



An Architect's Dozen

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Forthcoming events

- CGT Zoom talks, 22nd February - Michael Fish
- 15th March – Margie Hoffnung
- The Gardens Trust talks on zoom
<http://thegardenstrust.org>
- The National Garden Scheme is reviewing its garden opening every 2 weeks
<https://ngs.org.uk>

David Cash – An Architect’s Dozen

In November, when it was impossible to meet up in village halls, Cheshire Gardens Trust held the first of a series on online talks. In the first of these David Cash gave us a tour of twelve of his favourite gardens. He could not believe how difficult choosing twelve would be. He cheated and gave us a baker’s dozen of gardens across the world.

David began with Singapore. Since Singapore became an independent country in 1965, it has increased its land area by a quarter through reclamation from the sea. The architecture includes The **Marina Bay Sands Hotel** with a sky platform on top and a large conservatory which houses The Cloud Garden. This recreates the climate and plants of a tropical mountain, cool and moist with waterfalls flowing down a 35-metre-high structure clad in varieties of epiphytes. The building is divided into zones with walkways (see front cover), which take the visitor around and under the falls, with views of the city through the windows. As the climate outside is always hot and usually humid, being outside quickly becomes uncomfortable, so this inside garden is very welcome.



Staying in the Far East, David moved on to Japan, which he described as a “must see country”. He had found it very difficult to choose between the many gardens he had visited there but decided on the **Temple of the Silver Pavilion in Kyoto** (above). The building is not silver but, originally, was to have been covered in silver foil. The gardens of the temple are intended to be a place of meditation and contemplation. They include a sand garden with a sandcastle like mound which is said by some to be a representation of Mount Fuji and by others a platform for moon gazing. The grey gravel provides a contrast to the greenery of the plants and mosses. Moss, in its many varieties, is important in Japanese gardens, symbolising age, harmony and tradition. It is meticulously cared for and any intruding grass or weed is painstakingly removed. Dead trees however are left to decay, their forms providing a sculptural effect in the landscape. The temple is at the end of a trail known as

The Philosopher’s Walk, which David recommended to visitors to the region.



One of the gravel gardens at the silver temple represented a lake in China, which was David’s next destination, the **Garden of the Master of the Nets in Suzhou** (above). The garden was first created in 1140. Suzhou was then considered a centre of sophistication and culture. Marco Polo called it “The Venice of the East”. There were many gardens in the city. The Garden of the Master of the Nets is one of the smaller ones but gives the illusion of being large. The gardens are arranged as a series of rooms, with spaces in the walls, so each one is seen as if in a frame.

The **High Line in New York** was only completed last year, having opened in stages over ten years. It has been developed on an aerial Manhattan Railway built in the thirties to relieve traffic congestion. It stood derelict for years but now provides a mile and a half walk along its track. Piet Oudolf was responsible for the planting and tried to incorporate some of the natural species that had grown up in the years of neglect. The buildings that back onto the walk have been decorated; there is an area of shops and seats where people can sit and relax. It is so popular that it had to be temporarily closed due to the difficulty of maintaining social distancing in the narrow space.

The **Duisberg-Nord Park in Germany** has been visited by some Trust members. The park itself, previously a chemical works, is 49 square kilometres sitting within 800 square kilometres of the Ruhr valley. The industrial structures that dominate it are all UNESCO listed. A trail allows the visitor to explore the site safely. Some of the structures can be explored and installations have been incorporated. As with the High Line nature crept in while the site was derelict and planting has been sympathetic to this. It stands as a monument to the area’s industrial history.



In New Zealand, David and his wife had visited the **Ayrlies Garden near Auckland**, a vast garden created by a civil engineer and his horticulturist wife. Over forty years the couple transformed plain fields into a beautiful and varied garden, changing ground levels introducing water features, plants, large trees, and, more recently expanding into adjoining wetlands. A feature tree here is the *Taxodium distichum*, the swamp cypress (above), showing its pneumatophores, roots formed above ground when the tree is grown close to water. These red-brown "knees" allow oxygenated air to enter the tree's root system overcoming the anaerobic conditions around the underground roots.

Much closer to home David spoke of the fabulous landscape and planting at **Bodnant Gardens** (below). J.P. Pochin bought the Bodnant estate in 1874 and employed Edward Milner to redesign the land around the Georgian mansion. It is full of plant species from all over the world, brought back by Victorian plant hunters. Enhanced by its borrowed landscape, it has a woodland valley, formal lawns, lily ponds and generous terraces, as well as the famous laburnum arch.



Millennium Park in Chicago is a favourite with architects. David focussed on Cloud Gate, a large Anish Kapoor structure made from 160 stainless steel panels welded together and weighing 110 tons. It is polished to reflect the sky and nearby skyscrapers. Hugely popular, the public can walk underneath and look up to the distorted



Cloud Gate by Anish Kapoor

reflections.

David introduced us to **The Royal Alcazar Gardens in Spain**. Less well known and less crowded than the Alhambra, the gardens have been developed over years from a 10th century Moorish fort. It comprises a series of courtyard spaces, leading into the main garden area, which would have been where vegetables were grown and members of the household would gather. Water was important in the courtyards and The Courtyard of the Maidens (below) shows wonderful tiling. Its apparent tranquillity hides a story that the Moors demanded a tribute of 100 virgins from the local population and they would be brought into the courtyard.



