



Stockport Public Parks

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Forthcoming events (see page 11)

- 2nd March, David Cash – An Architect's Dozen – for Wilmslow Wells of Africa
- CGT Zoom talks:
- 15th March – Margie Hoffnung
- 12th April, Sheer Folly, Caroline Holmes
- 17th May, Island Gardens, Jackie Bennett,
- 14th June, Beth Chatto, Catherine Horwood

Stockport Public Parks



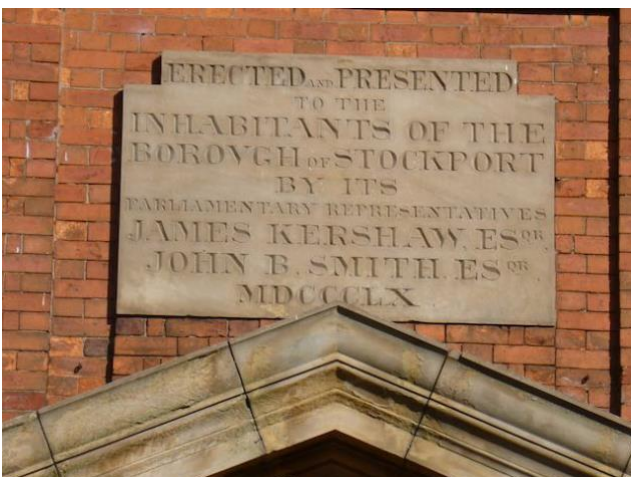
Stockport has a wealth of public parks, covering periods from Tudor to Victorian to 20th century. As so many of us have discovered during various lockdowns, they are an incredible bonus to our health and well-being. In Stockport, many of the parks are linked to Stockport's museums and civic buildings. They are very much part of the community.

In this article I will concentrate on two pairs of parks, linked by pleasant walks.

Possibly the park most familiar to members will be **Vernon Park**, which CGT visited in July 2010. Joy Uings wrote a tremendous piece about the spectacular opening in September 1858 in the July 2010 edition of our newsletter.

The park, the oldest in Stockport, was built on land donated by Lord Vernon. It is situated on a hill very close to the town centre with views of the countryside and the River Goyt running alongside. The park was built by Stockport Corporation helped by unemployed mill workers, who built many of the distinctive features of the park.

The park is accessed by a fine gateway (above), with an entrance leading to the old Grade II listed museum building. The museum was donated to the people of Stockport by two local members of parliament, James Kershaw and John Benjamin Smith (see below).



It housed Stockport Museum until relatively recently, but is now a café. Close by are two cannons (below), replacements for Russian guns captured at the battle of Sevastopol during the Crimean War. The originals were taken in the 1940s and used in the war effort. A little way down the slope is the Plant Collectors border, honouring people like Frank Kingdom Ward and Reginald Farrer.



Below this is a complex of winding paths, leading the way to the bottom of the park. There is an ornate stone bridge, built in 1876, across the 'Roman Road'. On the Stockport Tithe Map of 1850 this is shown as 'Royal Lane', rumoured to once have been a Roman Road. Tradition says that this was the route Bonny Prince Charlie took on his retirement through Stockport to Manchester in 1745.

Beyond is the bandstand, a copy of the Victorian/Edwardian original, with herbaceous borders, tree-lined paths, ponds and a maze. Particularly lovely is a flight of steps, leading steeply down through rhododendrons, with a view of the Goyt below. On the other side of the park are steps covered in a very fine laburnum arch. One very distinctive feature at the top of the slope is a cast iron and bronze drinking fountain built in 1859 and paid for by subscription from the workers of a local cotton mill.

The park fell into disrepair in the 1970s and 80s, but the National Lottery Fund helped to restore it and it was reopened in September 2000. The importance of this early public park was recognised when it was designated as grade II on the Historic England Register of Historic Parks and Gardens.

Alongside Vernon Park is **Woodbank Memorial Park**, far more informal, with open lawns, mature trees, woodland areas, a place for strolling. It has a wildflower area, a memorial garden, as well as children's play area and athletics track. It was originally home to Stockport Plant Nurseries, which unfortunately disappeared with local authority cuts. But it has been imaginatively replaced by community projects and an urban

horticultural hub.

This garden was presented to the town in 1921 by Sir Thomas Rowbotham, former mayor of Stockport, in honour of the Stockport men who died in The Great War.



Woodbank Villa (above) was built in 1812 -14 by Thomas Harrison in Greek Revival style for Peter Marsland, a prominent industrialist in the Stockport area. Following refurbishment by Rowbotham, it was used as the home for a museum and art gallery, but from 1948 its use declined and sadly the villa now stands empty, despite being a Grade II* listed building.

Marple Memorial Park is situated on a hill in the middle of Marple, with stunning views of the Peak District. Charles Walmsley bought the land in 1825. He demolished the original farm buildings and built Hollins House, now used as council offices. Close by he built Hollins Mill providing work for the local people for the next 220 years. In 1859 the estate was bought by the Carver family who became great benefactors to Marple. During World War 1 the Calvers and close relatives lost 4 of their children in the war. After the war they gifted the park in memory of them and 137 other men of Marple who fell in the Great War. It was dedicated as a War Memorial Park in July 1922 and a further 50 names were added after World War 2.



