



## Twenty Years of Cheshire Gardens Trust

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# Twenty Years of Cheshire Gardens Trust

## Early Days



*Lord Ashbrook cutting the cake*

2024 is the twentieth anniversary of Cheshire Gardens Trust and it is amazing to see what has happened in that time. Over 100 people attended its launch at Arley Hall and a very special cake was created for the event. Around ten committed people met every month for nearly a year beforehand to plan and set up the Trust. It has grown from a handful of people to one of the largest and most active trusts in England, thanks to its dedicated membership. Many of the people involved then are still active in the organisation, Lord Ashbrook is still our Patron, Ed Bennis was our Chairman from the start and has only just taken a step back. We were privileged to have had Ed as our lead,

with his experience and contacts in this country and abroad. Ruth Brown, Barbara Wright and John Edmonson were there from the start and very soon Barbara Moth took a keen interest in Research and Recording and Conservation, while Joy Uings took over the Newsletter, which grew from two to 12 pages in a very short time. At the same time membership grew to 120 almost from a standing start.

By 2007, Cheshire Gardens Trust was beginning to take on some major projects. In readiness for Cheshire's Year of the Garden (2008), they organised a Conference on Gardens and Tourism with the support of the Association of Gardens Trusts and Visit Chester & Cheshire. It was held at Crewe Hall on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2007 and was a great success.

The Conference looked at the role of historic landscapes and new design in attracting custom for business and pleasure. The conference was organised by Jacquetta Menzies, Tina Theis and Barbara Moth, nicknamed by AGT President Gilly Drummond 'The Three Graces'.



*The 'Three Graces' Tina Theis, Jacquetta Menzies and Barbara Moth*

Another huge undertaking took place in September 2014, when CGT hosted the Association of Gardens Trusts AGM and Annual

Conference, not a task to be undertaken lightly! The weekend saw CGT members develop the theme *Continuity and Change in Cheshire Gardens*. The conference, based at The Queen Hotel in Chester, had presentations by Cheshire's leading garden researchers and historians, followed by visits to Grosvenor Park, Port Sunlight, Thornton Manor, Burton Manor, Cholmondeley Castle and finishing at

Arley Hall. CGT volunteers were the backbone of the event and it would not have taken place, or have been so successful, had it not been for them.



*Ed Bennis at the AGM at Henbury Hall in 2018*

## Research and Recording

One of the Trust's major aims continues to be the research and recording of local sites which are important heritage assets. The Research and Recording Group, led by Barbara Moth, investigates and records these designed landscapes to understand their history, current condition and significance. We are contacted by garden owners, academics and consultants for information, and hopefully the information is used to inform proposals for the creative reuse of some of these historic places. Our completed reports are made available to Cheshire Archives and Local Studies (CALS) and Cheshire Historic Environment Record (CHER)— all 109 full reports and 53 shorter reports on Chester District. Our activities involve research on public and private landscapes; some we gain access to and others we don't.

Our research on Winnington Park, Verdin Park and Marbury Park formed the basis of an exhibition 'Salt and Parks and Gardens' at the Lion Salt Works in 2023. Right is a photo of Marbury Park beside Budworth Mere where the Research and Recording Team undertook a group visit with CHER officers to discuss local listing. But, at Winnington Hall, despite our objections, permission has been granted for construction of a solar array on this last remaining piece of park and setting to the Grade I hall designed by Sam Wyatt.



In January 2019 the group reported on their investigations of circular weirs. This type of spillway was invented by canal engineer James Brindley and used on his Staffordshire and Worcester Canal (1770-72). Instances of circular weirs in C18 designed landscapes appeared to be restricted to the 'Cup and Saucer' in the William Emes landscape at Erddig Hall.

Now the Research and Recording team has discovered two further historic examples in

Cheshire: the 'Swallow Hole' in a lake at Capesthorne Hall, possibly of late C18 date; and the circular weir in the lake at North Rode (above).

Edward Kemp (1817-1891) was a leading 19th century designer of parks and gardens and many of his commissions were in Cheshire. A morning of talks was held in Chester in March 2017, led by Elizabeth Davy, followed by an afternoon guided walk to view some sites in Chester designed by Kemp. The Research and Recording produced a booklet 'Kemp's Parks and Gardens in Cheshire' to mark the bicentenary of his birth.



