

Patron: The Viscount Ashbrook
Charity Number: 1119592

Inside:

- Meaning and Illusion in the Chinese garden
- Research & recording training day
- Delightful Daphnes and a potter's garden
- Caldwell Nursery Archives

Some future events:

- Dunham Massey; bring a picnic – 9 August
- Castle Park, Frodsham and Plant Sale – 15 September
- See the autumn colour at Jodrell Bank Arboretum; national collection of Sorbus and Malus – 21 October

On a fine sunny morning, a group of CGT members assembled in the café at Cholmondeley Castle in keen anticipation of a Grand Day Out...



The day started in good style with coffee and biscuits and then we repaired to the Castle entrance to meet our guides, Ian Dunn and Tonya Chirgwin. This was to be a particular treat as the Castle is not generally open to the public so we felt very privileged.

Before entering the building, we learnt some of the history of the family and the property. The family and lands date back to the Norman Conquest.

Several strokes of luck or good management resulted in improved circumstances for the family over the centuries (despite some less auspicious choices in backing the 'wrong' side in Hotspur's rebellion and the

Civil War) until Hugh Cholmondeley reached high office under Queen Anne and George 1.

Later, the marriage of the 4th Earl in 1791 brought the hereditary office of Lord High Chamberlain to the family and he was created 1st Marquis of Cholmondeley in 1816.

The present Castle was built in the early 19th century by the 1st Marquis and replaced the Hall which stood in low-lying land next to the chapel. The new site on top of a hill took advantage of the far-reaching views. Originally a fairly simple Regency villa, the house was soon extended and embellished to its present

appearance. The Marquis was responsible for much of the design himself, and used building material from the old Hall, both in the construction of the walls and inside the house where there are wonderful old doors and panelling.

It is hard to describe fully all that we learnt and saw inside the Castle, but, very briefly: there are many interesting family portraits; some 'fake' armour and armaments made of ceramic (but looking very authentic); a striking black marble staircase with wrought-iron banisters and panels. This was moved from the original Hall, as was a set of wonderful 17th/18th century tapestries with still-vibrant colour and depictions of everyday life such as drunken revelry and pig sticking amongst the bucolic scenery.

There were also many touches and reminders of the original 'romantic Gothic' style of decoration favoured by the 1st Marquis who was probably familiar with this style from his uncle, Horace Walpole, builder of Strawberry Hill.

But above all, this is a home, lived in and much loved. Every room had an array of flowering plants and through the windows were views of the grounds and the gardens.



And so to lunch, leaving the drawing room through French windows into a secluded terraced garden full of fragrant planting and passing beside the formal lily pond and down the daisy-strewn steps to cross the croquet lawn.



Refreshed and restored, we met the Head Gardener, Bill Brayford, for a tour of the grounds. Walking along the drive where uncut grass shelters many

wild orchids as well as buttercup, wild carrot and dandelion, we turned to look back at the magnificent white wrought iron gates and screen (below) made by Robert Bakewell.



A woodland area with azaleas and rhododendrons brought us to a laburnum grove where efforts had been made to remove early and late flowerers so that a glorious golden haze appeared as the trees blossomed simultaneously. Nature will not always play ball, and the goal has not yet been achieved, but the grove was nonetheless stunning.



A side path now led off into The Duckery, a lakeside area that has recently been restored from a very neglected state. Bridges, rills, waterfalls and a Gothic 'ruin' on a knoll (below) made for an interesting walk around a small lake and as we returned to the path, we had some wonderful views of the Castle on its hill and of some of the many mature trees surrounding it.



The sun was shining and it was a wonderful time to see the trees with young foliage and varied colour. There are some beautiful acers, a 50-year-old *Davidia involucrata* (Handkerchief Tree), *Abutilon*, *rubina*, *taxodium* and *metasequoia* as well as splendid cypress, cedars and of course oaks. A return visit to see the autumn colour would be very rewarding.

Within the vast grounds, there are several smaller gardens. The rose garden was in beautiful bloom with magnolia and clematis, lavender in old stone beds covered in lichen and moss as well as the necessary roses. This was a sun trap which in summer must be humming with bees and butterflies.

Rounding a corner, we found another lake with a small island on which stands a temple and at the far end, the terrace overlooking the Temple Garden. More lush planting of shrubs and trees gives a peaceful and contemplative atmosphere.