War memorial with Hollins House behind and hills in the distance

In addition to the war memorial there is a sun dial, stocks and The Headstone (top of next column), which was originally mounted on the front façade of Bottoms Cotton Mill, built by Samuel Oldknow in 1790.



There are some lovely paths, winding down to the Peak Forest Canal, with its astonishing flight of 16 locks. These were built to link the upper and lower sections of the canal, overseen by Samuel Oldknow and completed in 1804. A walk takes you down through the Memorial Gardens to the Peak Forest Canal and down to the Goyt Valley. A slight diversion takes you to the Marple Aqueduct, built in 1800 to carry the canal across the River Goyt.



Aqueduct and viaduct viewed from the Goyt Valley

You are now in **Brabyns Park**. Along the way you come to the cast iron bridge (see front page), commissioned by the estate's owner, Nathaniel Wright in 1813. It was made at Salford Iron Works and restored and re-opened in June 2008. There are two weirs along the river. Wrights Folly was also built by Nathaniel Wright in 1810 to provide a head of water to drive a waterwheel to power a mill, unfortunately it was never successful. The second weir was far more recent, built in 1971 to measure the water levels in the River Goyt.

Brabyns Park is Marple's largest park at 90 acres, was once the estate attached to Brabyns Hall. The Hall, a grand Georgian house, was built on the site of an ancient farmhouse in the early 18th century by Dr Harry Brabyn, a local surgeon, a grand Georgian House. It was sold to Nathaniel Wright, a wealthy mining engineer in 1800 then left to his niece, Ann Hudson. During World War 1 it was used as a military hospital but remained in the Hudson family till World War 2. After Ann's granddaughter Fanny died in 1941 it was sold to the Local Authority for £6,000 and opened as a public park in 1947.

**Sue Eldridge
Photos Sue and Katy Eldridge**

John Claudius Loudon and Jane Webb



A talk by Simon Gulliver for Cheshire Gardens Trust

Before going on to work as a horticultural adviser and consultant, Simon worked at Birmingham Botanical Garden for 10 years. The garden was designed by **John Claudius Loudon (1783-1843)**, hence Simon's interest. Loudon appears to have had an amazingly busy life and covered many areas in his lifetime. He was very influential on gardening, horticulture and agriculture from the late 18th Century to Victorian times.

Loudon was born near Glasgow and raised near Edinburgh and was interested in gardening from childhood. He attended Edinburgh University where he studied botany, chemistry and agriculture. He taught himself French and Italian and earned money from translation work so he could pay his university fees. Following early employment for nurserymen and planners in his home area, he moved to London in 1803 where he met eminent people such as James Sowerby, naturalist, artist and illustrator, Sir Joseph Banks, President of the Royal Society and the brains behind Kew Gardens, and Jeremy Bentham, founder of the Utilitarian Movement.

During his lifetime Loudon suffered from rheumatic fever and arthritis, and in 1825, had his right arm amputated following 2 fractures; not that this interrupted his work. He met his wife, Jane, when he reviewed a science-fiction book she had written, and asked to meet the author. They married within a year.

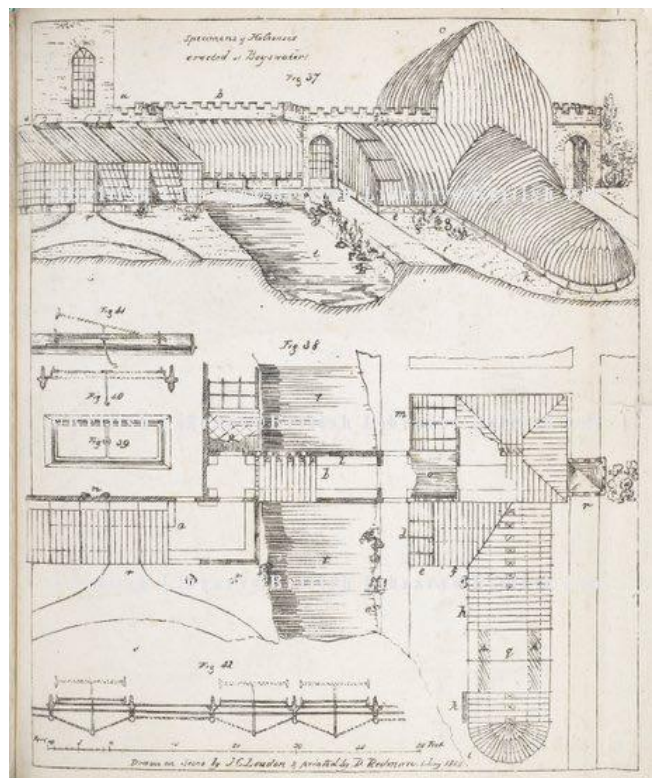
Loudon was a prolific author producing 60 million words on gardening. These were an essential reference in his time, and have become an indispensable source for historians of this period. Early publications included an article in 1803 on promoting the laying out of the public squares of London, and the use of plane trees because of their ability to shed their bark which helped in a polluted city; and a short treatise on hot houses. His first large-scale literary work was an Encyclopaedia of Gardening which ran to nine editions.