*Barbara Moth leading us round a tour of Kemp sites*

## ***The Caldwell project***

A major undertaking under the Research banner was the Caldwells Nursery project, documenting 200 years of Caldwells between 1789 and 1999. It started in the early days of Cheshire Gardens Trust. John Edmondson mentioned Caldwell's business ledgers held at CALS and suggested that the Trust should do something about them. Eventually CGT was successful with a Heritage Lottery Fund bid.



*The Caldwell family in around 1916*



*Caldwell Nursery staff with Caldwell siblings at the front, taken around 1959*

After training from Pat Alexander an army of volunteers undertook the translation of ledgers and the information has provided a wealth of material. Alongside this we realised that if we were to capture memories we needed to get going and we interviewed staff, family and customers. The information from both projects has formed the bulk of the information on the website. The recordings provide some fascinating insights into the technical side of rose

growing, travel to flower shows, and the early days of container growing and garden centres. The Caldwell family was involved at an early stage especially Bill's widow Mavis. Her son David Caldwell, who now lives in Australia, provided memories, photos and background information.

Early on in the project, one of the highlights was the garden at RHS Tatton Flower show, highlighting the Caldwell project, designed by Jacquetta Menzies, with a statue of King Canute (the symbol of Knutsford and the Caldwells Nursery) designed by Christine Wilcox Baker. Many other CGT members were involved in sowing and planting. The show garden won a RHS Silver Medal. At the show we were graced with the presence of Monty Don (see front cover), Chris Beardshaw and staff and family from Caldwells itself. It was a memorable day.

And finally Joy Uings did us proud and produced a book, launched in February 2016, with support from Barbara Moth and Moira Stevenson, describing the project.

For more information see [Caldwell Archives website](#).

## ***Conservation and Planning***

Since 2014 the Conservation and Planning group has commented on over 330 Planning Applications plus Local and Neighbourhood Development Plans. The Group is contacted directly for pre-applications discussions, notably by the National Trust and the Forestry Commission. Also, we know that CGT's website is used by Cheshire East Conservation Officers. Information from research is used to inform our responses to planning consultations, some we win, some we lose. We were one of many objectors to the proposal to locate Bewilderwood within Tatton Park, a Grade II registered park and garden. This has now been developed within an area of non designated land within the Cholmondeley estate. However our detailed research and comments on Alderley Park were not sufficient to save the walled gardens and landscape beside the serpentine lake from being developed for housing. A long running fight to save Nantwich Walled Garden has also been lost. We are currently into our 6<sup>th</sup> year of consultations with the National Trust at Lyme Park regarding improved visitor facilities and flood alleviation measures.

## Events



*Eaton Hall, view from the rose garden to the clock tower*

Another vital strand of CGT has been the Events Group, variously led by Hilary Newall, Tina Theis, Jacquetta Menzies and Margaret Blowey. We've had some lovely visits to gardens in Cheshire and further afield, as well as parks and nurseries. A highlight was our long awaited visit to Eaton Hall, where we heard from enthusiastic gardeners as they led us round the historic estate.

In 2019 we visited Birkenhead Park on the Wirral on a lovely spring day at the end of April where we were led round by Simon Sim, Wirral MBC Park Ranger. The Park was designed by Joseph Paxton in the 1840s and the work supervised by Edward Kemp. The public funded park was officially opened on the 5<sup>th</sup> April, 1847 and became the forerunner of the parks movement both here in Britain and the World.

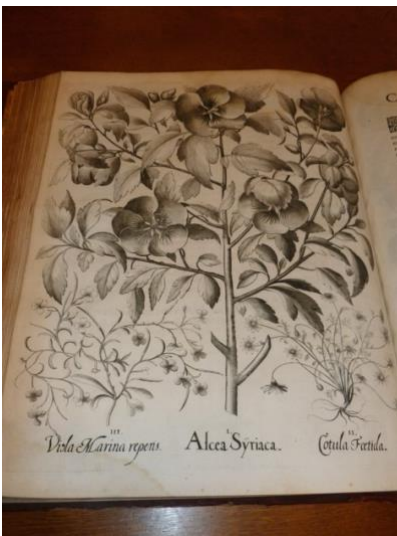
In 2017 we made a memorable visit to Wales where we were privileged to explore Dibleys Nursery, multi gold medal winners at Chelsea and other Flower Shows, specialising in *Streptocarpus*, *Begonia* and other houseplants.

