



The Knot Garden at Little Moreton Hall

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Future events (see pages 13/14)

- CGT Event: 3rd March, Emily Chandler, Head Gardener at Dunham Massey, at Marthall Hall
- 3rd April, Historic Landscapes Assembly
- GT Talks starting in January

The Knot Garden at Little Moreton Hall



Emma Hill at Marthall Hall

Emma Hill (left) is the Head Gardener of Little Moreton Hall, Hare Hill and now also of the Castlefield Viaduct. In addition she has a new role as National Trust Garden & Parks Consultant for Lincolnshire, Cambridgeshire and Staffordshire.

Emma began by outlining the history of the Hall and the wider estate. The Hall was built by the Moreton family in three phases from the thirteenth to the seventeenth centuries, and remained in family ownership until it passed to the National Trust in 1938. From around 1674 the Hall was tenanted. The

garden covers 7 acres. The moat pre-dates the building. There are two mounts. The inner mount has a square profile and is thought to provide a vantage point to view the garden. The second mount is circular and on the south side of the estate. It has recently been dated to the fifteenth or sixteenth century. In an early photograph this mount can be seen with a sycamore tree on top (see below right).

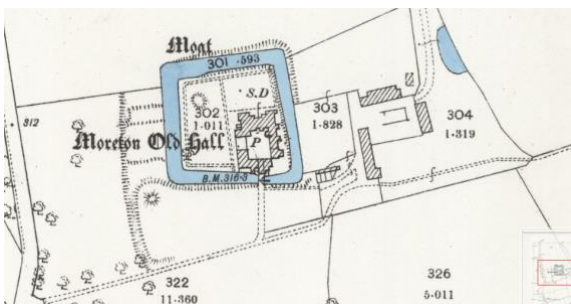
The inner garden is enclosed by a tall mixed hedge, planted in the 1970s. A yew tunnel was added in 1979 with a view through to the knot garden, which occupies a third of the footprint of the moated area at the NE corner. The remainder of the moated area was formerly orchard but most trees have been lost due to honey fungus. This area is currently used for events and cafe seating. Borders at each end of the knot garden have culinary herbs and standard gooseberries. There are herbaceous beds along the house walls.



Approach to Little Moreton Hall from the east, with tree and mount on the left hand side, from the Little Moreton Hall archives

The visitor's car park is to the west of the moat. The farm, which has a sixteenth century barn and is now privately owned, is to the east of the moat. In the fifteenth century the Moretons owned a bloom smithy, where iron was forged under water powered hammers and a corn mill. In the seventeenth century they also had a coal pit. At that time the approach to the house was from the east. Currently there is a mown grass labyrinth in the south side which can be viewed from the long gallery.

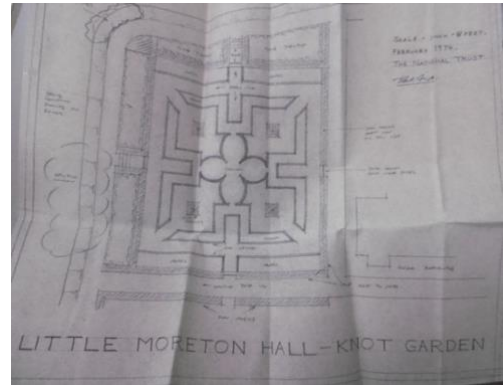
Emma has researched the records of the site which were found in a cleaning cupboard. From 1946 to 1958 the National Trust's efforts were concentrated on the Hall (structural stabilisation, dealing with dry rot, death-watch beetle and silver fish). A couple named Dale were employed as caretakers. They were responsible for cleaning, catering and welcoming visitors, as well as for the garden.



Ordnance Survey map from 1896, National Library of Scotland

The National Trust only formed a garden panel in 1945 on the acquisition of Hidcote Manor and Bodnant. Graham Stuart Thomas became the Garden Advisor in 1955. He was a nurseryman who had worked with James Russell (who did much planting at Hare Hill) at Sunningdale Nursery in Surrey. Thomas first visited Little Moreton Hall in 1962. A detailed letter in the archive shows he was acting as head gardener, detailing how often to cut the grass, recommending the use of a Flymo and bringing plants

from Sunningdale and other National Trust properties. He planted the mixed hedge around the orchard (hornbeam, holly, quickthorn, honeysuckle and sweetbriar). He then began to research into an interpretation of a knot garden. He suggested clipped thorn bushes or a box parterre filled with mixed foliage plants. He was trying to achieve “a little country garden, not too formal”. The plan dated 15/1/1971 shows L-shaped beds in thorn, a north-south walk to reach the path around the moat and topiary to the left of the path (to become the yew tunnel in 1979). By now Graham Stuart Thomas was so busy that he no longer visited and John Sales was appointed Head Gardener (1973-1998). His design (above) was a formal open knot garden taken from ‘The English Gardener’ by Leonard Meager of 1670. The plan is held in the Little Moreton Hall archives. Box is used rather than thorn. The gardener who cared for this spent six weeks pruning it and raked the gravel daily. He would not allow visitors near to it at all.