The Gardener's Magazine was probably his most famous publication and was the first magazine produced

for gardeners. This was a platform for his ideas such as training for head gardeners since their status had risen and there was the need for development in their general instruction.

Between 1809 and 1812 Loudon was also working on estates, competing with Repton. During this period he earned £15,000 from the sale of Great Tew so went travelling in Northern Europe, including Sweden, Prussia, Poland, Russia and Austria. He was heavily influenced by the formal gardens he saw. Later he travelled in Southern Europe.

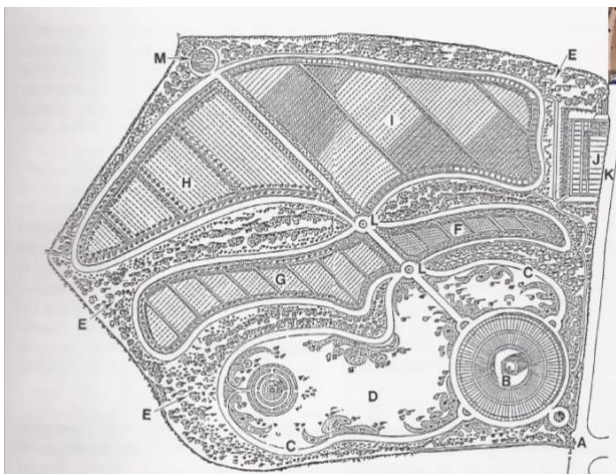
There are 145 recorded landscapes in the Parks and Gardens database linked with his name although it is not easy to find his contribution to the design on any of these sites. His most complete designs are probably Derby Arboretum and Birmingham Botanical Gardens.



Loudon's patented design using a wrought iron glazing bar

Recognition of the Loudons' work in London

An early interest was the development of glasshouses. In 1816 he patented a design for a wrought iron glazing bar to be used in the construction of glasshouses to improve the light levels and allow for a curvilinear style. Previously timber had been used which reduced the amount of natural light. Bicton in Devon used this innovation but there are no pictures. Felton Park in Northumberland was another where Loudon designed a hot house (1830).



Courtesy of Birmingham Botanic Garden

In 1828 he was asked to design a **botanical garden in Birmingham**. He wanted to combine a botanical and ornamental garden. The site was difficult as it was on quite a steep slope so he used a circular design with a straight axis through the middle of the site and winding pathways to either side (see above). However, the completed work was not to his design. The conservatory was placed at the top of a terrace and was rectangular rather than circular. Loudon was not happy about this but eventually became reconciled to the altered design. Today the garden is smaller than the original and a modern aviary reflects his design for the conservatory (see below).



Courtesy of Birmingham Botanic Garden

Derby Arboretum. Loudon was asked to design a space for public recreation in Derby (1839) but wanted to plant a botanical tree collection there (he was the first to use the title "arboretum"). The area was flat and poorly drained so he advocated the creation of mounds or ridges on which the trees could be planted and

which would hide groups of people. Loudon had strong views on how the arboretum should be developed, including the felling and replanting of trees in future years but this did not happen. Areas for public recreation were included at the insistence of the financial backers.



Mounds at Derby Arboretum, courtesy of Derby Council

Towards the end of his life Loudon was carrying out more landscaping work and also became involved in the design of cemeteries. In the London area particularly, land for graveyards was in short supply so he designed formal cemeteries with the graves arranged closely together to save space. His book on the subject became highly influential. He designed his own monument (see below) and, following his death, he was buried in Kensall Green Cemetery.



Jane Webb Loudon

Jane was orphaned at the age of 17 so started writing to earn a living. Her first book was called "The Mummy", written in 1827 (still available on-line). One of her jobs was to take dictation from her husband as he wrote his books. They had one daughter, Agnes.

Not very much has been written about Jane, but she herself wrote many books, over 20 being on botany, gardening and natural history. She particularly aimed her gardening books at women and young people. As well as books, she wrote for magazines. After her husband's death, she had to work to pay off his debts incurred in writing and producing his books on trees.



In 1823 Loudon designed a “double-detached” house. His mother and 2 sisters lived in one side, and he lived in the other. The photo shows the 2 houses as they are today. The entrance was shared.

Simon’s talk provided us with an interesting introduction to the work of two influential people of their time. Needless to say, much more information is available on the internet, including a surprising number of John Claudius Loudon’s and Jane Webb Loudon’s publications, which are still in print.

Julia Whitfield

Photos and other images courtesy of Simon Gulliver

Cwm Dyli Power station part 2 – Restoration of a Landscape

In the October edition of the newsletter Gordon Darlington set out the establishment of a restoration project on the Cwm Dyli pipeline when working for the economic Forestry Group. This is part two of the story.