An impressive double herbaceous border has full and very varied planting. Climbing back towards the Castle, we were surprised and delighted by a pebble mosaic by Maggie Howarth, a memorial to the 6th Marquis who died in 1990 and whose wife Lavinia is largely responsible for the wonderful gardens as they are today.



Above a 'handkerchief' from *Davidia involucrata*; below left the pebble mosaic by Maggie Howarth

Our tour ended, as all the best tours do, with a shopping opportunity as we reached the plant sales area which occupies the old walled kitchen garden. Vegetables and soft fruit are still grown to feed the house and it was lovely to see peas and beans growing in neat rows. There were many plants for sale and many of us took the opportunity to buy a sample of something admired earlier.

Although the visit now finished officially with a fine afternoon tea, I had noticed the woods climbing behind the café and took the opportunity to walk there before leaving.

The air was pulsating with butterflies and bees and everywhere birds were singing. At the top of the ride, I was rewarded with marvellous views across the Cheshire plain towards the Welsh hills.

Cholmondeley Castle Gardens seems to be one of those places that just gets better and better and I am looking forward to visiting again at different times of the year.

Jacqui Jaffé

A CGT garden for the Tatton Show

There have been important developments in CGT's plans for a show garden at the Tatton Flower Show next year.

We have a prospective sponsor – a major Cheshire manufacturer – and the final design needs to reflect the company ethos: innovative design, quality and craftsmanship. The theme for the garden is 'Made in Cheshire'. Preliminary discussions have been held with this company, and the response was very encouraging.

Jacquetta's design practice is based on sustainability and mitigating the effects of climate change. She therefore prefers not to work with the prospective sponsor and has withdrawn her design and so we are opening up the design process to CGT members and to outsiders; a review panel will be established to choose the most appropriate designer for the garden.

If you would like to propose a design, or if you know of a designer who would like to do so, then in the first instance, please contact: Ed Bennis, 0161 247 1118 or e.m.bennis@mmu.ac.uk.

CGT Chair, Ed Bennis, travels around the world, visiting a variety of gardens. In the April edition he wrote about the Keukenhof Gardens in Holland. Here is subject is further away and is illustrated by his own photos.

Meaning and Illusion in the Chinese Garden

As with the Persian garden, it is often difficult to relate the Chinese garden to western Europe, although there has been the fashion for Chinese artefacts, particularly porcelain and furniture, for centuries.

There is also confusion between the Chinese and Japanese garden, of which the latter has its basis within the Chinese garden.



Master of the Nets:

A large panel painting at the entrance to this garden shows the composition of the pavilions and gardens. Everything is orientated around the central water feature.

There is a philosophical base to both: The Japanese garden takes its inspiration from nature as does the Chinese garden, however, it is influenced by various beliefs such as Shinto, Hindu, Taoist, Buddhism, and often over-lapping each other.



Humble Administrators Garden:

views are framed and become constantly changing as one approaches the entrance. The rocks represent distant mountains while the gravels often portray water.

It is the Daoist love of nature combined with the Confucian emphasis on rites and duties that forms

the philosophical foundation of the Chinese garden. ¹

Buddhism came to China in the 5th century and reinforced the principle of man's spirituality connected to nature.

The Golden Age of Gardens was in the Song dynasty (1127-1279) where nature was abstracted and embellished with the principle features of water and rocks. These were enhanced with plants and animals, particularly birds.

None of these gardens are left except as references in

Master of the Nets:

the garden is a sequence of views, restful and dramatic, that are designed for contemplation



literature, however, we are left with incredible examples of both imperial gardens and the private garden – mostly from the early Qing dynasty (17-18th centuries). Lian Tao refers to the gardens as 'graceful and refined and close to the subtle harmony of wilderness.