We had a marvellous visit to Chethams library (below) where we were allowed to explore beautiful historic botanical illustrations.

The Research and Recording team had a day out in London where they were given privileged access to Repton archives at the RHS Lindley Library (below) and then visited the newly refurbished Garden Museum next to Lambeth Palace.



*Rex Dibley in the greenhouse*



*Precious books at Chethams Library  
Illustration from one of the many precious  
books at Chetham's Library*



*Research and recording team at Lindley Library*



*Professor John Handley on the visit to Lindow Moss*

We've also had some more unusual talks and visits. In October 2016 Professor John Handley, a retired academic, gave us a fascinating talk on the Cheshire landscape from an ecologist's point of view. He followed this with a tour of the peat bogs of Lindow Moss in July 2017. In February, Ken Moth took us on a tour of the urban landscapes of Manchester, taking a sometimes critical look at Piccadilly Gardens, Cathedral Gardens, UMIST and Chinatown, among others. It proved so popular that we had to run the tour twice. In October 2017 we were privileged to have two expert speakers from APHA (Animal and Plant Health Agency), Dr Paul Beales and Caroline Cawood to talk to us about plant biosecurity. We were introduced to some very gruesome wee beasts. For something so technical it was fascinating.

Jane Roberts delivered a number of courses for members on arts and crafts gardens, tree identification and much more. She gave us a wealth of information, beautifully illustrated.

In 2016, Ruth Brown and colleagues embarked on an ambitious series of events and courses aimed at a wider audience. On a beautiful day in May 2016, owners, head gardeners, designers and enthusiasts gathered at Arley Hall and were treated to a tour de force from Viscount Ashbrook and Ruth Brown on rhododendrons. Lord Ashbrook enticed us with the incredible range and variety of rhododendrons.



*Lord Ashbrook and Ruth Brown talking to a very appreciative audience about rhododendrons*



*Emma Rhodes at the Lost Gardens of Heligan*

In 2019 Emma Rhodes, a student at Ness Botanic Gardens reported on visits she had made as part of the Ness/Cheshire Gardens Trust travel bursary. She visited Heligan and the Eden project, developing materials for her teaching in primary schools. She reported in the Newsletter and at our AGM, delighting her audience.

But perhaps most ambitious of all were the overseas trips. We were so lucky to have Ed Bennis's experience and overseas contacts to enable these visits to go ahead. Ed was ably assisted by Heather Turner. We visited Belgium in 2008, Germany in 2011, Lisbon in 2013 and Sweden in 2016. There are very full reports over several editions of the Newsletter available on the gallery and Newsletter archive on the website.



## CGT Reaching Out



*Christine Wilcox Baker putting finishing touches to one of the display stands*

In order to publicise CGT and draw more members in we've undertaken a number of activities. In 2017 a team of CGT members generously gave their time during a glorious summer week to take the CGT message to a couple of Cheshire events, The Royal Cheshire County Show and Arley Garden Festival, winning two awards at the Royal Cheshire County Show.

More recently, on a misty morning in September 2023, a band of CGT volunteers arrived in

Queens Park, Crewe, to set up a stand to promote CGT and encourage people to participate in park activities, as part of a Heritage Open Day. They worked with partners, The Gardens Trust and Cheshire Archives and Local Studies. (CALs). They engaged 100 – 120 visitors in conversation, 60 people aged 2 – 95 years old made Tudor posies, memories were collected, historic plans examined, cards made and leaflets taken. And they met some lovely people.



*Gordon Darlington and Rupert Wilcox Baker constructing display materials*



*CGT and CALS members create flower posies in Queen's Park*

A Website and Newsletter are vital in communicating to a wider audience. Work started on creating the Website early in 2015; we went live in April 2016 and the site was also refreshed in 2019. Another review is in the pipeline. With the change in website style in 2019 the look of the Newsletter was also changed and, following a consultation with members, it was changed yet again to provide a simpler one column design.

## And Finally

Early in 2020 things changed dramatically with the start of Covid. We weren't able to have face to face meetings or events but we needed to keep in touch with members. So firstly, we doubled the number of Newsletters over that first year and members were fantastic in providing articles of interest, including tales from their own gardens. Remarkably the series on head gardeners continued with interviews conducted by email.

And then we decided to set up zoom talks. Thankfully Margaret Blowey took this on and was



*One of the fabulous illustrations from An Architect's Dozen. The first zoom talk by David Cash*

fantastic in sorting out the speakers, many of whom were unfamiliar with the format.