With the assistance of David Owen at our Bala Office and the appointment of Arwel Jones-Griffiths, fresh out of Bangor University, as Site Agent, we were ready to commence. Arwel lived locally in the Pen-y-Groes area and, importantly, was a fluent Welsh speaker.

The first job, following the marking out of all the site boundaries, was the air lifting of the fencing materials and their distribution along the pipeline. We had to familiarise everyone involved with the terrain, the emergency procedures and all the difficulties we expected to come up against as we proceeded down the steep hillside to the Power Station. The most important item was that there should be no lone working under any circumstance.



Late Summer 1989 prior to commencing the project

Once the protection fencing had been erected, the next job was to tidy and re-channel broken or damaged water courses before the late autumn/winter rains were upon us; again this was all hand work. The rough boundary areas around the concrete anchor blocks were generally tidied and any water channels

diverted away from around their perimeters. A team was formed to identify the various areas of adjacent vegetation that could be used as plug plants for the areas along the pipeline which would struggle to re-vegetate naturally.

Once the plugs were in place, many of the larger areas were covered with jute netting which was pinned down. From memory the plugs included the following species - club mosses (*Lycopodium species*), heath bedstraw (*Galium saxatile*), parsley fern (*Cryptogramma crispa*) and grasses.

We had a very good relationship with the local farmer and asked if his sheep could be kept off the areas of the valley while we were installing the plugs. But there was the problem of the resident herd of wild goats who found it easy to jump over the protective fencing.

With the oncoming winter months, work started on repairing the stone walls damaged by the machines bringing in the metal pipe sections and by man’s activities over the past century. The walling team was overseen by members of three generations of the Owen family from Bethel, led by grandfather who was 72 years old. His role was to select the stones which were cast around and mark out the line and build of the wall. The Owen family were well known locally for their wall building skills and to Wyn Thomas, who had project responsibility.

Whilst this work was undertaken we had visits from representatives of CADW (the Welsh Government’s historic environment service) mainly checking that our restoration was not causing any impact on the many buried Bronze Age settlements and ancient hut circles scattered around the steep hillside.

Site inspections usually involved being dropped off at the Warden’s Office at Pen-y-Pass and then walking by way of the Miners Track and crossing the trackless grass

and rocky terrain to the pipeline areas and then going down to the Power Station. On very many occasions I had to resort to my hand-held Dictaphone and camera when the adverse weather made any form of written notes impossible. I wrote and marked up drawings once down in our site cabin by the Power Station. On many occasions especially during the winter months, the Project Architect and I had to have a complete change of clothing before driving home to Cardiff and Macclesfield respectively.

The restoration contract was finally completed with no major incidents by early September 1990, with regular inspections checking on the recovery of the vegetation. As for the Power Station and pipeline they went on to even greater fame – featuring in the James Bond film “The World is not Enough”



View of completed pipeline restoration October 1998

Snowdon and the surrounding area is one of North Wales major tourist hot spots not only as a recreational location, but a region steeped in local industrial heritage. It has slate quarries, mining activities, old tramways and two internationally known heritage

railways, the Snowdon Rack Railway and the Welsh Highland Railway. Sadly, even before the Power Station and pipeline were built the Cwm Dyli area had been despoiled by mining activities since the mid-19th century. Thankfully these have now been mostly restored and are no longer an eyesore in the landscape.

When talking to the local older generations there is a great passion and pride for those working in these industries with their difficult conditions and especially for those working on projects like Cwm Dyli Power Station and the pipeline.



Power station and pipeline from the car park viewing area on the A498 May 2010

But time moves on; there is now a newly refurbished cafe at the summit of Snowdon and in September 2020, the Snowdon Rack Railway has taken delivery of two new hybrid battery-diesel locomotives.

When the time comes again to consider the replacement of this pipeline my hope is that it is the people of the region who will have the final decision. It is, after all, their history.

Text and photos Gordon J. Darlington

Praise for CGT Members

Joy Uings has reported that a Project [From specimens to commodities: the London nursery trade and the introduction of exotic plants in the early nineteenth century* | Historical Research | Oxford Academic \(oup.com\)](#) has recently used Caldwell research and included the following acknowledgement:

“Caldwell’s Nursery was chosen as a regional comparator owing to the extensive digitization of business records of the nursery carried out by Cheshire Gardens Trust. These records are available to view at a dedicated website <https://www.caldwellarchives.org.uk> [accessed 22 Apr. 2020]. For discussion of the business, see Uings, Moth and Stevenson, *Caldwell’s, Nurserymen of Knutsford.*”

Congratulations to Joy Uings, Barbara Moth, Moira Stevenson and all who worked on the Caldwell’s project and website.

Christine Wilcox Baker reported that she has been contacted by Art UK (the online register of public artworks) to let her know that they have photographed King Canute (below) at his site in Knutsford and included him on their register.

www.artuk.org/discover/artists/wilcox-baker-christine



Why is this here?