Present Day



The photo on the front page shows the Knot Garden prior to extensive renovation in 2021. Since maintenance was impossible during the Covid pandemic, the hedges became too wide and out of shape, and suffered the ravages of box blight. It was necessary to remove all the top growth and renew the soil, enriching it with Vitax and mycorrhizal fungi. This has provided a temporary reprieve while the future of the Knot Garden is decided (see left).

Factors to consider for future development

Is a knot garden relevant to the Moreton family? It is unlikely that they would have created a knot garden in the seventeenth century. As Royalists they had heavy fines to pay and many commitments, including soldiers billeted at the Hall.

The use of box is no longer supported by the National Trust. The position of the knot garden (really a parterre) is not visible from the house. If installed at the time it would have been better viewed from the long gallery. The knot garden has not always been here and possibly the Graham Stuart Thomas design is more in keeping with the age of the house.

A survey has been undertaken to determine visitors' responses to the knot garden. Emma outlined the options for the knot garden.

- Retain the 17th century/20th century design as at present but replace the box with *Euonymus japonicus* 'Microphyllus'.
- Take out the box, add germander (*Teucrium chamaedrys*) and lavender and fill the borders with foliage plants using Graham Stuart Thomas' original plan.
- Take out the box and use metal edging to define the Leonard Meager design, though this would have no historical relevance to the site.
- Perhaps a 21st century solution using climate-resistant planting or a Mediterranean garden on the south of the site, to be viewed from the long gallery.

Emma also noted that it is hoped to obtain land to the east of the moat which is currently rented. This would allow the creation of an orchard and the eastern approach to be reinstated.

There was an interesting discussion of the options. It was a fascinating insight into the site and the decision-making process on the future of the Knot Garden.

Monica Walker

Photos of the Knot Garden by Emma Hill, photo of Emma Hill by Gordon Darlington

Lindsay Berry, Quarry Bank Mill

Twentieth in our Series of Head Gardeners



Lindsay Berry at Haddon Hall, photo courtesy of Lindsay

Meeting Lindsay Berry, Head Gardener at Quarry Bank Mill since June 2023, was a delight. She's had such an interesting career and certainly opened my eyes to the extent and challenge of the garden.

Lindsay grew up in Bury St Edmunds in Suffolk but moved north to study Biology and Archaeology at Sheffield University. After graduating she stayed in Sheffield and worked with charities, often in some very challenging roles. Towards the end of this early part of her career she worked for Whirlow Hall Farm Trust, which provides opportunities for children and young people, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds or from inner city areas. As well as working with young people she helped restore the

market garden and put in a sensory area, which opened her eyes to the potential for a career in horticulture. If she was to make such a career change, she felt she needed a good grounding in horticulture before going any further. She found a role at Ryton Organic Gardens near Coventry, the home of the Henry Doubleday Research Association. With its wide range of demonstration gardens, projects and research this provided tremendous grounding for her new career.

After a year at Ryton, Lindsay wanted to move back north and she was recruited as Head Gardener at Ordsall Hall, a formerly moated Tudor hall in Ordsall, Salford. The gardens there are designed to showcase garden styles popular throughout history, such as a Tudor knot garden, an orchard and a 20th Century allotment (originally a WW1 allotment when Lindsay and team created it). She was able to indulge her love of teaching for RHS qualifications and costumed interpretation. She loved it and stayed there for seven years. Staffing was dependent on funding, but they were able to run a traineeship as well as part time gardeners, the equivalent of one full time gardener, as well as 15 volunteers.

Throughout her career Lindsay has continued to study. She took a postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE), which she has used to good effect at Ordsall and elsewhere. Prior to the PGCE, she gained RHS levels 2 and 3 qualifications then went on to undertake the RHS Master of Horticulture, a 3 year distance programme for experienced horticulturalists. Her research subject was costumed interpretation in historic gardens.

Following her time at Ordsall Hall, an opportunity came to move to Haddon Hall in Derbyshire and she moved to Buxton. It was her dream job, a medieval hall and deer park, with 900 years of history, while remaining in the same family all that time. The garden is attributed to Elizabethan architect Robert Smythson and was recently redesigned by garden designer Arne Maynard. But, as is often the way with gardens in private ownership, the family decided on a change of direction and all garden staff were made redundant. Lindsay then had a brief time at Thornbridge, before going in a completely different direction.