We roamed far and wide, including a fabulous talk on the gardens of the south of France, we had 15 talks in all, which kept peoples' interest.

Once we were able to get back to business we had some fascinating visits and talks, such as the visit to Growing @Field 28, a family run urban farm in Daresbury, specialising in pesticide and biocide free speciality leaf and heritage produce. We were fascinated by the range of produce grown and on display in their shop.



*The Sky Garden on Castlefield Viaduct*

We were privileged to visit two new parks in Manchester. In the morning it was Mayfield Park, the first park in Manchester City Centre for a hundred years. Unusually the park came before the surrounding housing and office developments. In the afternoon we visited a National Trust experimental garden on the disused viaduct in Castlefield, overlooking the surrounding industrial landscape. Both were quite extraordinary.

In August 2023 we were privileged to hear from Professor Luca Csepely-Knorr from Liverpool University, who had curated an exhibition on Brenda Colvin, a landscape architect in the twentieth century, at Styal Mill. The breadth of Brenda's work was astonishing, moving from domestic gardens in the 1930s to big structural designs after WWII, new towns, universities, power stations. In addition to Brenda Colvin, it featured other women designers who were early members of the Landscape Institute founded in 1929. Later Luca took us on a tour round Styal village where Brenda Colvin had designed some of the community areas.



*Luca Csepely-Knorr showing us Brenda Colvin's designs in Styal village*

And finally we were privileged to hear from Marcus Chilton Jones, Curator at RHS Bridgewater. He kept us enthralled for over an hour talking about the achievements and future developments in the garden (see the next article). We were so pleased to have him back 6 years after his original talk to us.

This has been a whistle stop tour through the last twenty years of Cheshire Gardens Trust; much has been left out. If you would like to delve a little deeper, there is plenty more information and photos on the [CGT website](#). Look at the Newsletter archive and the gallery, which contains information on events, at home and overseas, landmark events and research. There are also separate sections on research and conservation.

With your help we look forward to CGT's next twenty years.

**Sue Eldridge**



## RHS Bridgewater Garden: Marcus Chilton-Jones, Curator



*Aerial shot looking south from Bothy Chimney down through the Paradise Garden and Kitchen Garden*

A large number of members and guests filled the hall for the first CGT “in person” event of March 2024 at Marthall Village Hall. Marcus last gave a talk to CGT about the RHS Bridgewater garden six years ago, when the garden was still in the planning stage.

In his talk he reflected on what has been achieved and what plans there are for future developments. He explained that the holy trinity of plants, people and place are needed to create a good garden.

Three parts of the initial plans have been ‘completed’: the walled garden, the lake creation and restoration and the visitor facilities. Not that a garden can ever be considered to be complete.

So many difficulties have been thrown at Bridgewater over the last few years: high levels of arsenic found in the soil in the walled garden, ‘the beast from the East’, asbestos in the Victorian tunnels used for storing fruit, the Pandemic, deer, disease, gales, floods... Despite all of this there have been many successes. Visitor numbers are much higher than predicted, and have remained so in the three years since opening, averaging half a million per year. The first tree was

planted on 11th September 2019; by the time the garden opened on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2021 268,000 plants had been planted.

One of the Key Performance Indicators that the RHS uses is to improve the health of plants, people and the environment through sustainable gardening.

When Victoria meadow was first surveyed Marcus described it as “a bit of a desert” as a result of intensive farming practices. Now five years later the number of plants growing there has increased from 4 to 25. The community grow plot is already used by 8 different

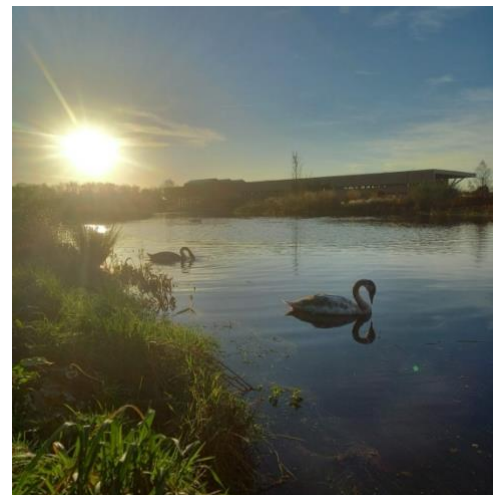
community groups who meet and socialize together through gardening. In addition to the 29 full time members of staff there are 11

learners on site, including apprentices, and 150 volunteers. Many of these are hands on with the gardeners, but also take on roles of governance etc. Important trials of annual and herbaceous plants and shrubs are undertaken, and there are a number of National Collections of plants.