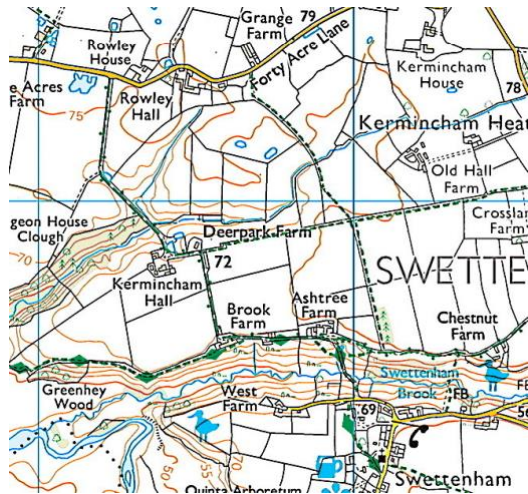
A new series from the Research and Recording group

Travelling about there are always odd things in odd places that make us wonder, "Why is this here?", relicts of former land use, design and events, a palimpsest of a designed landscape long forgotten. So, if you have wondered why a boundary wiggles, there are unusual trees in strange places or a flight of steps going nowhere, this series is for you.

Barbara Moth

Kermincham Deer Park CW4 8DX

A popular walk (public right of way) leads south from Forty Acre Lane to Swettenham, or past Deer Park Farm and back to Forty Acre Lane.



Starting near Rowley Hall, you see a brick wall on the way downhill:



This wall was built 300 years ago to enclose Roger Mainwaring's deer park of 52 acres, the unusual shape in the map above. From the restoration of the monarchy (1660), there was a revival of interest in deer keeping among the nobility and gentry. Roger Mainwaring succeeded to the property in 1700. He rebuilt the old hall in brick (1718), and used the plentiful supply of clay on his lands to either reinstate a much older deer park or to build a new one. The wall is about 5 feet high. Repairs have been made over time

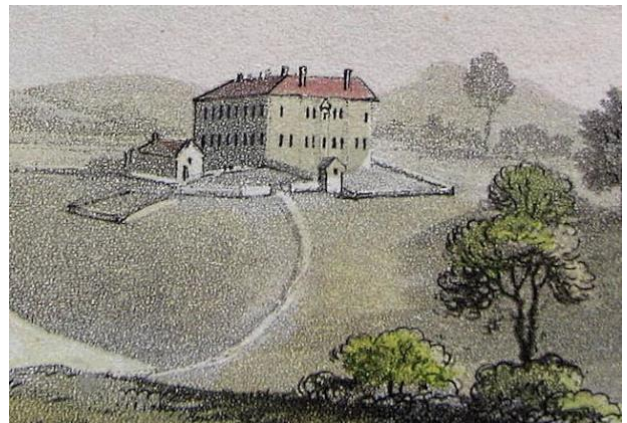
but the lower courses are of C18 English Garden Bond bricks. The original triangular coping stones remain in many places and allow views into the park.



Following the wall downhill, you see two gate piers and a small brick building:



Restored in recent times, it dates back to the 1720s. It may have been a gazebo or a gatehouse by the western entrance to the hall's enclosure, as depicted below:



The hall was demolished in the 1850s, but the little gatehouse and the 1720s stables and dove-cote (above) remain. The latter have been converted into private houses.

Deer Park Farm stands on the site of the old hall. The owners of the picture (c.1850) kindly gave permission to reproduce this detail.

(Map detail: www.streetmap.co.uk)

Barbara Wright

Rhododendrons, Camellias and Magnolias

Gardeners can contribute to a database of living plants collated by the RHS Rhododendron, Camellia & Magnolia Group. So far unregistered plants and a few thought lost have been discovered. The project aims to identify and propagate the most threatened taxa and reassemble collections to be enjoyed by future gardeners. Data from gardeners is being added to that from the RHS, National Trust and large public gardens.



Camellia X williamsii 'C.F.Coates', Eaton Hall

Sally Hayward from RHS says 'To explain our project very simply, our work involves discovering 'who is growing what' across the UK. Over the years we have gathered lists from our Members on a fairly random, mostly opportunistic, basis in order to co-ordinate threatened plant identification and subsequent propagation. We have undertaken to bring all the data together to create a single resource for each of our three genera which will simply identify taxa which are extant in the UK and how many examples exist in more than one location. In this way the rarity of particular taxa can be quickly identified and duplication or unnecessary propagation can be avoided so that we can prioritise our efforts



Rhododendron 'Cynthia', The Grove, Arley Hall

appropriately. Location and personal information will NOT be included in these lists as the data is confidential and will not be shared on a wholesale basis. The database is held secure and detailed information following specific requests or investigations will only ever be released on a discretionary basis, subject to the full permission of the garden owner. In this way confidentiality is assured and will give confidence to others to supply their lists. This is a major task but we believe that the effort will be worthwhile and will result in a better understanding

of what is growing in the UK, particularly in view of the Nagoya Protocol situation and the issues now relating to the import of new garden plants.