The **Louisiana Museum of Modern Art** is not in America but in Denmark on the shore of the Öresund Strait, looking towards Sweden. It was founded by Knud Jensen, who had three wives, all called Louisa. The architects walked around the area many times, getting to know the space before designing the buildings, all of which interconnect. There are sculpture groves, mature trees, art installations, a wooded area and views from the windows of the buildings all planned to work together.

At the **Museu Calouste Gulbenkian in Lisbon** the key is the relationship between simple austere buildings, water, lush planting, light and shade. David remarked that this might not be so effective in rainy Britain.

David's twelfth garden was **Gaasbech Castle** (below) near Brussels, with its path of purple recycled glass. This has also been visited by some CGT members. There are simple formal gardens but also a 19th century vegetable garden where different methods of growing are displayed in colourful arrangements, reminiscent of displays at Chelsea. Belgium was a major supplier of fruit and vegetables at the time.



The **Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew** were David's sneaky 13th, a place he loves. The Temperate House opened in 1863 but construction continued for 36 years. Other fine glasshouse structures have followed. David showed us The Hive by Wolfgang Buttress, an amazing mesh installation representing the inside of a beehive. Its 1,000 LED lights are controlled by the vibrations of bees in the gardens.



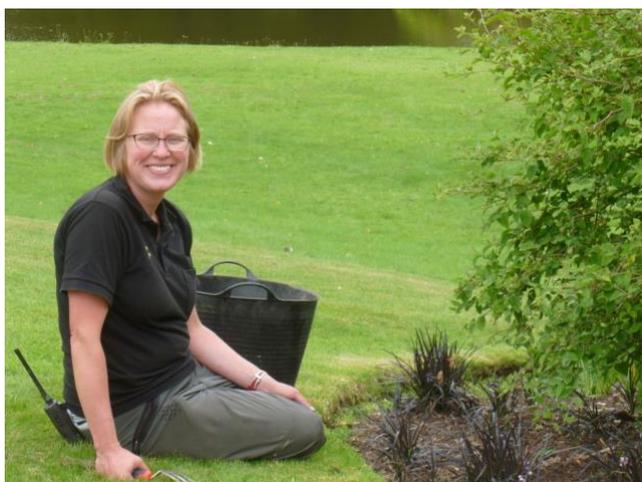
The Temperate House, Kew Botanic Gardens

When travel can resume David has given us a readymade programme, a garden to journey to each month and a bonus day trip to Bodnant.

Jenny Wood

Photos David Cash

Sarah Witts, Lyme Park Twelfth in our Head Gardener Series



Sarah Witts, a brief respite during Lockdown

Sarah told me her story via email, over an extended period during summer and autumn 2020. These are her words.

I was born and grew up in Northampton. My parents had a large garden with fruit and vegetables, hanging baskets and lots of cottage garden style borders, so I was involved in gardening from a young age. Both my sets of grandparents were keen gardeners too; my

summer holidays were often spent at my grandparents and my grandad used to have me swatting cabbage white butterflies with an old tennis racket in his veg garden.

Whilst I enjoyed gardening, I didn't consider it as a career option when I was at school. I went to Medical School in Liverpool and became a doctor but realised after 5 years that it wasn't for me. I'd always enjoyed gardening and when I was a doctor I spent most of my free time developing my garden. You could often find me out in the garden after finishing a 24 hour shift; it was a great way to relax and unwind. After deciding to leave Medicine, Horticulture was the obvious choice.

I attended the Welsh College of Horticulture where I completed an Advanced National Certificate in Horticulture. During this time I volunteered at Ness Botanic Gardens two days a week to learn practical skills. I went on to sit the RHS level 3 certificate and completed part of the RHS Masters in Horticulture but my job at Quarry Bank was so busy I didn't have the time to finish it.

After Ness I was fortunate to get a job with the

National Trust at Bodnant Garden as a gardener and was there for two and a half years. I worked with the shrub border team for most of this period helping to renovate the borders which were a bit overgrown. I moved to Dunham Massey as Assistant Head Gardener and was there for two years. I was responsible for the winter garden, which had already been planted when I arrived but I continued to develop the area. I also managed the large team of garden welcome volunteers.

I then became Head Gardener at Quarry Bank Mill, where I was involved in the restoration of the walled garden and glasshouses. It was an incredibly busy and rewarding job and I was sad to leave but, with most of the project work finished, I was ready for another challenge. I briefly worked at the RHS Bridgewater Garden in Worsley as the Walled Garden Manager but the role didn't suit me as it was almost entirely office based so I moved back to the National Trust this time at Lyme Park, again as Head Gardener.



The main lawn in autumn

A Head Gardener role with the National Trust is incredibly varied. In normal times I'm probably out gardening with the team around 50% of the time; the rest of my time is spent planning works, managing budgets, liaising with suppliers and contractors, sharing information for marketing purposes and plant recording and labelling amongst other things. Normally there are four gardeners and a team of around 60 practical volunteers. During the COVID-19 lockdown period I was the sole gardener for 12 weeks. I focussed on the formal areas of the garden, and left the more naturalistic areas to fend for themselves. I reduced the mowing regimes and only started to cut the lawn edges once the garden opened to the public. Lifting 5,000 bulbs and re-planting several thousands of bedding plants in the formal beds on my own was a challenge but it was worth it as visitors have really enjoyed the display. In June another colleague returned and in August we had three gardeners working alongside a reduced garden volunteer team.