Lindsay had an opportunity to be part of the development of the new garden at RHS Bridgewater in Salford. She was Garden Manager, starting there before it opened in 2021 and she was responsible for the walled garden. She already knew and liked the work of Tom Stuart Smith from meeting him at Haddon Hall. But it was a lot of travelling (six hours a day) and she really wanted to be nearer



Lindsay in the central section of the curvilinear greenhouse



The Apprentice House

home. After some temporary work, she was able to return to her love of historic gardens and she was recruited as Head Gardener at Quarry Bank Mill. The garden had been under managed and struggled through the Covid period. It will take a lot of work requiring all the skills she acquired over the years.

In the first year Lindsay's priorities were recruitment, developing the team, assessing the site and developing a management plan. Until I talked to Lindsay and walked round the garden with her, I hadn't realised how extensive the garden was. Her responsibilities also include the

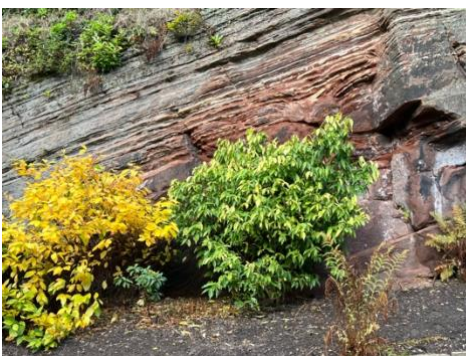
garden at the Apprentice House and in Styal Village. A little further afield is Northcliffe Hall, built by the owner of Quarry Bank, but now luxurious apartments. It is surrounded by rhododendrons, some of which may be Greg hybrids, so they have access only for conservation purposes.

The main garden site has plenty of problems. It slopes steeply down to the River Bollin. This was originally cleared by volunteers but is very difficult to access. The terraces leading down the slope have become very overgrown. Lindsay and her team are slowly clearing these, replanting and clearing the moss from historic stonework as they go (see right).



Geology plays a large part with crumbling sandstone and occasional rockfalls. A lot of surveys have been needed with help from geologists to work out just what condition the garden is in and what needs to be done. Part of the Picturesque style of garden are the sandstone rocks halfway down the site (see below), providing a backdrop to the planting. But the shrubs have now got too large and hide the sandstone.

The curvilinear greenhouse at the top of the site, built in the 1820s, is unique. All of it was restored in 2014-17. The wood has already needed paintwork refurbishment; Lindsay had one quarter of the east side done this year. It will probably take 4 -5 yrs to complete it. The border alongside the greenhouse has still got some wonderful planting with great autumn colour but is seriously overcrowded. Lindsay has begun dividing, planting and amending the colour scheme. On the other side of the path and around the walls, many of the fruit trees and shrubs are doing well but some need sympathetic treatment and pruning. The borders around the lawn are now being revised, removing overgrown shrubs, sorting out peony and iris beds and generally improving the view down the slope towards the river.



To help Lindsay with all of this, she has help from Pete, a full-time gardener who has been at the garden for a long time but will be retiring next year. There is a new Senior Gardener, along with three part time gardeners and they are applying to host an apprentice. Alongside this, amazingly they have retained most of their volunteers and recruited new people, with possibly 60 altogether and 5-6 regulars a day. They have started running garden events, such as propagation courses and the ever popular wreath making. In addition to all of this Lindsay now spends 3 days a week as consultant across

several National Trust properties in the north.

Lindsay and her team have their work cut out, but I'm sure they will achieve what they set out to do and I look forward to seeing how the garden develops over the coming years.

Text and photos Sue Eldridge (further photos on the website)

Don Billington, Bromeliad Expert



Don Billington with *Tillandsia usneoides* – Old Man's Beard

The recent talk by Don Billington in October 2024, was an informative and entertaining afternoon. Instead of the usual talk with slides Don brought several boxes of plants to use as visual aids. He introduced himself with a short history of his career in horticulture. After his apprenticeship with Liverpool City Council, he spent 35 years at Croxteth Park. A big change came in 2008 when he was offered plants, at a bargain price, from an exhibitor who didn't want to take his remaining stock back at the end of the Chelsea Flower Show. Don is now recognised as the expert in Bromeliads, holds three National Collections, has won about 15 Gold Medals at RHS shows and is an RHS judge. The collections, *Billbergia*, *Neoregelia* and *Aechmea* are now housed in the recently restored glasshouses at Walton Hall Park, Warrington. Don is also undertaking an RHS House Plant Trial, the first time there has been a trial of house plants.

Bromeliads are mainly native to sub tropical or tropical regions in the Americas from SE USA to Central Argentina and the Caribbean. One species is native to West Africa.