As an additional bonus to the project, we have been working with major gardens to locate propagation material of long lost cultivars, particularly those raised by hybridisers associated with those gardens. For example, we are working with RHS Wisley to locate the lost Francis Hanger rhododendron hybrids (he was Curator there from 1946 to 1961). He raised 71 named hybrids, and only 29 now remain at Wisley. We have so far found a further 12 cultivars growing in other gardens and material is being sent for micro-propagation in order to re-establish plants at Wisley and also to distribute further to other gardens as a further measure of conservation for the future.

Ideally the information that we seek is a list of rhododendrons, camellias and /or magnolias and, in addition, but by no means essential, any information regarding where the plants were originally sourced from, dates planted etc. Photographs would be great, but again, not essential. We will also endeavour to help with the identification of unnamed cultivars of the three taxa. There are many wonderful gardens in Cheshire so I am sure that they hold a rich resource of information.



Camellia House Eaton Hall

We welcome anyone with information, no matter how small the garden or the list of plants growing within, to contact us on rcmconservation@gmail.com.

Further information about our Group can be found on our website <https://www.rhodogroup-rhs.org/>

**Sally Hayward
Plant Committee**

**RHS Rhododendron, Camellia and Magnolia Group
Photos Sue Eldridge, Jan Lomas and Joe Wainwright**

Trees and shrubs online



Alnus sieboldiana in Kwangyeung South Korea

This article first appeared in the *Gentian*, the magazine for members of Ness Botanic Gardens in Winter 2019

Plant identification is the mainstay of botanic gardens. Knowing what you have is the key that unlocks all the doors to understanding a plant, its usefulness for education and its significance in all respects. For plant identification the apex of identification and taxonomic work includes two major types of work, regional floras and comprehensive guides to particular plant groups (monographs). These are often aimed at an entirely botanical audience with minimal reference to horticulture. Sometimes a publication is written that transcends both botany and horticulture. One of the greatest of these was *Trees and Shrubs Hardy in the British Isles* first published in 1914 by William Jackson Bean (1863-1947). Bean was a superb plantsman, holding the position of Curator of RBG Kew between 1922 and 1929. This four-volume reference provided the definitive guide to every tree and shrub then known growing in the UK and included their identification, cultivation and listed notable specimens and other points of interest. A genuine labour of love, such things are never really finished. The last edition was written in the 1970s, with a Supplement written by Desmond Clarke in 1988.

In the last 30 years since the Supplement, many regions of the world (including Western China, Vietnam, and the Americas), have re-opened to modern botanists and plant collectors. Many new plants have been introduced or re-introduced into cultivation including most of the Ness Sorbus and Betula collections (e.g. *Sorbus hughmacallesteri* in 1990 by RBG Edinburgh). As such, in 2009 Bean received a major update with *New Trees: Recent Introductions to Cultivation* by John Grimshaw and Ross Bayton. Although it covered only a few shrubby species, it continued what Bean had started and included every known new introduction. Today there is a move away from books on taxonomy as it is a science that with molecular work is forever changing. Written books are out of date by the time they are published. The modern

answer is online flora and monographs, e.g. www.efloras.org. Bean's work today continues in this format, with Trees and Shrubs Online (TSO) (www.treesandshrubsonline.org). The authors were asked to contribute to this by writing the guide to Alders, work that should finish by spring. This includes writing accounts of the 40 species of alder and a definitive identification key. The guide will include photographs, many of which are taken at Ness, and information on biogeography, ecology, pests and diseases and cultivation.



Alnus pendula, Mount Hakkoda

So why alders? Ness has a significant collection of known provenance alders (*Alnus* spp.), including some unusual and beautiful plants. They vary from smallish shrubs found at high latitudes in boreal forests (e.g. *A. alnobetula* ssp. *crispa*, northern North America) to very large tropical trees (e.g. *A. acuminata* from Mexico south to Argentina). They flower usually in spring, and can start as early as January or February when few plants normally flower. There are also three species that also flower in autumn. All alders fix nitrogen in association with mycorrhizal fungi associations with their roots. Many species can therefore grow in difficult conditions and are frequently used in agroforestry systems as the additional nitrogen and soil stabilisation aids associated with crop growth. Some species are primary colonisers and have also been used in land reclamation works. Certain species are also excellent street trees (e.g. Italian Alder, *A. cordata* lining the railway on the Ness boundary, and *A. rubra*) being wind-firm, tough and not causing damage to pavements. Many species are drought-tolerant. As a test a Caucasian Alder, *A. subcordata* was planted in a site with 15cm of soil on top of bedrock. Although rather dwarfed for the species (it can grow 3m a year) it is perfectly happy. It is primarily the European *A. glutinosa* that is associated with riparian habitats. Although many species are not the most beautiful of plants compared to many others, they have their charms. One of the most beautiful is *A. sieboldiana*

from Japan and Korea (below Wood Henge and elsewhere at Ness) with glossy leaves, single large cones in autumn, shrubby to upright habit and beautiful yellow-green catkins in spring. One of the finest-leaved of all plants is *A. pendula* – a delicate smallish shrub with graceful many-veined foliage.