Summer planting in front of the house

We received a donation from the Peak District National Trust Association last year which will enable us to continue our work renovating the herbaceous borders. The herbaceous borders are on a very grand scale and we've been tackling one of the four borders each year; this year we'll finish planting the second border with a hot colour scheme before starting to clear another border.



One of the herbaceous borders in August

We had a major flood in the garden in July 2019. Almost all the paths were damaged in some way and tonnes of debris was deposited around the garden which needed clearing up. In the two weeks following the flood the garden team repaired many of the paths in order to restore a circular route around the garden for visitors. Some paths such as the herbaceous border path and path running down into Vicary Gibbs were more seriously damaged and required specialist contractors to install new drainage and improved path surfacing. We still have several paths which require further repairs; unfortunately gravel paths are not covered under our insurance policy so we're tackling the repairs and improving the drainage as funds allow. I made the changes to the Italian garden before the flood but the new perennial scheme turned out to be very flood resilient. I changed the Italian garden from seasonal bedding displays to a perennial scheme for several reasons: cost, labour and sustainability. Traditionally the Italian garden was bedded out twice a



The Italian garden in autumn

year; bedding plants for the summer and bulbs planted in autumn to flower in the spring. Each year 15,000 bedding plants and 15,000 bulbs would need to be purchased and planted at considerable cost and requiring a lot of time to plant. As Lyme is prone to late frosts, the bedding plants would be planted at the beginning of June and would be removed in September so that the soil could be prepared for bulb planting whilst the weather was still reasonable. I felt that bedding out wasn't a sustainable practice particularly as the summer bedding only provided a short season of interest. With the perennial scheme, we've retained the tradition of only having a single flower colour in each of the shapes that makes up the parterre pattern. This makes for a graphic effect when seen from above which is the idea with the Italian garden. When choosing the perennials, I tried to ensure that there was a good mix of early and late colour to provide a long season of interest. For example, in the purple beds early colour is provided by *Salvia nemorosa* 'Caradonna' then shortly after *Geranium* 'Rozanne' starts flowering and carries on through into autumn; late colour is provided by *Aster x frikartii* 'Mönch'. We now have colour in the beds from March until the end of October and the time and money we have saved each year has

allowed us to start improving some of the other areas of the garden including the herbaceous borders, rose garden and orangery.

Our focus since we reopened the garden after lockdown has been keeping the garden looking as good as possible despite not having the full team on site. COVID-19 has significantly affected the finances of the National Trust and so we are having to review how we maintain and develop the garden with the reduced funds available. We've been propagating more plants to reduce the need to buy in new plants. This autumn we've cleared another of the overgrown herbaceous borders; over the spring and summer we'll ensure all the perennial weeds are removed prior to replanting in late summer 2021.

I love the structure of the garden at Lyme, the changes of level, the views and the contrast between the formal and informal elements of the garden. The different areas of the garden provide an opportunity to plant a wide range of different plants and ultimately it is the plants that are my primary passion.



*Lyme Hall see through the autumn colours of *Euonymus alatus**

Sarah Witts

Photos Sue Eldridge

With grateful thanks to Sarah Witts for giving up her time during a difficult year

Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe, "The Serpents of Moreton Marsh"



"A Factory Garden" by Ed Bennis. This talk was the second of the online talks organised by Cheshire Garden Trust.

The talk had two main components, the life and career of Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe (1900-1996) and a detailed look at one of his most significant designs at the Burton Foods site, formerly the Cadbury Chocolate Factory, at Moreton on the Wirral. The importance of the site has recently been recognised by Historic England and the watercourse is now included on the National Heritage List for England (NHLE) and is listed as Grade II, which is for "Sites of special interest and warranting every effort to preserve them". As a result Ed Bennis was pictured on the front cover of the recent GT News, overlooking the iconic Jellicoe waterway.

Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe had a long career. He trained as an architect but is known mainly for his landscape works. He was a founding member of the Landscape Institute in 1929 and wrote a number of books. He is



Statue of Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe at Sutton Place

recognised as one of the most respected landscape architects of the 20th century. His early work used scale, perspective and metaphor to influence designs and his work helped to inform modern thinking on industrial design. Some of his other works include the Caveman Restaurant, Cheddar Gorge (1934), Hemel Hempstead Water Gardens (1957-59), the Kennedy Memorial Gardens, Runnymede (1964-65), Shute House, Donhead St Mary, Wiltshire (1970-1990) and Sutton Place, Surrey (1980-1988).



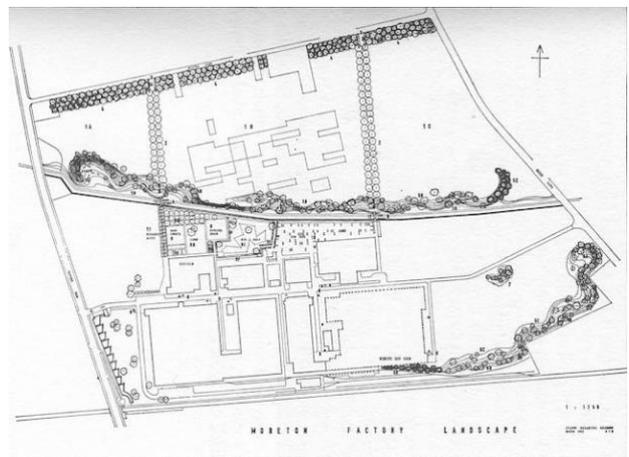
The Kennedy Memorial, Runnymede

The site at Moreton was built as a new chocolate factory for Cadbury's in the early 1950s and was planned to be part of the post war redevelopment of Liverpool and Birkenhead. Originally, it was planned to employ up to 450 people and at its maximum employed 6,000. It was a difficult site to work with being low lying and windy. Jellicoe apparently described the site as "diabolical". His plans included playing fields and other amenity spaces. The plans included bunds which were developed from excavated material and were designed to act as windbreaks on a very windy site. These were to form the "serpents". The watercourse is on the edge of the site and forms a barrier, "too wide to jump and too deep to paddle", between the site and the road. It comprised ten pools, divided by shallow weirs and each pool was shaped to



exaggerate perspective and disguise the whole length of the watercourse. It was partially designed to be looked down upon as people walked from the local station to the factory and there are several viewing platforms (see above).