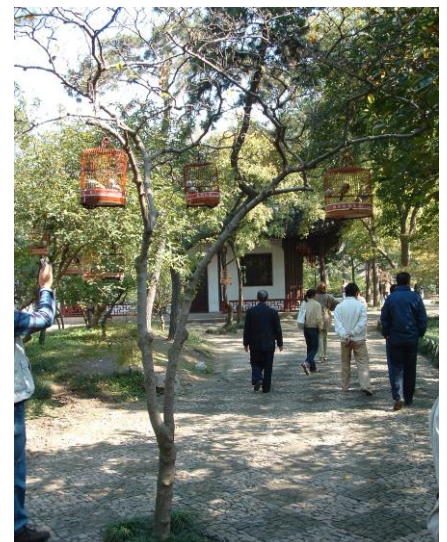
The gardens were originally built by gentlemen scholars,

Humble Administrators Garden:

bird cages are hung along the walk

Happy Singing & Cheerful Talk

'The birds are singing, the flowers are smiling, and the fish are diving. This is a dialogue between people and nature, and brings the joy of autumn.'



the rich and ranked classes of a feudal society. There are two different types of private gardens, one was the simple

¹ Jellicoe, Goode & Lancaster *The Oxford Companion to Gardens* Oxford University Press, 1986 p111

scholar's retreat for self-cultivation, such as the Suzhou gardens. They were built to provide a refuge from the tensions of society.

The other type tended towards a more ostentatious and elaborate display of wealth and in the style of the Imperial parks.² In contrast the imperial gardens were grand affairs suitable for holding large events for the court, yet they also had smaller, more intimate gardens for the royal family to relax within.

Multiple pavilions form the spatial structure of the private gardens with rocks and water providing the detail. There is a surprisingly limited use of plants. They are generally used as a backdrop, almost like a theatre curtain, or as sculptural elements that often reflect the seasons.

Features are ascribed poetic names such as 'The Pavilion in the Lotus Breezes', 'The Hall of Distant Fragrances' or 'The Fragrant Isle'. Their very names induce a feeling of understanding and relaxation, an escape from worldly pressures, as well as the links between gardens and the arts including painting, calligraphy, music and poetry.

² Tao, Lian *The Design of Public Parks in China* 2004; This was an MA thesis at Manchester Metropolitan University and was published in China.

³ Lou, Qingxi *Chinese Gardens* China International Press 2003

Both garden types adopted 'the technique of imitating and symbolism in order to recreate natural landscapes in a limited space'.

Private gardens sought to 'present the feeling of greatness through small details'.³ Often the details were representative of famous landscape scenes and reproduced abstractly with limestone rocks and highly managed native plants.

What becomes immediately apparent within the gardens of Suzhou is that in every direction, there is a different view, a different landscape scene. Arranged as such, it becomes impossible to understand how large the garden actually is, as it becomes an endless series of spaces.

Argument has been ongoing for many years as to whether or not the Chinese garden was an influence on the 18th century English Landscape Garden. Certainly the scale is different, as are the details; but the idea of nature and ever changing scenes is a prime constituent of the English landscape.

Ed Bennis



Humble Administrators Garden:
a pavilion on the waters edge giving the illusion of a boat.

'Dark clouds have not dispersed on an autumn day....
Let's keep the wilted lotus leaves and listen to the rain
falling upon them.'

Tang poem by Lt Shangyin

Charitable status acquired

Following on from the AGM agreement to changes to our Memorandum & Articles of Association, the Charity Commissioners have now registered The Cheshire Gardens Trust as a Charity – number 1119592.

We have also received our notification from HM Revenue & Customs that CGT is accepted as a charity for tax purposes.

We are looking into the possibility of utilising Gift Aid and *would like to hear from anyone who has experience of administering this. Please contact Joy Uings (see details on last page).*

Research and Recording Training Day, Bolton Hall, Wensleydale

On 12 May we met up as a group at the White Swan in Middleham, North Yorkshire, to embark on a Research and Recording Training Day, which had been organised by Parks and Gardens Database Unit at York University in collaboration with the Association of Gardens Trust .

We were a mixed group from various Gardens Trusts – Cheshire, Lancashire, Shropshire and Yorkshire, and all interested in researching and recording historic gardens. My particular interest was, as a novice, learning how to look at maps and documents in an historic context.

The day started with looking at various documents, maps and other materials in connection with Bolton Hall, Wensley, our target for the research. The Hall is privately owned by Lord and Lady Bolton, and was completed in 1678, with the surrounding grounds and parklands established by 1723.



After lunch we set off for Bolton Hall where we were greeted by Lord Bolton (and his four dogs!), and set off for a tour of the gardens and park, consulting older maps as we went along. Going from the theory to the practical was the best bit for myself, as it then became much easier to understand the design of the landscapes the maps were showing.