Alnus pendula Tanigawa-Dake

Some of the rarest plants in the collection include Nepalese Alder, *A. nepalensis*, sometimes called Nepal Black Cedar. It is an autumn-flowering species found in warm temperate to tropical regions throughout Asia, as far west as Himachal Pradesh (NW India) to Vietnam in the east. It is not especially hardy in our climate, but the single plant at Ness from Dehra Dun, Uttarakhand, India appears to be just that. This species is incredibly rare in cultivation in temperate regions and the plant at Ness might be unique in this country. Another very interesting plant is one that hails from Ulleung-do Island, off the coast of South Korea. A relative of *A. maximowiczii*, it has the largest known leaves of any alder and is quite possibly something new to science. It has amazing large yellow male catkins (20cm long) and



Alnus maximowiczii Ulleung-do

pure red female catkins in spring. It grows on a bone dry slope in the furthest reach of Ness Gardens (Stott Willow).

We hope you go and find many of these plants in the gardens, when you are able to. The biggest planting is adjacent to the children's play area, and if you are near do go and have a look at our amazing collection.

**Text and photos Tim Baxter and Hugh McAllister
Ness Botanic Gardens**

With grateful thanks to Ness Botanic gardens
<https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/ness-gardens/>

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Grimshaw, J. & Bayton, R. (2009). *New Trees: Recent Introductions to Cultivation*. Kew Publishing

Forthcoming events

At this stage we can't tell what the immediate future will bring, so we may be dependent on zoom talks through Spring and into early summer, so here is a selection of what's available.



Cheshire Gardens Trust talks

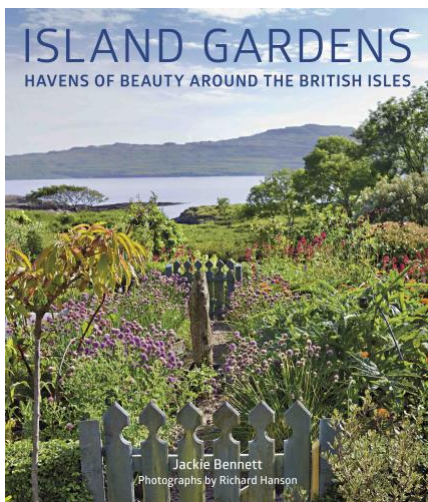
A new series of zoom talks to take us into spring and early summer. Each talk will be on a Monday at 3.30pm. More information will be circulated by email in March.

Monday 12th April, Sheer Folly – weird and wonderful garden buildings, Dr. Caroline Holmes

Caroline Holmes explores garden history and architecture with humour. She is an experienced lecturer working for a wide range of organisations and is a Course Director for the University of Cambridge Institute of Continuing Education. Many of you will have seen her giving some of the Gardens Trust talks. She is author of 11 books.

Monday 17th May, Jackie Bennett, Island Gardens – Journeys around the British Isles

Jackie is a writer and editor, author of the recently revised "Artists Garden" reviewed in the last newsletter, as well as "Shakespeare's Gardens". She writes for a variety of magazines, gives talks for groups and runs writing workshops. We thought Island gardens would give you a taste of delights to come after this time of Lockdown.



Monday 14th June, Dr Catherine Horwood, Beth Chatto's Garden

Catherine Horwood is a social historian with a passion for gardening and garments. A keen gardener for over thirty years, Catherine has created three gardens that have been open through the National Gardens Scheme 'Yellow Book', and was for many years an assistant organiser for the NGS. She is the authorised biographer for the late plantswoman, Beth Chatto, and writes for gardening magazines such as Gardens Illustrated and The English Garden.



Tuesday 2nd March 2.15 p.m. Favourite World Gardens - An Architect's Dozen - David Cash

For those of you who missed it the first time, David Cash repeating his zoom talk on behalf of **Wilmslow Wells for Africa**. Link to zoom from 2pm, talk at 2.15pm



Wilmslow Wells for Africa

Registered Charity No. 328310

[Link to Zoom Meeting 14.00 Tuesday March 2nd 2021](#)
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THE GARDENS TRUST

The Golden Afternoon of Gardens and Artists

A 5-part online series, on Tuesdays @ 10, starting March 2nd.

The decades before the First World War are often referred to as the Golden Afternoon of gardening. They were also the Golden Afternoon of garden painting. Presented by David Marsh and Caroline Holmes.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-golden-afternoon-of-gardens-and-artists-tickets-140640005041>

Unforgettable Gardens

A 4-part online series on Wednesdays @ 7 starting March 10th, exploring more gloriously Unforgettable Gardens, starting with Monet's garden at Giverny, £5 each or all 4 for £16

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/unforgettable-gardens-tickets-140892616609>

Plant-hunting in the Himalayas on Sat 13th March @ 10.30 am online via zoom.