Part of the site is now to be redeveloped for housing and the watercourse has been neglected and become overgrown. The Gardens Trust, including Ed himself, has been working to research the site for some time and, in discussion with managers at Burton Foods, discovered some of the original plans and drawings, whose significance had not been realised. These are now deposited with the Landscape Institute. Hopefully, this research and Grade II listing on the NHLE will lead to the restoration of this important piece of 20th century design.



Moreton Master Plan

Further information about the talk and photos, the site and the NHLE is available on the Cheshire Garden Trust website <http://www.cheshire-gardens-trust.org.uk/default.asp?Home>

Just type Jellicoe into the search facility.

Further information about Geoffrey Jellicoe and his contribution to 20th century landscape architecture can also be found in '100 20th Century Gardens and Landscapes', edited by Susannah Charlton and Elaine Harwood (see p.15).

Patricia Hazlehurst
Photos Ed Bennis

The new Cheshire Gardens Trust website



Despite COVID, a lot has been happening in Cheshire Gardens Trust. The Council of Management, in particular Ed Bennis, Sue Bartlett and David Cash, have been updating the website (see front page above). They've been supported by Roxbury Dynamic, the technical team; Tina Theis who undertook the indexing and search facility; and Barbara Moth and the Research and Recording team who

added so much information on Cheshire's historic designed landscapes. We've also got an updated Newsletter format to match.

Do visit the website. We hope you like the new look. I think you'll find a lot of new information to interest you as well as all the latest news, events and newsletter. The Parks and Gardens section is particularly good, with listings of parks, notable gardens and designers. To celebrate this we've started a new series on Cheshire parks and are seeking your help with providing photos and information. The Research and Conservation sections are also excellent. I particularly like the search facility. Originally aimed at providing an index of newsletter articles, this now provides a search facility for the whole site, so if you want to find out about a particular park or garden, head gardener or plant, even something simple like a daffodil, then search away.

If you would like to provide information or comment on the website, please contact info@cheshire-gardens-trust.org.uk

With grateful thanks to all those involved.

Sue Eldridge

The Parks of Macclesfield

If you have had a good look at the new Cheshire Gardens Trust website you will have seen a new section on Cheshire's Public Parks (<http://www.cheshire-gardens-trust.org.uk/?Cheshires-Public-Parks>). To celebrate this we are starting what we hope will be a new series in the newsletter on the parks of Cheshire. Please do explore your local parks. Take photos and send them to the website editor, Sue Bartlett (bartlettbs@gmail.com). And, if you feel like doing some research and writing an article on your local park/s, please contact the editor. The Research and Recording Group will also be happy to help with further information and references. Here is the first of the series on parks from Christine Arnold.

There are three parks in Macclesfield, two of which were created during the second half of the 19th Century and one from the beginning of the 20th Century.

West Park was the first, situated in the north-north west of Macclesfield, and adjacent to Macclesfield Cemetery. It is Grade 2 listed on the Historic England Register of Historic Parks and Gardens.

In the early 19th century, the poor of Macclesfield had very little time for recreation, given their long working hours. With the enclosure of the commons in 1804,



The glacial erratic in West Park

their access to open countryside became very limited. Crime rates began to rise, with recreation centred mainly on the inns and ale houses (there were 162 in 1850). Cock fighting and hooliganism became a problem for the local magistrates.

There was a need for more public space. Birkenhead Park, the first publicly funded park, had opened in 1847, and was followed by others, with a corresponding civilising effect on the working population in the surrounding areas. Health benefits in the children were also seen.

Surprisingly, the idea for a Macclesfield park came from a group of working men who wished to commemorate the death of Robert Peel in 1850 with a memorial. He had been a popular Prime Minister with ordinary people because of his repeal of the corn laws and introduction of factory standards. Rather than using funds to erect a statue it was decided to form West Park. This was a popular decision and in just 3 weeks £300 had been collected from 17000 workers in the town known as 'The Pennies of the Poor'.

The park opened in 1854 and is 15 acres in size. There are open, grassed areas with mature conifers and deciduous trees. Despite being close to the main road, the evergreen rhododendrons inside the walls on two sides help to buffer the noise from the surroundings. The park is well maintained and features colourful seasonal flowerbeds.

Features include the West Park Boulder. This huge granite glacial erratic was found originally in an excavation in Oxford Road, Macclesfield. It was dragged to the park in July 1857 by a team of horses to add to the Park's interest. It can be traced to the bedrock of Ravensglass in Cumbria, from where it was thought to have been carried by glaciers during the ice-age.



West Park Museum, situated near the West entrance, opened in 1898. It was purpose built to house the Egyptian artifacts collected by the explorer Marianne Brocklehurst, daughter of the Mill owner John Brocklehurst, with the help of her brother Peter Pownall Brocklehurst. It was donated 'for the education, refinement and pleasure of the people for all time to come' and is a beautiful red brick and terracotta building decorated with carvings (see photo of detail above).