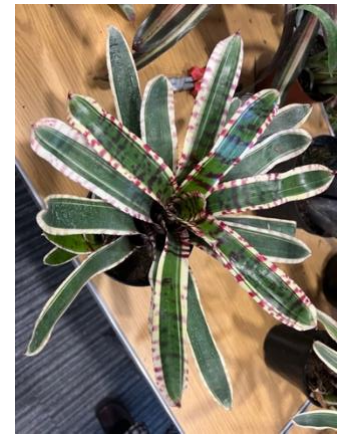
Using some of the plants he had brought to his talk Don first introduced us to *Tillandsia*, air plants. These are epiphytes that literally grow in the air holding on to their host tree with 8 to 10% of their roots. Don demonstrated how they can be displayed, out of direct sunlight, simply by securing them to wood or a branch. He recommended using plastic coated wire to avoid problems with rust and spraying lightly, preferably with rainwater. These plants are monocarpic so they will die after they



Aechmea fasciata – Urn plant

produce flowers although they will produce offsets which can be used. *Tillandsia* are named after Elias Tillandz, formerly Tillander, the 17th century Swedish botanist.

Billbergia are evergreen perennials; some species have colourful leaves and a variety of flower forms which last only for a few hours. They are found in Mexico, Central and South America and the Caribbean with some species endemic to Brazil. They are named after Gustaf Johan Billberg, the 18/19 century Swedish



Neoregelia carolinae – Blushing bromeliad

botanist.

Neoregelia are named after Eduard Von Regel, a 19th century German botanist who was the Director of the St Petersburg Botanic Gardens. These plants use their roots to hold onto their host trees but get their nutrients from the leaf litter, animal droppings and rainwater which collects in the central cup formed by the leaves. This cup is used by poison dart frogs for their tadpoles, safely away from predators.

Aechmea has about 250 different species. The name comes from the Greek, aichme, meaning a point or spear because of the rigid points on the sepals.

Don interspersed his entertaining talk with anecdotes from his career as a competitor and RHS judge. It was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone present.



CGT Members admiring Don's plants

Patricia Hazlehurst, Photos Sue Eldridge

Heaton Parks, Stockport



Mersey Vale Nature Park

The Heaton Parks in Stockport are set against a background of rivers and trails, as well as industrial history. The River Mersey flows from Stockport in the east to Liverpool in the west. Along the way it flows through some interesting areas, such as Mersey Vale Nature Park and, further on, the Sale and Chorlton Water Parks and Fletcher Moss. Running alongside the River Mersey is the Trans Pennine Way Trail which was devised in 1989 to provide a high quality route and to regenerate some previously derelict areas. This coast-to-coast route from Hornsea in the East Riding of Yorkshire to Southport on Merseyside opened officially in September 2001 and is approximately 207 miles long.

Close by is the Conservation Area of Heaton Mersey. This was originally agricultural but there was industrial development in the 18th and 19th centuries. This all provides the backdrop for a series of parks in the Heaton area, some formal, some informal, with a rich diversity of wildlife and history. All are managed by Stockport MBC with support from some well established Friends Groups.

Mersey Vale Nature Park opened in 1992. Samuel Oldknow, well known for his industrial and canal building activities around Marple and Mellow, established a bleach works on the north bank of the Mersey in 1785. Mersey Vale Nature Park was formed from the rubble of the bleach works and railway sidings. Thousands of tons of soil were used to create the park's open space, wildflowers were sown and trees planted. These spaces have created rich natural habitats, with trails, a traditional orchard, two ponds (not easy to find) with dipping platforms and a wildflower meadow. It is a lovely place for a wander alongside the river and through woodland, but it needs a little finding and is in two parts, divided by an industrial estate.



Steps leading down from Heaton Mersey Park to Mersey Bowl



Heaton Mersey Bowl

A path from the Nature Park leads to **Heaton Mersey Park and Bowl**, an interesting park, also split into two halves, both part of the Heaton Mersey Conservation Area. It was opened in 1897 at the same time as Heaton Moor Park (see below), as part of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee celebrations. Now it has herbaceous and shrub borders, specimen trees and a children's playground. At one stage there would have been views over the surrounding countryside, but this is now shrouded in overgrown shrubs and trees. Unfortunately, this park, with its rather dilapidated buildings, is in need of a bit of TLC.

Mersey Bowl is a wide open space below Mersey Park. In the early 1800s cloth from the nearby bleachworks was pinned out here.

Heaton Moor Park

As part of the same development, Lord Egerton of Tatton donated approx. 4 acres of land to Heaton Norris District Council. The land was placed into a charitable trust for the free use and enjoyment of the public for play, pleasure and recreation. This became Heaton Moor Park, which also opened in 1897. Over the next few years, the park was developed with two bowling greens, three tennis courts, a croquet lawn, formal flower beds, a bandstand, greenhouses and a pavilion.

