snowdrops and a new pavilion. Already a favourite place for Andrew.

Text and photos Sue Eldridge



Overlooking the mere

Walton Hall and Gardens



Walton Hall and gardens at the time of the Greenalls. Photo from Lady Daresbury's photo album, still in the care of the family, c1920s.

Walton Hall and Gardens are known in Warrington as "the jewel in the crown". They certainly offer the most variety in the town offering plenty of facilities for children and adults. There are formal gardens with azaleas and rhododendrons in the spring, bedding plants and herbaceous borders, as well as a large collection of trees, some of which must be heading towards 200 years in age. Gentle walks through the gardens and trees, and around a pond with water lilies, make for a very pleasant few hours. Then there is the recently restored conservatory range, the central part and one wing of which are open to the public. Gone are the days of large teams of gardeners but, despite this, visitors admire the relatively well-kept grounds.



Spring 2020 in the gardens (taken by a Friend of Walton Estate).

Turn back the clock 200 years and this area of south Warrington (or Runcorn as it then was) consisted almost entirely of fields owned, in the main, by Thomas Langford Brooke of Mere. A local brewer, Edward Greenall, started buying up land here to build a new house. This area, south of the industrial area of Warrington, was popular with the recently rich industrialists, bankers, etc, as it was slightly higher above the town so the air was fresher. Edward Greenall started building his house but it is not really known whether he intended it as his retirement home or as a home for his

son, Gilbert. In the event he died before it was completed so Gilbert and his bride were the first residents. They had no children but after his wife Mary died, Gilbert married Susannah and they had three children.



Lord and Lady Daresbury at the door of Walton Hall

This brought about the enlargement of the hall. Gilbert and Susannah's son, also Gilbert, inherited the hall and lived there with his wife, Frances. On his death in 1938, the estate had to be sold to pay death duties. The estate was large and included several farms. Warrington Council bought the house and surrounding gardens and parkland in 1941, and the park was eventually opened to the public in 1945 once the war had ended. In the 1970s parts of the hall had to be demolished as it was in a poor state, so the building today is considerably smaller than it once was. Apart from the hall, the grounds remain substantially as they were when the Greenalls lived there, making this about the oldest surviving intact hall and grounds in Warrington.

**Text and photo below Julia Whitfield
Lord Daresbury has given his permission for the use of
archive photos**



Restored conservatory range

Plas Cadnant, a Labour of Love



Pool and Yew Walk

The Hidden Gardens of Plas Cadnant are to be found in a steeply sided valley with a microclimate on Anglesey beside the Menai Straits.

In a Zoom talk to CGT in March, Anthony Tavernor gave details of the history of the gardens from 1804 when John Price bought the land. The son of a local farmer he worked for the Marquess of Anglesey of nearby Plas Newydd managing a copper mine. The house was built and the gardens were created by three generations of the Price family. Photographs showed that there were plenty of staff and gardeners. Humphry Repton produced a sketch looking towards the Menai Strait probably while he was working at Plas Newydd for his Red Book dated 1799.

The estate was sold in 1928 being purchased by the Fanning-Evans family who updated the property. The decline began after the 1930s when the house was rented out. In 1993 the site was sold and in 1996 the current owner, Anthony Tavernor bought it.



Uncovering the Valley Gardens

The steep valley garden was restored by clearing the overgrown laurel, *Rhododendron ponticum* and timber and making paths leading down to the river at the bottom. The picturesque style of garden was established with water features and viewing points. The humidity of the garden enabled a range of plantings of trees and shrubs to include tree ferns, rhododendrons and hydrangeas.

The gardens were devastated by floods in 2015 but were



The Feature Bench Plinth before the Flood in October 2015



And during the Flood in December 2015

restored again and now offer a wonderful variety of interest throughout the seasons from the spring flowers, summer borders, through to autumn colours and fruits in the kitchen garden. The trees and shrubs give year round interest and red squirrels can be seen. Visitors are welcomed to the garden. There is a visitor centre and tea room and cottages are available to book for a stay.

The gardens at Plas Cadnant have been a labour of love for Anthony and have been recognised as one of the 20 best gardens of Wales. They were of great interest to Prince Charles when he visited in 2017.



Reflecting Pool and Lower Valley

Janet Horne

Photos courtesy of Anthony Tavernor, with grateful thanks, more photos on the CGT website

Lyme Park Flood Alleviation Consultation

Lyme Park was given to the National Trust in 1946 by the 3rd Lord Newton, who wished it to be a resource for the "health, education and delight of the people."