There is a children's play area in which, rather unusually, can be found 3 standing stone set in a triangle and formed from gritstone which, although not in their original location (they were thought to be sited at a farm in Sutton) are in fact early medieval cross shafts. They have lost their heads, but form a rare group of monuments with round shafts, dating from the late 9th century and give some insight into the local flowering of Christianity (Historic England; scheduled



Medieval cross shafts in children's playground monument, list entry number 1012884).

There is also a Crown Green Bowling Green of some size beside the café, as well as tennis courts and a skateboarding and cycle riding area.

Victoria Park was donated to the people of Macclesfield in 1894 by Francis Dicken Brocklehurst on the site of Fence House and its grounds.

The house was demolished and the 12 acre park formed on its grounds. This was one of a series of gifts by the family to the townsfolk. For that reason, a pillar was erected following his death in 1905 by 'Macclesfield Men' in a central position in the park in 1908 to thank Francis Brocklehurst on behalf of the people of Macclesfield (see below).



The park is situated on the east side of the town between Buxton Road and Hurdsfield Road, on the edge of Fence Avenue, and was intended to give space for recreation to the people living on that side of town, which was becoming very congested. A public holiday was declared for its opening. The park including areas for sports, a bowling green, pavilion, bandstand, and aviary was made good use of by the local inhabitants and is still well used today.

The most recent park and the largest, is **South Park** which was opened in August 1922 and is 42 acres. It

was presented to the town by Alderman William Frost and opened by the donor. A stone to commemorate the opening can be seen near to the entrance to the pavilion.



The bandstand in spring

There are enclosed areas for basketball, tennis and table tennis. A relatively new skatepark which opened in 2009 was designed with the help of some local skateboarders. There is also a children's play area. One of the most striking features of the park is the surrounding countryside, which can be seen from the elevated, open, grassed areas on the southern side of the pool, with striking views up towards the Peak District (see below) and back towards the town centre.



View from West park towards the Peak District

Further information can be found on the following websites
<http://www.cheshire-gardens-trust.org.uk/?Cheshires-Public-Parks> :

https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/leisure_culture_and_tourism/parks_and_gardens/macclesfield_area_parks/macclesfield_area_parks.aspx

<https://www.thefriendsofvictoriapark.org>

[WEST PARK, Cheshire East - 1001495 | Historic England](#)

https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC22Y38_west-park-boulder-stone

Ian Laurie *East Cheshire Parks and Gardens*,
 Mowl and Mako *Historic Gardens of England – Cheshire*

Christine Arnold

Photos Christine Arnold and Sue Eldridge

London Gardens with the Cheshire Gardens Trust/Ness Botanic Gardens Travel Bursary Award

If you fancy a trip to the London area with a garden focus then I fully recommend following this trail: RHS Wisley, Kew Gardens, Chelsea Physic Garden, the Garden Museum and the Royal Parks. En route I researched ideas for school visits and interpretation panel styles. It was a real treat to have the opportunity to visit these places, meet colleagues and share ideas thanks to the Cheshire Gardens Trust and Ness bursary award funding. The bursary was established in 2017, with the aim of helping RHS Students and Ness staff to broaden their horticultural, botanical or landscape knowledge This is a snapshot of my journey in 2019.

First stop was with Kyle McHale, educator at **RHS Wisley** who led a horticultural workshop set in the teaching glasshouse. The Year 6 children proudly took home boxes of cuttings that they had prepared. Later Kyle facilitated a 3D art session, inspired by the art of Andy Goldsworthy, with Year 2 children, who created some eye-catching sculptures in the grounds. Finally, I met with a volunteer who explained an ambitious new RHS development, the *National Horticultural and Learning Centre*; one wing a scientific research facility and the other a teaching facility with welcoming entrance gardens.



3D art at Wisley

Next stop was with Alison Dent, educator, based at **The Look Out Education Centre**, Royal Parks. She included me in an orienteering workshop for a Y6 group which was initiated with an indoor session to build skills in grid referencing and map symbol identification. The children excitedly explored Hyde Park to locate 'treasure' such as statues and interesting tree specimens. 'The Look Out Centre' has its own tiny nature area – pond, meadow and the lightning tree trunk (ideal for dead wood habitat interpretation) where many children learn about nature.



Alison Dent with the lightning tree

Then followed the **Botanic Garden Education Network Conference** at Royal Botanic Garden Kew, an essential part of a garden educator’s yearbook, and a whole chapter in itself! One highlight was a preview of the Christmas lights show which included the Temperate House (largest surviving Grade 1 Victorian glasshouse in the world). This houses Kew’s temperate plant collection. The building and collection have recently been restored with a £14.2 million Lottery grant. Interpretation (see below) in the Temperate House was simple, clear and in keeping with the Aegis Evolution Garden in the grounds.



The **Garden Museum** is an oasis in busy Lambeth, founded by Rosemary and John Nicholson in 1977 in order to rescue the abandoned church of St Mary’s which had been due for demolition. It is the burial place of John Tradescant (c1570-1638), the



Poster of Bees Seeds at The Garden Museum

first great gardener and plant-hunter in British history. The exhibition was bright and airy including tools and artworks relating to gardening. The artwork included a poster advertising Bees Seeds, a company set up by Arthur Bulley (Ness founder), whose aim was to sell seeds to everyone and spread the love of gardening. My attention was drawn to an exhibition about garden sheds. This emotive exhibition provided an insight about what sheds can mean to people.