In the latter part of the 20th century following government cuts, the park began to decline, but a group was formed to restore it, becoming the Friends of Heaton Moor Park. It is now looking very well maintained with some lovely features, such as Victorian steps,



Heaton Moor Park

walls, seats and urns. There are some interesting herbaceous and shrub borders, and it still retains a bowling green and tennis courts. It is a lovely place to walk around or sit on one of the numerous benches and take a rest in pleasant surroundings.

Heaton Mersey Common

Further north is Heaton Mersey Common, a local nature reserve. It was once part of brickworks, with deep clay pits, reservoirs and railway tracks to move excavated clay to nearby brick kilns. It was owned by the Bailey family from the mid 1800s to 1932, when J and A Jackson bought it to add to the many sites they owned across the North of England. The site remained in their hands until the late 1960s. Between the 1950s and early 1970s the brickworks land was infilled. Heaton Mersey Common was created in the mid 1970s and designated a local nature reserve in 2008.

The Common has a large pond and stream, woodland, a wildflower meadow and grassland, all connected by footpaths. This wide range of habitats provides shelter and food for a diverse range of wildlife. Both this and Mersey Vale Nature Park are good places to wander and explore.

Sadly, the River Mersey burst its banks on New Years Day causing widespread flooding and damage to property.

Text and Photos Sue Eldridge (more photos on the website)

Further information

[Stockport Heritage Trust](#)

[Heaton Mersey Valley Conservation Group](#)



One of the many pathways on Heaton Mersey Common

The Public Parks and Gardens of Merseyside 1802 – 2020



Sefton Park Palm House

I discovered this course through the Ness Botanic Gardens newsletter where they publish a link to the University of Liverpool's continuing Education courses. This drew my eye because of the parks and gardens. It was a ten-week course of lectures, led by Dr Lee R. Kendall, a lecturer in Art History at The Tate, Liverpool, who has a passion for Liverpool. He has delivered many lectures over the past five years, all to do with aspects of Liverpool, with an emphasis on art. All the lectures were illustrated by photographs, portraits, postcards and modern

paintings showing their history from the original landowners and early designs to the modern day.

The course began with the earliest garden, which was the Liverpool Botanic Garden, originally founded on Mount Pleasant, before being relocated to Wavertree Botanic Garden with the plant collection being split between Croxteth Country Park glasshouses and Sefton Park. The Garden was opened as a private space in 1802 by a group of botanists led by William Roscoe (1753 – 1831) who was the son of a market gardener; he worked with his father from the age of twelve, when his schoolteacher had no more to teach him. Later in his life he wrote:



Croxteth Hall



The winding paths of Birkenhead Park

'This mode of life gave health and vigour to my body, and amusement and instruction to my mind; and to this day I well remember the delicious sleep which succeeded my labour, from which I was again called at an early hour. If I were now asked whom I would consider to be the happiest of the human race, I should answer, those who cultivate the earth by their own hands'.

We learned of the listed parks; Princes Park, Birkenhead Park, Newsham Park, Stanley Park and Sefton Park. Joseph Paxton was involved in the design of Birkenhead and Princes parks where at the latter he designed the Grand Lodge. Edward Kemp was involved with Birkenhead, Newsham and Stanley Parks. Stanley Park is arguably the finest of Kemp's designs and possibly the grandest park in Liverpool. Sefton Park, although

designed by a Frenchman, bears striking similarities to Birkenhead Park, with its wide winding paths around the park.

The conservatories at Sefton and Stanley Park are now at their finest again after suffering from years of neglect, vandalism, bombing and cheap repairs. The use of statuary in parks is also a significant feature, allowing philanthropy and artistic designs, although vandalism has always been a hazard in the parks.

All the early parks were built to be private parks and were paid for by wealthy residents buying plots of land to build their houses. This was not always successful. The plots surrounding Princes Park were slow to sell until Sefton park was built when they were snapped up and the area became a fashionable place to live. Much of the land was bought from the Earl of Sefton on land which had been part of Toxteth Park deer park in the 1600s. Later parks were created by the Corporation in an effort to reduce the pollution evident in the city and to provide a Ribbon of Parks that provided relaxation for the working classes. This was most evident in the sports available in the parks. Cricket and tennis in the early private parks and then football pitches in the later parks. Stanley Park still has two football grounds at either end of the park, Liverpool FC and Everton FC (for now).