Dorset Gardens Trust in association with TGT Speaker Mark Bobbin, Tickets £5

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/plant-hunting-in-the-himalayas-tickets-140690227257>

Gardens of the Early 17th Century

A 6-part online lecture series, once a week on Thursday mornings at 10 am with Sally Jeffery, Jill Francis & David Marsh, starting March 18, £30

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/gardens-of-the-early-17th-century-tickets-142274736567>

National Garden Scheme



While we wait for gardens to open properly, NGS is offering an opportunity to have a digital taste of their gardens, some with a guided tour by the owners or head gardeners

<https://ngs.org.uk/virtual-garden-visits/>

The English Garden

The English Garden Magazine advertises a range of talks. This is just a sample:

29 March 2021

Listen to world-renowned designer **Tom Stuart-Smith** talk about his masterplan for the new RHS garden at Bridgewater, near Manchester, in this 6pm fundraising lecture for the Kew Mutual Improvement Society. Hopefully due to open in May this year, the garden at Bridgewater has been in development throughout the pandemic, and Tom will look at how it has been built and planted despite the difficulties. Tickets cost £10. Buy tickets and find more information [here](#).

30 March 2021

Regular readers of The English Garden will probably be familiar with **Philippa Burrough's** incredible garden at Ulting Wick in Essex. It's one of the National Garden Scheme's most popular destinations, and in this

7pm talk for the NGS Philippa will describe its creation, as well as sharing practical details of how she puts on its impressive tulip display (see below). Tickets to the online talk cost £10 and can be booked [here](#).



An Unexpected Find



HS2 dig finds 16th Century gardens in Warwickshire

Spotted by Jane Gooch on the BBC website (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-coventry-warwickshire-55840474>). One of the best preserved ornamental gardens from the 16th Century has been found at an HS2 high-speed rail site. Once-sprawling flowerbeds and gravel paths have been uncovered at Coleshill, Warwickshire.

The huge formal gardens are thought to have been built by Sir Robert Digby to show off his wealth and status. Experts said they compared to similar gardens at Hampton Court and Kenilworth Castle.

The shape of what was once Coleshill Manor and an octagonal moat were originally picked up by aerial photography during a site assessment of the rail route. They are to the east of the Birmingham section of the high-speed line which is set to link the city to London

and then Manchester and Leeds.

Excavations revealed the manor house and large gardens, measuring 300m (984ft) from end to end, which date from the decades either side of 1600.

Wessex Archaeology carried out the dig over the past two years and project officer Stuart Pierson said it was a "once in a career opportunity" to work on it.

"Evidence of expansive formal gardens of national significance and hints of connections to Elizabeth I and the [English] Civil War provide us with a fascinating insight into the importance of Coleshill and its surrounding landscape," he said.

"We have also uncovered structures such as pavilions and some exceptional artefacts including smoking pipes, coins and musket balls, giving us an insight into the lives of people who lived here."

Dr Paul Stamper, a specialist in English gardens, described the preservation of the remains as "exceptional".

"There have only been three or four investigations of gardens of this scale over the last 30 years, including Hampton Court, Kirby in Northamptonshire and Kenilworth Castle, but this one was entirely unknown," he said.

"The garden does not appear in historical records, there are no plans of it, it is not mentioned in any letters or visitors' accounts."

Gilly de Ferranti



Gilly in front of the white wisteria

It was a great shock to hear of the sudden death of my dear friend Gilly de Ferranti just after Christmas. She had recently moved to the west side of Cheshire from Henbury and was looking forward to making a new and splendid garden.

Gilly was a very talented garden designer, who was much in demand, carrying out substantial projects in Cheshire and in London. Whilst running her professional practice (Gilly Brown Landscape Design), from her home in the grounds of Arley Hall, she was an active member of Cheshire Gardens Trust. She also made a major contribution to the Society of Garden Designers as the regional co-ordinator for the North West, which is when I met her.

Gilly married Sebastian de Ferranti in 2011 and moved to Henbury Hall. She put her design career on hold to work on the gardens at Henbury. She brought her considerable expertise to bear on editing over-mature

plants, opening up the views across the lake and managing repair of the historically valuable garden buildings. She also initiated new planting. The kitchen garden in particular benefitted from her energy and creativity. The Italian garden similarly was assessed and improved. Her touch was so precise and subtle, you just knew that the place was immeasurably better but you didn't know how it was done. The garden as it is today is almost as much Gilly's creation as that of the original layout by the Brocklehursts - a great achievement.

The de Ferrantis were generous supporters of Cheshire Gardens Trust. The gardens were opened to us on two occasions and our members were made welcome to the AGM and other events that were held in the Servants Hall.

Their happy marriage was ended by Sebastian's death in 2015. In his memory Gilly brought into reality their joint vision of a book about the building of Henbury Hall. Written by Jeremy Musson with an introduction by Gilly, *Henbury: An Extraordinary House* is a tribute to her husband's creation.



Henbury Hall from the 'Little Garden'

Jacquetta Menzies

Photos Jacquetta Menzies and Chris Parsons

Copy date for April newsletter is 31st March

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