Future developments include a new arboretum for Greater Manchester by 2027, divided between 12.5 acres of woodland, and 7.5 acres to be used for land management and woodland crafts. The Chinese streamside garden will have a fusion forest with a mixture



*Subterranean Victorian Fruit and Vegetable store in the Old Frameyard Walled Garden north-inaccessible to the public*



*Moon Bridge Water, the new lake adjacent to the Visitor Centre*

of British native species and exotic plants from China, with a Bambusarium planned for 2024. The Scholar's Garden will be launched in 2025.



Wildlife is thriving and the garden is now a hedgehog release site. There were 42 bird species recorded in site in 2016, there are now 54, with a huge increase in numbers. You may have met one of the pheasants in the walled garden, like we did, and have seen the oystercatchers, which like the gravel car park. Pied wagtails choose to nest in the garden centre, and kestrels make use of the nest boxes in the working yard.

This was an informative and entertaining talk by Marcus (above), but in this short report I have only been able to give a flavour of it. We are fortunate to be able to witness the maturing of this new garden, and look forward to many more visits in the future.

Isabel Wright

Photos Marcus Chilton Jones

## The History of Smallholdings and Market Gardens by Liz Wright



An edition of the Smallholder Magazine from 1962

by Heathrow Airport. Market Gardens are considered to be small areas of 1 to 2 acres, usually family run and with little outside labour. They may have specialised in particular crops or planned various cash crops throughout the year and sometimes had short term livestock, e.g. hens and pigs. During WW2 some started to keep goats for milk, which wasn't rationed, unlike cows' milk.

On 12th February members of CGT 'met' via Zoom for a talk by Liz Wright on the History of Smallholdings and Market Gardens who joined us online from The Fens. Liz has written a number of books on this subject and was editor of The Smallholder magazine for over 20 years. She is now editor of The Country Smallholder magazine.

Liz started by asking "Market Gardens and Smallholdings - is there a difference and why has one continued but the other has faded away?"

Market Gardens started in the 1800s on the 'edges' of cities to feed the growing urban populations. For example, in London there were market gardens in Earls Court and a large area of west London was used by market gardens. One large area which used to be market gardens is now covered



Liz Wright, displaying her produce at a local market stall



A Market Garden is not a mini farm, doesn't use large machinery or plant cereals over large areas.

The meaning of Smallholding has changed over the years but they are larger than Market Gardens, with 20 to 30 acres, and can have more varied livestock including sheep and cows. They also are often run by families, sometimes with additional outside help, and in the 1970s were part of the self sufficiency movement. They use various market places to distribute their produce. Traditional markets are reliable but sometimes not very profitable. Sometimes niche markets are an option if producing specialised produce or heritage varieties and, of course, more can be sold online these days. Liz mentioned a recent estimate by the NFU about the

dependence of the UK on food imports, which stated that, without imports, we would run out of food by mid-July instead of October which was the previous estimate.

Liz reviewed the changes in the 60s, 70s, 80s and 90s. In the 60s industrial farming started to increase, plastic took over and chickens became either egg layers or meat producers. The 70s saw a Fight Back with John Seymour, the founder of the Self Sufficiency movement. The 80s was the age of diversification with experiments, not always successful, in keeping ostriches, snails, Angora goats, alpaca (see above), deer and goats for meat and the growth of courses in running a smallholding. The 90s saw people moving away from cities with soaring house prices and self sufficiency becoming more "part self-sufficiency".

Finally, Liz asked the question "Where do we go now?" Could market gardens make a comeback with worries about supply chains, a demand for fully traceable food, more people moving towards less meat consumption and an increase in City and Community Farms?

Liz's talk was followed by a lively Q and A session.

**Patricia Hazlehurst**

**Photos Liz Wright**

## ***Holboellia brachyandra***



*Holboellia brachyandra* on the back wall of the Orangery at Dunham

There is a new climber in the Orangery at Dunham Massey, *Holboellia brachyandra* (the short-anthered sausage vine). It replaces the Passionflower which covered the walls before the recent restoration work.