The plaque commemorating Joseph Paxton in Princes Park

Although designs were accepted by the owners of the park, many of the features were not incorporated due to lack of funds, but in later years the parks were developed further to meet the current days' needs. Aviaries were very popular in some of the parks, but like the conservatories, were very expensive to maintain and shone like beacons during the Second World War. It is thought that the parakeets currently seen in the parks were escapees from these aviaries.

The largest park is Croxteth Country Park and when it was passed to the Corporation after the death of the widow of the Earl of Sefton in 1980, 500 acres were sold for development and to pay for the maintenance of the hall and grounds, the remaining 500 acres. Queen Victoria stayed here in 1851 and for once, faced torrential rain during her visit.



Terraces at Stanley Park

The last park we looked at was The International Festival Gardens. This was an attempt by the Government of the day to improve the economy of the area and to deal with the problem of social deprivation which had led to the Toxteth riots. In 1984, there were 4 million visitors to the 60 gardens which had been built

on what was once, very toxic land. Legacy was supposedly built into this garden, but the only gardens that remain are the Chinese and Japanese gardens as they were gifts from the two nations. Much of the land is now developed for housing.

Summary

The development of these gardens chart the growth of the city of Liverpool and it is clear that they were all developed in response to the needs of the local population, be it the need for pleasant housing in the suburbs in the early 1800s or the need to provide clean air spaces for the working class from the mid-1800s onwards. They show the determination of certain 'worthies' to improve the lives of the local people and demonstrate their philanthropy towards their city.

In later years, parks are being revisited by the council with their aims being to remove buildings in parks that are seen as carbuncles and to return the parks to their original aims, whilst ensuring every citizen of the city has access to the benefits of park life. Many gates have been restored and regilded, lakes have been dredged and damage caused by bombs and vandalism has been rectified or removed. Liverpool is a city that values its parks and their benefits to the health of its citizens.

Jackie Cawte

Photos Gordon Darlington and Jim Jeeves

Photos of Croxteth Hall, Joseph Paxton's Plaque and Stanley Park taken from Wikimedia

[Stanley Park Terraces](#) Rodhullandemu

[Croxteth Hall](#) Wikimedia Author Rept01x

[Princes Park Joseph Paxton Plaque](#) Jonathon Deamer

Tulip Trees



Arley Green, which lies within the Registered designed landscape designated by the Historic England Grade II* and within the Arley Conservation Area, has a magnificent Tulip tree which I find it essential to visit at least once a year.

Having seen it in full autumn splendour, other buttery gold Tulip trees came to notice, even newly planted ones in Albert Square, Manchester, the lively fluttering leaves seen in contrast to the buildings.

Arley's Tulip tree (left), which thoughtfully has a young understudy, is not indicated on old maps from the Arley

Archive. The green was the location of Cow House farm, shown on the map of 1744, the cruck barn being converted to a school and the shippens to cottages by J C Buckler in 1844. Perhaps this is the date when the green was established and the tree planted? It may well have been purchased from Caldwell's Nurseries who sold many *Liriodendron tulipifera* in the early 19th century and supplied a great many trees, as well as other plants and seeds, to the Warburtons at Arley. Loudon credits John Tradescant the younger with introduction of the tree from North America c. 1650 and says that it was cultivated by Compton in Fulham in 1688.

The Tulip tree at Arley has a girth measuring 4.67m which qualifies for Veteran tree status. It has been duly entered on the Ancient Tree Inventory.



Tulip tree leaves

Text and photos Barbara Moth

Further information

[Arley Hall Archive - Maps](#)

Hartwell, C., Hyde, M., Hubbard, E and Pevsner, N. 2011 *The Buildings of England: Cheshire*: Yale University Press

[Arboretum et fruticetum Britannicum by John Claudius Loudon](#) | [Open Library](#) 286

[Tree - Ancient Tree Inventory](#)

Curious Connections



Most contemporary homes would not have the use or space for this imposing piece of glassware (left). Made by the Belmont Glassworks, Birmingham, 1846, and featured in the recent Victorian Radicals exhibition at Birmingham City Art Gallery, it would have served as a 'comport' or table centrepiece, the dish piled high with fruits or decorative sweets. Turned the other way up it became a vase for displaying stalks of celery – multipurpose tableware.

The piece is heavy and quite grand, with elaborate patterns which are deeply cut. Its creation was only possible due to the development of steam-driven cutting wheels and enabled by the repeal of the Glass Excise Act in 1845, which taxed glass by weight. The Belmont Glassworks

were situated in the heart of Birmingham with other engineering works, close to the Digbeth Branch Canal, enabling the transport of heavy glass items to customers country wide. "Archaeological excavations unveiled remnants of a Boulton & Watt steam engine and kilns from the Belmont Glassworks, active on the site since 1803."