This resource was damaged by extensive flooding in 2019, and the continuing threat posed by flooding and climate change necessitates action. Cheshire Gardens Trust was invited to a consultation on flood alleviation proposals. Studying reports and having the delight and excuse to walk Lyme Park again, we forwarded comments and participated in an online meeting with National Trust officers. Once they have had a chance to digest consultation with statutory consultees, including the Peak District National Park and Historic England, there is likely to be a site meeting to look at proposals



View from the moorland above Lyme Hall, looking down on the Hall to the left and the Cage to the right

in more detail before a planning application is submitted.



View of the hall with the Cage beyond

Proposals for visitor improvements, which were put 'on hold' due to the flooding, are also being progressed and integrated with the flood alleviation measures, so there is a great deal to consider. Our role is to assess how these schemes impact on the significance of this historic designed and frontier landscape, quite a challenge.

The National Trust said that climate change is affecting all their north-west properties including Tatton Park and Dunham Massey. They also acknowledged the increased use of these urban fringe properties during and following the pandemic.

Barbara Moth and Sue Eldridge

Wirral History Fair



Jackie Cawte talking to a visitor about our new boards

Jacque Williams, Judith Allman and Jackie Cawte spent a very interesting time at Wirral History Day, which this year was held at Hulme Hall at Port Sunlight. We displayed our new boards which showed research undertaken by the Research and Recording group at Hooton Park, Eastham Ferry and the Jellicoe design for the Cadbury factory at Moreton. They generated a lot of interest from visitors, who shared their memories of all these places. Some people had researched them, lived

near them or had ancestors who had worked at them. We gained a new member and were given suggestions of new places to research. Altogether, it was a very interesting day and it can be highly recommended to anyone who is interested in history.



Jackie Cawte
Photos Jacque Williams

Why is this here? The Lawton Hall Eye-catcher

Walking along a woodland path (Footpath 27) from the A34 to All Saints Church at Church Lawton, east of Alsager, one passes from the suburban to the sublime. There is an air of mystery, a wooded bank rising to the left, bluebells carpeting the ground, and an opening ahead round the corner; then situated on a mound this ruined tower, with just one wall standing (below).



The ruin overlooks Lawton Pool, a man-made lake created in the early 1800s by Charles Bourne Lawton of Lawton Hall, in emulation of John Webb's lake at Rode Hall nearby. The ruin is named 'The Round Tower' on early maps. It is an eye-catcher visible across the lake from the Hall, and contributes to the character of approach along the former east drive. It had a functional purpose; it was a dovecote, hence the pattern of recesses for the nesting boxes on the internal wall. Until the 17th century a dovecote was a status symbol,



Lawton Pool

keeping doves was restricted to the aristocracy.

Lawton Hall became a school and has now been converted to apartments, but the public can still enjoy these views and relics of the designed landscape from the footpath.



Historic picture of Round Tower at Lawton with pigeon keepers cottage, now kept at Cheshire Archives

Barbara Moth

Loyal Johnson and Eaton Hall



Sam Brewster with gardener in rose garden at Holme Hall, Bakewell

In 1928, American horticultural student Loyal Johnson and his friend Sam Brewster embarked on a cycling tour of Britain's finest gardens. Loyal kept a detailed diary of his visits and took numerous photos of the gardens. In 2015 these were donated to RHS Lindley Library by

Loyal's son Marshall Johnson. It gives a fascinating picture of Britain nearly 100 years ago and makes a great story.

RHS Lindley Library is working with the Gardens Trust and County Gardens Trusts across the country to produce an online exhibition "The Bicycle Boys". This is part of the Unforgettable Gardens project and will launch on 8th June 2022. We are delighted that Eaton Hall has been chosen to be part of the project and are very grateful to the 7th Duke of Westminster, his mother, the Duchess of Westminster and Jan Lomas, Head Gardener, for their help and support. Loyal Johnson visited Eaton Hall on 30th June 1928. More information will be available on the RHS website and we will publicise it nearer the time. Also, we are planning a CGT visit to Eaton Hall in July.

Sue Eldridge

Arabella Lennox-Boyd – in Conversation with Alastair Laysell at The Garden Museum



View across the lake from Gresgarth Hall

Arabella Lennox-Boyd has been designing gardens for the past 50 years, with some 700 commissions worldwide, both commercial and private. To celebrate her new book, 'Gardens in my Life', she talked of the inspirations for her work with Alastair Laysell, the documentary and film maker. He is making a series for Sky Arts - 'The Art of the Garden, how great gardens get designed', to be shown in 2022 and featuring six of the country's top designers, including Arabella.