*Holboellia* is named after Frederick Ludwig Holboell (1765-1829) who was the Director of the Copenhagen Botanic Gardens. According to Kew there are 25 species in this genus plus 6 sub-species and 6 varieties of *Holboellia*. It belongs in the family Lardizabalaceae together with 6 other genera including *Stauntonia* (synonym of *Holboellia*), *Akebia*, *Decaisnea* and *Sargentodoxa*. They are vigorous climbers native to China, the Himalayas and Asia.

*Holboellia brachyandra* was collected from Mount Fansipan, the highest mountain in Vietnam, by Bledlyn and Sue Wynn-Jones of Crûg Farm Plants on an expedition they did in the autumn of 2003 with Dan Hinckley. The flowers are considered to be quite large for *Holboellia* and are fragrant. The sausage-like fruits are edible and are said to smell of watermelon.

**Patricia Hazlehurst and Freyda Taylor**

## Trees in the Winter Garden at Dunham Massey



*Himalayan Birch and Chinese Red Birch*

As we come into April trees are flowering or coming into leaf and there is lots of interest in the Winter Garden. Here are some of the trees to look out for.

As you enter the Garden notice the pyramid shaped tree ahead of you. It may not be in leaf yet but it is an unusual variety of beech, *Fagus sylvatica* 'Asplenifolia', the Cut Leaf or Fern Leaf beech, which has wonderful autumn colour. Walk up the Entrance Border path and notice a chestnut on the right at the back of the border. It is *Aesculus indica*, the Indian or Himalayan Horse Chestnut. Next on the right are two very different birches, the white trunk of the Himalayan Birch, *Betula utilis* subsp.

*jacquemontii* and the red trunk of the Chinese Red Birch, *Betula utilis* subsp. *albosinensis*.

Take the right-hand path past the Bluebell Mound up to the Scented Walk. As you pass the next junction there are two examples of the Cornelian Cherry, *Cornus mas*, on either side of the path which have yellow flowers in the early spring and cherry red fruits in the autumn. The fruits are edible but are rather 'tart'. Next on the left is a group of three single stemmed *Prunus serrula* (below), with lovely shiny bark. The one nearer the path is much brighter than the two further back, presumably visitors are unable to resist stroking it as they pass.

At the circular bench turn left and a little way along notice the tree on the left side of the path. It is *Magnolia laevifolia* 'Gail's Favourite', an evergreen magnolia; at the moment it has small flower buds encased in a velvety brown jacket. It will flower later in the summer with small, white, open and fragrant flowers. Return to the circular bench, noticing on your left one of the many specimens of the Candyfloss Tree in the garden, *Cercidiphyllum japonicum*, with lovely heart-shaped leaves, which will have a sweet smell of burnt sugar in the autumn as they turn colour (see illustration on page 13). Next to it is one of the yellow flowered magnolia, *M. 'Elizabeth'* named after Dr Elizabeth Sholtz, the Director of Brooklyn Botanic Gardens, where the tree was developed in the 1960s. In the centre of the circular bench is another *Cercidiphyllum* 'Red Fox', which is a relatively new planting and has red leaves. Behind the hedge of *Sarcococca confusa*, there are three of the Coral Bark Willow, *Salix alba* var. *vitellina* 'Britzensis', with upstanding golden branches. These will be pollarded. On the left at the back of the border is the Snakebark Maple, *Acer tegmentosum*, with its silvery striped bark. Roy Lancaster, who was one of the people who advised on the planting of the Winter Garden, called this Dunham's signature tree.



*Prunus serrula*

Continue up the path and on your right there is a dwarf acer, *Acer palmatum* 'Dissectum Garnet' This has lovely purple leaves and fantastic autumn colour. At Dunham this is known as Cyril's tree as it was planted in memory of a long serving garden steward. Next is one of many crab apples, *Malus* 'Rudolph', which has bright pink flowers in the spring and red fruits in the autumn. A little further along on the opposite side is *Malus transitoria* 'Thornhayes Tansy', a cut leaf crab apple, which has finely cut leaves and tiny yellow fruits in the autumn. Turn right at the next junction and



*The Candyfloss tree*

notice a small magnolia on your left near the next junction. It is *Magnolia biondii* and was planted in 2020 as part of the Women's Institute Federation celebration of their 100 year anniversary. It only flowers every few years but I noticed this year just a couple of flowers are coming out. They are white and fragrant. It was donated by the Dunham Massey Women's Institute which was supported by Penelope, Lady Stamford.