Chelsea Physic Garden is a four-acre south-facing walled garden set up by the Worshipful Society of Apothecaries in 1673 to grow medicinal plants. The site has a very mild microclimate so even olives can be grown here! There was a rather overwhelming amount of information to read, however some of the interpretation was accessible via 3D-exhibits.



3D exhibition about cotton

In just one week I had many experiences, met some inspiring educators and returned wanting to spread the word about what London’s gardens have to offer. I hope everyone will have the chance to visit these sites sometime in the future.

Rose Froud, Education Supervisor, Ness Botanic Gardens

A Mid-Winter anecdote

Excerpt from *Villa and Cottage Gardening, specially adapted for Scotland, Northern England and Ireland*, by Alexander Sweet, 1889. Page 119, found by **Joy Uings**. An old Scot who grew rare Auriculas in Manchester, was visited by a kind English lady, one awful winter, to see if she could help them. They “required nothing”, and when the lady felt how few blankets were on the

bed she offered to send some, but again “they had plenty, for Sandy had a pair covering his frame Auriculas!!!” – self-denial with a vengeance, and the lady could appreciate it too, as she sent an Archangel mat for the frame, to keep the old man’s darlings cosy, and free the blankets for their proper use.

Powis Castle Gardens



On one of the last few warm sunny days of autumn, before COVID Tiers and dreary weather locked us in again, we visited Powis Castle (above), a jewel of the National Trust's gardens, and one I'd never visited before. The first delight was the approach through surrounding parkland, folds of land nestled at the castle's base, full of ancient, veteran trees and feeling like a hidden land that time forgot; the castle perched high on a ridge, with stunning views out over the Welsh borders. Then the garden itself, those famous terraces dropping down the steep hillside to the valley below.



During the Civil War, Powis had been taken and used as a garrison by Parliamentary forces and so was never seriously damaged as many other castles were. With the Restoration came its renovation and the gardens were begun in the late 1680s, making this one of the last of the formal Renaissance inspired Baroque gardens before the change in style of the 18th century. Three terraces were constructed, the first with classical niches; the second with arched loggia; and the third with glazed hot house (above) for overwintering the specimen plants that would be placed out in summer. This was before they realised lack of light would be an issue as well as temperature. From there grass terraces with steps dropped to an extensive formal water garden with statuary. Classical features extended up the wooded hill beyond. And thus the garden stayed, like sleeping beauty, for about 100 years.

By the late 1780s, the more relaxed landscape style of gardening had its influence, with the water gardens

removed and the clipped topiary yews, original to the 1690s planting, allowed to grow loosely and naturally. William Emes, landscape gardener, was employed by the 1st Earl of Powis to make improvements to the estate. The ridge beyond the water garden became a fully wooded Wilderness, with paths leading to a late 18th century dip pool built within a grotto of rocks and ferns. The remains of the early formality are visible in the broad central grassy clearing that runs between rows of the original yews, now gnarled old trees, and finishing in a large stone urn.



The mid-Victorian period brought a return to an Italianate style of garden. Statues and urns, original to the early garden, were moved around the terraces and castle grounds and the, by now large and loose yews, were once again tightly clipped, which they have been ever since, giving the iconic quirky shapes they now are (see above). The final phase of major development came in the early 20th century, when the old walled kitchen garden and orchard were cleared (moved to a site not visible from the house) and developed as formal rose and water gardens, complete with peacock.

While my husband sat and sketched (see sketch below), I was in my element peeling away the layers of history (a particular delight was coming across a row of stone clam shells on a wall buried beneath the huge topiary), but also enjoying the modern planting that has now brought the terraces bang up to date, with exotics, late flowering tender salvias, grasses, and fabulous autumn colouring shrubs. A beautiful garden, and a jewel indeed.



Medieval Gardens



Whilst it may not have been possible to attend Gardens Trust lectures in person this autumn there have been plenty to enjoy on line and most of these would not, normally, have been accessible to us.

The Gardens Trust produced a series of six lectures on The Medieval Garden. In a brief article it is impossible to cover the wealth of information conveyed, or, sadly, the many fine illustrations presented by the lecturers, Caroline Holmes and David Marsh.

Medieval Britain was vastly different from today and the church impacted on all aspects of life in a way it is difficult, now, to conceive. The garden was the province of church and the nobility. There are no extant Medieval gardens but information about them can be found in accounts and other records of the times, in books of hours, books like *Le Roman de la Rose*, altar pieces and other paintings and tapestries. The garden was distinctly different from the park, which, though an enclosed area which belonged to a particular owner, was specifically created for hunting. In Medieval times England was closely linked to France and the French Kings built gardens for their Queens, a little away from the palace, a place for the women to relax in pleasant surroundings. The wealthy nobility copied this. Paintings show gardens enclosed by walls or trellis. Any garden needed to be enclosed; there was plenty of wild life about to invade it. Gardens needed much maintenance and a gardener could have quite a high status, particularly one who was a specialist in particular tasks, such as pruning or grafting.