Of Italian birth, she was brought up pre-war at the family home of Palazzo Parisi, in Oliveto. Here she roamed a countryside full of wild flowers, hills and an often harsh landscape shaped by olive trees, and this taught her a deep respect of place. But of course this is Italy, where the beauty of the surrounding architecture seeps in unconsciously and becomes a part of you. The scale of the Renaissance gardens is so good – human, and enchanting, and full of amusement. Her most constant source of inspiration is the garden at Ninfa, outside Rome. She still visits every year, saying it is like walking into Paradise – Byzantine ruins smothered in roses and wisteria, water everywhere, the harsh hills one side contrasting with the lush green of the garden; it is a constant inspiration.



Gresgarth

By now living in England, she and her new husband

moved in 1978 to Gresgarth Hall, Lancashire, where she found garden making a real challenge. It took her a long time to understand how to work with the English weather and light – so different from what she knew. Good gardening friends from Europe told her she'd be able to grow nothing but alders and birch trees, and she wished Russell Page were still alive to give her help. But through trial and error, and constant learning, she now grows all sorts of seemingly difficult species, and it is here that she experiments with what can be grown, and what works well together, which she can then translate into her work. It also taught her that for any new project, the sense of place and climate make a huge difference. Before any design can begin she has to take time to explore a new area and to see what works there. She finds inspiration and learns everywhere and travelling has widened that vocabulary. Villandry showed how beautiful a kitchen garden could be. From China and Japan, she learnt to look in a different way at the placement and shapes of rocks, water, and especially trees. And back at Gresgarth, digging out stone boulders, she found herself using them; one large one in particular she placed where it was hit by the evening light. So now everything has importance – shape, scent and light.



Trees in the arboretum at Gresgarth

In design terms, her approach is primarily to listen to the client and ask how they will use the garden. She wants the finished result to feel as though she's not been there, and she designs for the long term – structure, trees and shrubs. The herbaceous planting is just lovely fluff – here today and gone tomorrow. And most importantly, the spaces have to relate to the house, its setting, and to each other – the garden must be a place to be lived in and used.

Looking at the photos she selected from her new book, the mix of ideas becomes evident – French treillage to create secluded sitting areas at the Bristol Hotel, Paris – formal, but with softness and the sound of water;

a private garden in Germany, formed between two linking farm houses to create an enclosed kitchen garden, a sort of 'hortus conclusus'; a garden on the Isle of Wight with a view to the sea, where everything is kept simple and green, with low blocks of yew leading the eye out; a 'Renaissance' parterre on the terrace at a villa in Italy, for Sting; a contemplative stone labyrinth with stepped grass terraces at a Maggie Centre; and at her own house, Palazzo Parisi in Italy, a simple swimming pool within a grassy grove of olive trees and view over the hills, or an avenue of tall cypresses and roses leading to a small chapel building.

In Cheshire, Arabella has worked at Eaton Hall for 30 years, redesigning aspects of the garden, such as the rose gardens and hot border.

Nature, and simply being outside, has always been hugely important to her. The change in seasons always gives something to look forward to and teaches patience. Christopher Woodward, Director of the Garden Museum, summed up her approach with the words 'always explore, always experiment'.



The new hot border at Eaton Hall

Gresgarth Garden opens once a month through the year, from February. A recording of this talk can be viewed on The Garden Museum website at [Arabella Lennox-Boyd: Gardens of my Life - Garden Museum](#), costing £10.

Liz Roberts
Photos Sue Eldridge

Council of Management (CoM) a very personal view

Ed Bennis has kindly written this article in response to our request for more information about Council of Management. We hope it will be the first of a series of articles about the groups that make up Cheshire Gardens Trust. But it is also intended to encourage more members to take part in different activities. Editor

Let us start with saying that the title CoM sounds very official, formal and arrogant. In truth, it is official as we must have this type of setup as a registered business and charity, but it is far from formal or arrogant! As a small group of volunteers, and sadly getting smaller, the CoM deals with the running of The Trust in terms of compliance, funding activities, promotion and future strategies. Activities such as research, events, local planning issues and the newsletter are dealt with by small groups of volunteers, often not members of the CoM.

How does it work? It is really very simple with a meeting held every six to eight weeks at someone's home or in the garden weather permitting. And like any decent get-together, coffee, tea and cake are always available. There is time for discussing our own gardens, plants, ideas and problems and even the occasional plant swapping session. Then onto the business of running The Trust with reports from different groups such as events or research, and whatever might have arisen such as dealing with a student bursary or requests from a garden owner, a researcher, the Gardens Trust or even the National Trust. There can be a focus to a session such as the Queen's 70th celebration; should we plant one tree or

70 trees, and where should it/they be? We haven't yet reached a decision on that one.