The repeal of the Glass Excise Act and in 1851 the repeal of the Window tax together with advances in manufacture enabled aspiring middle class Victorian gardeners to have glasshouses. Though the cultivation of celery did not demand a glasshouse, Caldwell's did recommend a hotbed, and in 1884 were offering 13 varieties of celery seed.

Celery is still widely grown in Lancashire, available in season with foliage much as Caldwell's illustration (right), worthy as a table centrepiece and with a wonderful flavour.

As of 2014 celery has been classed as an allergen because it is "a common cause of pollen related food allergy", and hence its inclusion in foods such as stock cubes is highlighted in bold. Nonetheless for many cooks celery, in or out of season, remains an essential ingredient in soups, casseroles and salads.

With thanks to Birmingham City Art Gallery and the curators' informative captions.



Barbara Moth

Further information

[Belmont Glass Company](#)

[Celery Allergy](#) | [Allergy UK](#) | [National Charity](#)

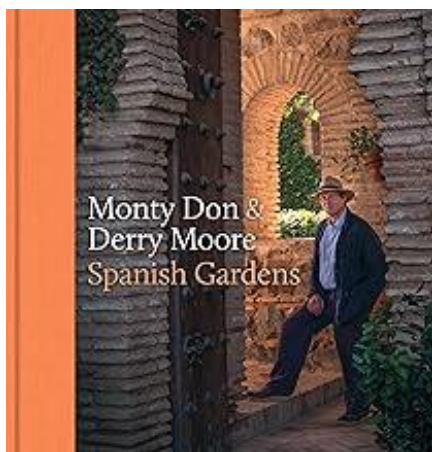
Manchester's Viaduct Garden

The National Trust is now seeking Planning and listed building approval for Phase 2 of Manchester's Viaduct Garden. This could extend the length of the garden from 120 metres to 330 metres and could include a second entry and exit point to allow more people to visit. The Phase 2 extension will also include WaterAid's Gold Medal-winning garden from this year's RHS Chelsea Flower Show, designed by architect Je Ahn and landscape designer Tom Massey. The planning application and listed building applications for Phase 2 of the viaduct are now live on Manchester City Council's public access portal. You can view the plans and leave your comments [here](#).

The Garden is still open until September 2025

For more information see [Manchester's Viaduct Garden](#)

Book Review



Spanish Gardens, Monty Don and Derry Moore

Many of you will have seen the Monty Don series on Spanish Gardens on TV. Well this is the book, a big coffee table edition, not something you'd be able to read in bed. It is beautifully photographed by Derry Moore, friend to Monty and a famous British photographer, though I must admit I found some of the photos a little sombre.

Like most of us, Monty Don knew very little about Spanish gardens, apart from the iconic Alhambra or the Alcazar in Seville. Spain's history was powerfully marked by the period of Arab occupation from 711 to 1492. The concept of the paradise

garden is particularly clear in the patios of Andalusia. In addition, there are the strong cultural identities of the Catalans, Basques and Galicians. After Franco's death in 1975 there was an explosion of creativity in garden design as in all creative arts. Monty weaves in the history of the area alongside descriptions of gardens and other areas. For example, writing about Las Ramblas in Barcelona he says "In the 18th Century the Ramblas was paved and trees planted. It became a place to promenade and shop, but also a meeting place for friends, lovers and crowds. It was where Picasso would drink when he lived in Barcelona and where Orwell watched the barricades being built during the Civil War".

The geographic and climatic diversity of Spain is huge. Monty's writing is beautifully descriptive, 'Driving south from Santiago, all is rich green, eucalyptus in plantations, oaks and pines on the hillsides in the morning mist, meadows lush with grass, kiwi orchards covered with their vine like foliage, all suffused with a damp glistening green light'. The enormity of Spain and the differences between the regions leaps out at you.

There is such diversity in this book, grand estates and ancient gardens, like Palacio de Galania and Las Nieves in Toledo, exotic gardens and olive groves, monasteries and historic buildings, green walls and statues, lush woodland areas, a 100 year old man on his balcony, rooftop allotments and public parks and so much more. There is just too much to describe, you'll have to read it.

Other books that might be of interest are:

"The Botanic Garden" by Ambra Edwards

"Lost Gardens of the World" by Sandra Lawrence

"The Book of Wild Flowers" by Angie Lewin and Christopher Stocks

"A Short History of Flowers: The stories that make our gardens" by Advolly Richmond

"An Almost Impossible Thing :The radical lives of Britain's pioneering women gardeners" by Fiona Davidson

"Hortobiography" by Carol Klein

"Unforgettable Gardens: 500 years of Historic Gardens and Landscapes" published by the Gardens Trust



Sue Eldridge

Forthcoming Events

Cheshire Gardens Trust Event



Monday 3rd March 2025 – Emily Chandler, Head Gardener at Dunham Massey. To be held at Marthall Hall

Do try and visit the Winter Garden (left) at Dunham Massey before Emily's talk. Also, you can take a garden tour with one of the volunteers, some of whom are CGT members, from mid January onwards, Monday to Friday 1 hour.