Return to the main path and notice the *Acer griseum* (below), the Paperbark Maple, introduced by Ernest Wilson. Continue to the top of the Scented Walk, go under the two Great White Cherry trees, *Prunus serrulata* 'Tai Haku' and turn

right to walk past the numerous camellias and the Denny Pratt late flowering azaleas. If they are still in flower, notice *Magnolia* 'Vulcan' on the right and *M.* 'Star Wars' on the left. Continue on to the Birch Triangle, with the group of Himalayan Birch, which are washed in the autumn. At the bottom edge of the triangle notice the tall tree behind the *Camellia* 'Faustina'. It is *Maytenus boaria*, a gift from Roy Lancaster. There are thought to be over 200 different species of *Maytenus*, native to South and Central America, Asia, Australasia and Africa. *M. boaria* is native to Chile and Argentina and is evergreen. The name comes from the Mapuche name 'maiten' and 'boaria' means 'bovine' because cattle eat the foliage. The species has male and female flowers but can be highly invasive and it is now illegal to propagate, distribute or sell in New Zealand where it has become a serious pest.



*Acer griseum*

Continue past the Yellow Meadow towards the entrance and notice two tall trees close together at the back of the grassy area. These are *Acer pseudoplatanus* 'Corstorphinense' or the Golden Sycamore. It is a variety first noticed in the village of Corstorphine, a suburb of Edinburgh. Together the two trees form a wonderful canopy and are usually the first trees to come into leaf in the spring, with a light bright green leaf which stands out against the bare branches of other trees and looks wonderful with the spring sunshine.

**Text and photos Patricia Hazlehurst**

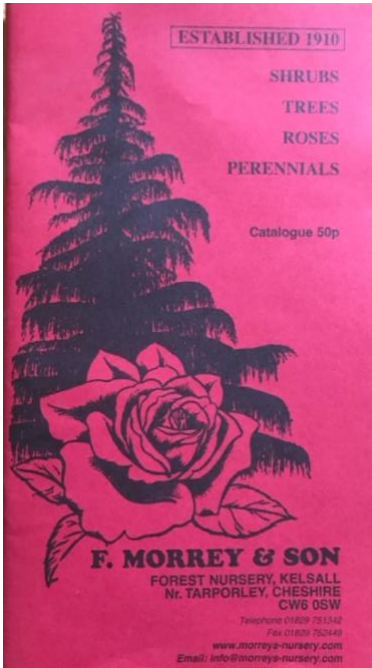
## A Caldwell's Snippet

*The Caldwell Archives website has been transferred to a new format. There is little change to the way the website looks when viewed via a computer, but the important difference is the way in which it looks when viewed via a smartphone. Do have a look, as it is really neat.*

*There are, of course, a few wrinkles, which hopefully will be sorted out in the near future. One big change is the customer reports which has been redesigned to give the total expenditure per customer. As our current metric system does not easily translate the £sd used in the ledgers, these totals are not completely accurate, but are only out by a few pence.*

**Joy Uings**

## Morrey's Nursery closes after 114 years



We are so sorry to have to report that Morrey's Forest Nursery in Kelsall closed its gates at the end of March this year. It was first established in 1910 when Frederick Morrey bought the land to grow flowers for the Manchester market. They were taken by horse and cart to Delamere Station and then by train to the city.

Morrey's was a traditional working nursery propagating most of the stock for sale. With a result, prices were never "over the top". Staff were skilled and knowledgeable and always eager to offer sound advice.

Owner Alison Franks, great granddaughter of the founder Frederick Morrey, thanked all staff and customers for their support over the years. Locally people say that it is to be hoped that the nursery of about 100 acres stays in the horticulture trade.

Morrey's supplied so many well-known gardens, Bodnant, Arley, Ashton Grange. When I look at my own wee garden I see so many plants from Morrey's, the fruit trees and bushes and my favourite, the *Catalpa bignonioides* 'Aurea'.

Cheshire Gardens Trust visited Morrey's Nursery in 2011 not long after Alison had taken over following the sudden death of her father David Morrey. We had access to all areas of this typical working nursery and could watch staff grafting plants and taking cuttings. We reported the visit in the Newsletter of January 2012, page 4, see [CGT Newsletter January 2012](#).