The medieval world was full of symbolism both religious and romantic. The Virgin was associated with lilies, blue flowers, irises and roses but roses were also the symbol of Venus, goddess of love. Strawberries

symbolised the crucifixion, violets could be symbolic of the virtue of humility but also of erotic love. Lily of the valley was popularly known as “Mary’s earrings”. The flowers in art works, therefore, are not just a pretty addition. Paintings of the secular garden show ladies reclining on turf seats in gardens containing what were still exotic plants. If the garden shown contained carnations, then not fully hardy, it indicated that its owner was a very rich man, able to provide warmth for the flower in winter. In a romantic situation, if a lady accepted a carnation from a suitor, she accepted his love. There is more to a garden than meets the eye.



The garden of paradise, unknown Rhenish artist between 1410 and 1420

Monks treated gardening as a sacred duty. A monastery would contain several gardens including a physic garden, vegetable plots and orchards. The plots were divided by grass paths for easy tending to the plants. The paths and cloister grass would be dug up and re-cultivated each year because the pretty, flower speckled grass was meant to appear as a mille fleurs landscape, not a wild flower meadow. Wild flowers grew everywhere and it was necessary to stop invasive species taking over and ruining the effect. The gardens did not have box hedges, as often depicted in reconstructions of medieval gardens, as the dwarf box was not introduced into Britain till the Restoration. Leeks, onions, celery, a basic lettuce and parsnips were grown, along with a variety of herbs. Also grown were plants that are now considered weeds but were then cultivated as vegetables, such as ground elder. The abbot, who held the social status of a baron, had his own garden, where he could entertain important visitors. This might contain a water feature. Monks were well aware of the need for cleanliness and the need to separate water for food use and sewage. The monastery was a sensual environment with flowers for the church, scented plants, different tasting vegetables, greenery, fine architecture and music. Convents also

had gardens, cultivated by the nuns. It is, however, likely that lay persons, from the local village, were employed to do the heavy weeding!

There were few truly native plants at the end of ice age. The Romans brought many species, including herbs and some vegetables. The Normans brought wallflowers and pinks. As the years passed crusaders and traders carried seeds of more exotic species, which were cultivated and developed over time.

On a larger scale the really rich could modify the entire landscape surrounding their castles. It might be assumed that the wide moats round castles, such as Bodiam and Leeds, were for defensive purposes but, as England settled down in the years following the Norman conquest, there was not the same need for defence in areas away from the borders. Research has revealed that several castles were part of major earth works, incorporating water systems and the important fish ponds but also, raised view points from which the castle might be admired. Rivers might be diverted to provide the necessary water source. Did Capability Brown know about this? This was landscape engineering on a huge scale, long before he became famous.



Bodiam Castle, Kent

The Trust is producing another series, The Tudor Garden, starting on 7th January 2021. Having found how many people have been reached through these presentations, the Trust intends to continue the series into subsequent centuries, even once restrictions have been lifted, so there is much to look forward to in 2021.

Jenny Wood

Images from the internet, public domain

CGT and Education

These sad, quiet times are happily providing the Council of Management (CoM) with opportunities, the first of which has been the development of our 'new look' Website which we hope you are enjoying exploring. Now we are giving thought as to how we might expand our education activities.

The Student Travel Bursary which we run in partnership with the University of Liverpool at Ness Botanic Gardens is necessarily on hold, though Rose Froud did manage to undertake a travel bursary to London in November 2019 (see page 10). In the meantime the current revision to the RHS qualifications is providing the opportunity for a Student Practical Placement at



Emma Rhodes on placement at The lost Gardens of Heligan

Ness with CGT transferring the Bursary for the time being to fund books and equipment.

To explore this subject further, the CoM recently had a very interesting presentation from Stephen Ensell, Education Officer with the British Association of Landscape Industries (BALI). Their website is well worth a look, particularly in respect of their training and work with charities:

<https://www.bali.org.uk/home/>

Stephen's brief is to inspire younger generations to take up a career in all aspects of landscaping. He felt that many young people are now more aware of their social responsibility in respect of environmental issues. BALI's 'Go Landscape' initiative has targeted GCSE students upwards and those looking for career changes, including military retirees, also form an essential audience. Stephen reported on BALI's recent increase in work across the industry and the anticipated further increase in the next twelve months as a result of anticipated redundancies. It is surprising to learn that the value of the industry to the UK is £24 billion and 1 horticulture position in every 62 UK jobs! Sadly, there is still a great need to recruit sufficient skilled people to the landscape industry and many of the training courses in both further and higher education have been depleted in recent years. There is currently a 70% skill gap in the industry!

With this in mind, 'Go Landscape' regularly attends

careers events, many in secondary schools and colleges, outlining what fantastic wide-reaching opportunities the industry offers; from small scale gardening, horticulture, construction and design, through to extensive landscape projects involving skills in project, financial and people management. The fundamental objectives are to counter the common perception of it being unskilled work and to inspire both youngsters and returners to appreciate that the skills needed are extremely diverse and offer many varied career paths. Stephen was pleased to forge links with Cheshire Garden Trust and hoped that the two organisations might find ways of working together, such as interested CGT members helping at BALI events in local schools and colleges.

You may remember our first Bursary recipient, Emma Rhodes, who is a primary school teacher of over 28 years' experience, successfully working with children, their parents and special needs children in the school allotment which she developed. So, with junior and primary school children in mind, CGT plans to form a group to investigate the practicalities of offering small grants to local schools working to improve their grounds for educational purposes and to instill in young children an interest in and love of nature.

Your Help Please!