And I still refer to 'we' although I am no longer a member. I was chair from before The Trust was official since no one else put their hand up, and this lasted for 14+ years! There are two reasons for stepping down, one is that from the beginning I felt that no individual or group should have full control. It has been extremely damaging in other Trusts when this has happened. Second, I recently found out that as an American citizen, the IRS (those terrible tax people in the USA) required me to report my income as a director and trustee to them. Of course, there is no income but this gave added complications and accountant costs in dealing with the IRS. And of course, I have to do a UK tax return as well. It was time to try and make life simpler!

I do miss the discussions and the social side of being on the CoM, although I could do with less cake. What is rather nice is when the phone rings, or an email comes, asking for my opinion which makes me still feel that I am able to contribute something to The Trust. Hence my reference above to 'we'. I try to attend some of the zoom meetings, and hopefully I might drop in on some of the live ones in the future. I would encourage any member to come to one of the meetings and to see what it is like. It is personally rewarding and you would be doing something to help conserve our parks and gardens for future generations.

Ed Bennis

The Gardens Trust News and other events



The Gardens Trust: Hare Hill Gardens at Alderley Edge (National Trust) featured as The Gardens Trust Unforgettable Gardens for February. The article, written by Barbara Moth of our R&R group, and Emma Hill, Head Gardener at Hare Hill, can be read on the Gardens Trust website, <https://thegardenstrust.org/hare-hill-cheshire>.

The final two Unforgettable Gardens featured as part of a lecture series with English Heritage, which ends this month, are Osborne House, Isle of Wight and Brodsworth Hall & Gardens, Yorkshire. Most other series of lectures are drawing to an end too, with the exception of the continuing Garden History series, which reaches The Nineteenth Century Garden, Part 2 starting 28th April.

Full details of these and other courses are available at <https://thegardenstrust.org>

The Open Gardens Scheme: this is now back after the last two years' abeyance. For local openings under Cheshire and Greater Manchester visit www.opengardens.co.uk. Most dates are in June and include the Wells for Africa Scheme in Wilmslow on 25th. Gardens are open in Wilmslow, Didsbury, Heaton, Willaston Village, Goostrey and Chorlton.

The National Gardens Scheme is also back to its full programme – pre-booking is still available for most sites but no longer compulsory. Of particular interest, and not usually open otherwise, are:

Tirley Garth, Willington, Tarporley – a Grade II* Arts&Crafts Garden designed by Thomas Mawson in early C20, open May 8th 1pm-5pm;

Manley Knoll, Manley Cheshire (if you can't make our CGT trip, see below) – another Arts&Crafts Garden, open May 22nd 12pm-5pm,

Sandymere, Cotebrook, with some more contemporary features May 15th 12pm-4pm;

Burton Manor Walled Garden is one of 4 open under Burton Village Gardens, Neston, open June 26th 11am-5pm, with joint ticket.

Finally, **Stretton Old Hall**, Tilston, Malpas, a contemporary garden featured on BBC Gardeners World, open June 18/19th and July 30/31st 10am-5pm.

Plant Hunters Fairs: these start in Cheshire with Capesthorpe Hall, April 10th and July 13th; Cholmondeley Castle 24th April, Adlington Hall, May 8th; and Norton Priory, Runcorn, May 22nd. Check website for fairs further afield, and for ticket information. www.planthuntersfairs.co.uk

Adlington Hall and Gardens is hosting an evening with James Alexander Sinclair, one of UK's leading garden designers on Thursday 21st July, 7.30 prompt (gates open 6.45). Cost £36 including sparkling wine and canapes served on arrival <https://www.adlingtonhall.com>

The Parkland and Gardens of Poulton Hall are open from 2pm to 5pm Easter Saturday and Sunday and May 28th and 29th, Adults £6 tickets from <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/whats-on/wirral/poulton-hall>

And finally, we have already circulated the

CGT Spring/Summer Events, but here is a summary:

Manley Knoll, Manley, Frodsham: Friday 27th May

Abbeywood Gardens, Chester Road, Delamere, Northwich: Monday 20th June

Gardens of Eaton Hall, Eccleston Gate, near Chester: Thursday 7th July

Cholmondeley Castle, Malpas: Thursday 22nd September

Liz Roberts

And finally

Crispin Spencer, Membership Secretary, has asked me to remind you that subscriptions for CGT are due now, thank you.

And did you know that 12th May is World Topiary Day. You can find examples of topiary in several of the gardens we've featured in the newsletter and many of those listed under events.

Copy date for July newsletter is 30th June

Contributions to the Newsletter are very welcome. If you want to comment on articles in this edition or would like to contribute one for the next, please contact the Newsletter Editor, 148 Chester Road, Hazel Grove, Stockport SK7 6HE or email newsletter@cheshire-gardens-trust.org.uk