Freyda Taylor

## Forthcoming Events

### Cheshire Gardens Trust Events



Happy Houseplants at the RHS Urban Show

**18<sup>th</sup> - 21st April, RHS Urban Show at Mayfield Park, Manchester.** Events Team members will be there on Thursday 18th April in the morning. Advance tickets are available from the RHS website.

**Wednesday 22nd May 1.30pm** - Cheshire Gardens Trust 20th Anniversary Garden Visit and AGM at Arley Hall

**Tuesday 28th May 2pm** - a visit to Bankhead, Barnhill, near Chester

**Thursday 13th June 2pm** - a visit to the heuchera nursery, Plantagogo, near Crewe

**Wednesday 17th July 2pm** - a return visit to Laskey Farm, Thelwall

**Thursday 8th August 2pm** - a visit to Norley Bank Farm near Frodsham,

**Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> August:** A garden party for CGT Members and friends at Ashton Grange, Grange Road, Ashton Hayes, Chester, the home of our Treasurer Martin Slack and his wife Kate.

**Thursday 12th September: 11 am** - visit to the Palmhouse, Sefton Park

## The Gardens Trust

Two new online series of talks:

**A History of Gardens** starts with a 5-part series on Early Gardens, examining styles from the ancient world through to the Elizabethan era. Join for the whole course or individual talks Tuesdays at 10am from 16 April.

**People's Parks** is a 6-part series with Paul Rabbitts, author of the acclaimed book of the same name, which explores the history and design of some of our outstanding public spaces. Wednesdays at 6pm from 17 Apr

And two new "in person" events:

**Unseen Gems of the Lindley Library** which explores the archives of the RHS, looking respectively at materials from the Victorian period, 18th century and 16th / 17th centuries. Only a dozen places available for each session: 29 April, 24 June and 16 September.

**Study Trip to Suffolk** 10 to 12 September. Two and a half days of garden visits, good food and great garden-loving company. Book early to ensure your place!

For further information see [The Gardens Trust Events](#) page



## National Garden Scheme



There is a wealth of NGS gardens open during Spring and early summer.

Some more familiar ones, not usually open at other times, are:

**Tirley Garth**, Tarporley and **Tattenhall Hall**  
12<sup>th</sup> May;

**Manley Knoll** 19<sup>th</sup> May;

**Sandymere**, Cotebrook, 9<sup>th</sup> June;

**Somerford**, nr. Knutsford, 28<sup>th</sup> April and 7<sup>th</sup> July;

**The Old Parsonage** (left), Arley Green. 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> June.

Some less familiar or new to the scheme are:

**Norley Court** (a large spring garden with backdrop of Cheshire views) 12<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> May;

**Carr Wood**, Hale Barns (laid out in 1959 by Clibrans of Altrincham) 18<sup>th</sup> May

**Peover Hall**, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> May;

**Swineyard Hall**, with moat dating back to 13C, 19<sup>th</sup> May, 16<sup>th</sup> June;

**The Wonky Garden**, Widnes 9<sup>th</sup> June and 14<sup>th</sup> July;



*Willaston Grange*

**Willaston Grange (left)**, restored Arts and Crafts house and garden, nr. Neston 15<sup>th</sup> June

**Burton Village Gardens**, Burton, Widnes (Briarfield, Burton Manor Walled garden, Trustwood, The Coach House) 30<sup>th</sup> June.

See [Burton Village Gardens](#)

**The Old Byre**, Nantwich (a smallholding, which might be of interest following our recent talk) 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> July.

Further information from the [NGS website](#) or in the leaflets that can often be found at garden centres.

## Planthunters Fairs

Planthunters fairs in Cheshire or nearby are:

**Cholmondeley Castle Gardens**, 28<sup>th</sup> April and 31<sup>st</sup> July;

**Capesthorpe Hall** 12<sup>th</sup> May and 11<sup>th</sup> August;

**Norton Priory** 19<sup>th</sup> May;

**Dorothy Clive Garden** 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> August;

**Ness Botanic Gardens**, 1<sup>st</sup> September.

For further information see [Plant hunters Fairs](#) website.



*Capesthorpe Hall*

## Wells for Africa



The good people of Wilmslow and nearby are once again opening their gardens to support Wells for Africa on 24<sup>th</sup> June. For further information see [Wells for Africa Open Gardens Day](#)

**Copy date for July Newsletter is 30<sup>th</sup> June 2024**

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](mailto:newsletter@cheshire-gardens-trust.org.uk)