The CoM currently consists of only six members so assistance in progressing our Education plans is urgently needed. This should only involve joining in

two or three 'virtual' discussions plus a little research. No experience is required, although we would appreciate contributions from people with a background in education. Of course, longer-term involvement would not be unwelcome! Please speak to any CoM member or email: info@cheshire-gardens-trust.org.uk

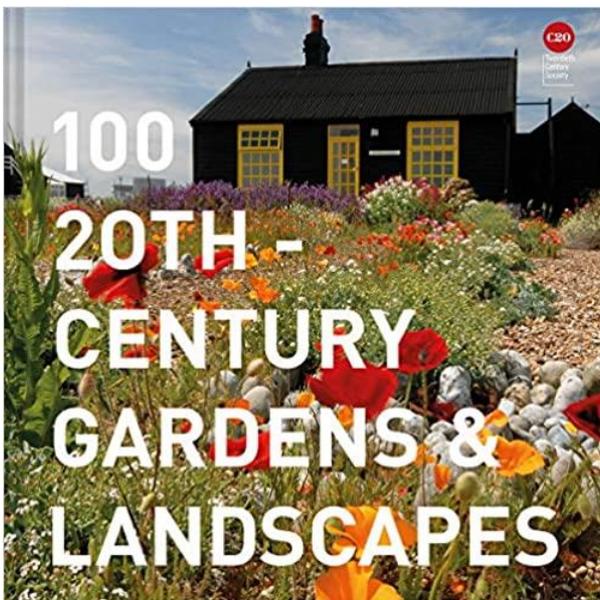
These recent months have seen an increased interest in gardening, visiting gardens and parks and enjoying the countryside. We hope that parents' and grandparents' keen interests might lead to budding horticulturalists and even future landscape architects among their off-springs! Positive feedback from the children is so heart-warming and gives us hope for the future.

Margaret Blowey and Sue Bartlett
Photos Emma Rhodes and Ed Bennis



Encouraging children from an early age

Book Review



If you have been watching the Zoom garden lectures, David Cash's Architects Dozen, Ed Bennis's talk on Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe and in January The Gardens Trust's 'Post war Designed Landscapes' and are still thirsty for more, this may be just the book for you. I almost wished I'd read and written about this for the October edition of the newsletter as it would have made a good

Christmas present, but perhaps you can just treat yourself.

Each entry in this book is short, usually just a half page of text and two photos, though some are more extensive; along with four longer articles, such as 'The private garden in the 20th century' or 'Recognising the value of the modern urban landscape'. A very simple concept but the coverage is immense, private and public gardens, civic buildings, new towns and estates, industrial buildings of all sorts, cemeteries and memorials, waterways, parks, roof gardens and university campuses, from the very traditional to the ultra modern. Some are very familiar, such as Sissinghurst, Portmerion, Great Dixter, but many are not and I certainly get itchy feet to go out and explore. It would be difficult to pick out favourites. All the great names are here, Gertrude Jekyll, Percy Cane, Rosemary Verey, Penelope Hobhouse, Marjorie Fish, Beth Chatto, Sylvia Crowe, Brenda Colvin, John Brookes, Geoffrey Jellicoe, and more recently Tom Stuart Smith and Piet Oudolf. We will all pick out different aspects. Having been bought up in a new town, the new towns, estates (such as the Byker estate and Barbican Centre) and



West Dean Gardens

gardens are fascinating as is the M62 and surroundings and Hope Valley cement works. I was surprised at how many of the very late 20th century developments were so iconic, such as West Dean Gardens, the Eden Project, the Queen Elizabeth Park (Olympic Park) and Trentham gardens.

This is a real treat and it just illustrates how we should value the post war gardens and designed landscapes which we perhaps take too much for granted.

Sue Eldridge

Susan Bourne 1950 – 2020



Susan was born in Littleborough, Rochdale. Attending boarding schools in Yorkshire fostered a life long interest in architecture and the countryside. In particular the regular replenishment of the nature table gave her a comprehensive knowledge of wild flowers. This enabled her, even from a speeding car, to identify the roadside flora as it flashed past.

After University in Lancaster and Manchester, the whole of Sue's working life was spent at Towneley Hall, a country house museum on the outskirts of Burnley. Starting her career as Assistant Curator in 1972 and becoming the Curator in 1988, Sue oversaw a major redevelopment project funded by the Heritage Lottery

Fund that extended the Hall on the footprint of the former service wing. This provided a lecture theatre, library, shop, staff offices and exhibition preparation space, freeing up space in the Hall for displays of ceramics, Egyptology and local history. Sue also expanded the collections of regional furniture, decorative arts and material related to the Towneley family who had owned the Hall prior to its purchase by Burnley Corporation in 1936.

Retiring in 2010, Susan dedicated more time to her private passions - art, books and her two gardens in Cheshire and The Lakes. She was an indefatigable visitor of exhibitions, cathedrals, churches, country houses and gardens in Britain and Europe with family and friends. A member of both Lancashire and Cheshire Gardens Trusts, she greatly enjoyed the trips to gardens in Germany, Portugal and Sweden led by Ed Bennis and his course on garden history earlier this year.

Only days before her sudden and unexpected death she had completed the installation of a stylish fruit cage in her Cheshire garden and purchased an unusual conifer to plant in the Lakes. She will be remembered for her infectious enthusiasms for gardens, knowledge of plants, love of the countryside, and sense of fun. She will be much missed by friends and family.

Moira Stevenson

In the next edition we will be featuring an article on the talk by Simon Gulliver, the second part of Gordon Darlington's article on the Cwm Dyli power station and pipeline, the Parks of Stockport and much more.

Copy date for Spring newsletter is 14th February

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