All the details and booking arrangements will be emailed or mailed to members

The Gardens Trust

A History of Gardens Online talks: Part 4 C19 Gardens, a series of 5 talks starting on Tuesday 7th January 10am

C20 Women in Landscape, a series of 6 online talks, in partnership with FOLAR, including one on Brenda Colvin. Starting Wednesday 8th January 6pm, last talk 30th April

Archive Visit – Behind the Scenes at Kew

Gardens Trust Members Only tour of the Economic Botany Collection and the Herbarium at Kew. Monday, 27th January at 11am – 1 pm. Tickets £50

Places to Play - A series of 5 online talks exploring organised recreation in designed landscapes, Wednesdays at 6pm from 12 Feb,

Exploring the Oxford Herbaria Collection with Stephen Harris, Saturday 22 March 2025 2-4pm

London Conference - Historic Landscape Assembly - Historic Parks and Gardens in the UK Planning System. Thursday 3rd April 9.30-4.30 in person or online

The Gardens of Ireland Tour- The Gardens Trust 12th - 19th May 2025

20th-Century Gardens: Evolution, Influence and Conservation May 30th – June 1st. Study weekend in partnership with Oxford University and the 20th Century Society.

For further information see [The Gardens Trust events](#).

National Garden Scheme

A few gardens are open in the early part of the year:

16th February Meveril Lodge (see right), Combs, High Peak, Derbyshire, SK23 9UZ, 5 miles north of Buxton, near Chapel en le Frith

Snowdrops, hellebores, and unusual trees and shrubs

4th April (and many dates thereafter), HMP Thorn Cross, Appleton Road, Warrington, Cheshire, WA4 4RL

An open prison with large sprawling grounds, maintained by the prisoners



Planthunters Fairs

Some early Planthunters fairs in Cheshire or nearby are:

Sunday 23 March **Arley Hall**, Northwich, Cheshire CW9 6NA, 10am - 4pm

Easter Sunday and Monday 20/21 April, **Dorothy Clive Garden**, Market Drayton, TF9 4EU

Sun 11th May **Capesthorpe Hall**, Macclesfield, SK11 9JY

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

Snowdrop Gardens

[Rode Hall](#) 3rd Feb – 2nd March

[Ness Botanic Gardens](#)

[Dunham Massey](#)

[Hopton Hall, Derbyshire](#)

[Arley Hall and Gardens](#)

Other gardens

[Norton Priory events](#) Sunday 26th January Fruit tree pruning, Sunday 2nd March Fruit tree grafting

[Ness Botanic Gardens](#) have garden tours at 11am on the second and third Sundays of the month

[RHS Bridgewater](#) events include:

Houseplant Weekend 31st January – 2nd February

Urban Design Course 22nd February

General Garden workshop 1st March

Growing Herbs course 29th March

Low maintenance course 12th April

[Dorothy Clive](#) events

Rose pruning Saturday 18th January; 6 week gardening course, starting Saturday 15th February

Stop Press

Fame at Last

Alison Moore, Garden Writer for Cheshire Life Magazine is writing an article on Cheshire Gardens Trust, which will appear in the March edition. It will be a 4-page feature of around 700 words and 5 to 6 images, most of which will be provided by us. Her usual monthly articles feature a particular garden or individual involved in horticulture, so this will be slightly different. She will be writing about some of the work of the CGT since it was formed in 2004, and the work that goes on to help preserve the garden heritage of the county. It will celebrate Barbara Moth's Volunteer of the Year award in the anniversary year and highlight the type of events organised by The Trust, ranging from fascinating talks to group visits. She'll end the piece by telling readers how they can apply for membership and what the first event of 2025 will be. Keep your eyes open.

Adlington Pictures

Cheshire Gardens Trust (CGT) has been informed that four 18th century paintings of Adlington Hall and Grounds are being put up for auction on 22nd January. The paintings by Thomas Bardwell, a self taught Suffolk artist, belonged to the Legh family who were until recently the owners of Adlington Hall. See [Dreaweats Auction House](#).

The Hall is on the National Heritage List for England as a Grade I listed building and part of the stable block is listed Grade II* with the rest being listed Grade II. The grounds are designated Grade II* on the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens and contain eleven Grade II listed buildings.

Cheshire Gardens Trust is concerned that these important paintings may leave the county or, indeed, the country and has drawn attention to the case locally in the short time we have.

Sue Bartlett

Copy date for April Newsletter is 30th March 2025

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