After the tour the group got together to look at the data collection sheets devised by the Parks and Gardens Database team. Barbara Wright has assured me that the CGT recording sheets will not be half as daunting...



Finally, it was a privilege to be allowed around Bolton Hall's park and gardens by Lord Bolton (now Harry to us!), as they are not usually open to the public. I hope to be able to use my training in the near future.

Kristin Reichenfeld

Photos:

Left – Lord Bolton leads the group round the gardens

Above – the group gets to grips with the database paperwork

Wells for Africa

On 30 June, 20 garden owners opened their gates on a very wet day in the Wilmslow and Handforth area as part of the Wilmslow Wells for Africa charity (No 328330).

In over 24 years and 91 projects, this charity has brought water to over 100 African villages.

Their aim is 'to improve life in drought-stricken areas of Africa providing wells, pumps, dams and water collection equipment'.

Over 98% of the £453,000+ that has been raised goes directly to these water projects.

The gardens are only open for the one day which means it is impossible to get around all of them, but it is worth remembering this event for next year.

Ranging from the mature and established to new gardens, there are traditional and modern gardens. The owners are there to answer your questions with tea and scones available at some of the gardens.

One owner was serving Pimms, but as he said perhaps

mulled wine would have been better considering the weather!

Most gardens are not open to the public so this is a unique opportunity to see some wonderful gardens and to support this important charity. For more information see www.wilmslowwells.org

Ed Bennis



Denise's delightful Daphnes

On the last Saturday in April we visited Denise Field's small garden – a treasure trove of rare and unusual plants. The garden holds a National Collection of Daphnes as well as Trilliums and Erythroniums.



The Daphnes were in full bloom



Some of them were for sale



Labels made identification simple

It was a lovely afternoon and everyone really enjoyed the visit. I think that for me the most interesting thing about the garden was how Denise had created such a beautiful space while incorporating so many amazing and unusual plants.

Often plant collections look just that – plant collections – but Denise had combined such a lot in a small garden so skilfully that it was restful on the eye, but fascinating in the detail.

Barbara Moth

Erodium pelargoniflorum



Denise answering questions



Brunnera macrophylla



The Association of Gardens Trusts Annual Conference

The 2007 AGT Annual Conference is being hosted by Cornwall Gardens Trust and will be based in Falmouth. The full details are as follows. You can book for the whole conference, or pick and choose. This means that if you are holidaying in Cornwall at that time, you may be able to fit some of the sessions into your itinerary.

Friday 7 th September	Falmouth Parks – Walk & Talk & Tea	£8.00
	AGM and business meetings	Free
	Welcome Reception, Dinner & Lecture by Tim Mowl	£27.00
Saturday 8 th September	Lecture, visit by coach to Godolphin, Trelowarren or Bonython and Glendurgan gardens – talks by owners & guided tours, lunch & tea	£45.00
	Conference Dinner – Speaker Sir Richard Carew Pole	£22.00
Sunday 9 th September	Lecture, visit by coach to Tregothnan and Pine Lodge gardens – talks by owners and guided tours, lunch & tea	£60.00

Bed and breakfast is additional and you can book for all sessions plus B & B for £260. You can download a booking form from the AGT website – www.gardenstrusts.org.uk – or you can contact Jean Marcus of Cornwall Gardens Trust on 01398 351241 (e-mail: Barvanjack@aol.com). The full programme is on the AGT website and also the Cornwall Gardens Trust website – www.cornwallgardenstrust.org.uk.

Garden as Display Area – Gordon Cooke’s plants and pots

It was a rainy evening in June, but there was a good turnout for the visit to Gordon Cooke’s garden in Sale. It is surprising how many people can wander around in a quite small space, but it is helped when the garden’s owner has deliberately purchased the house next door, just to expand his own planting area.

For that is what Gordon has done. Ten years ago, after a decade with one small garden, the house next door came up for sale and he was able to double his planting space.

Once everyone had arrived, he gave a short talk on how the garden has developed. Purchasing the house next door gave him the opportunity to create a wonderful cavern (*below*) – though he admitted that, in his anxiety to complete this, his workmanship left a lot to be desired!



The garden is full of a huge variety of plants, which are central to Gordon’s work as a potter. He says ‘the study of plants and observations of their growth and habit; the actual leaf or stem and more general observations of decay and change of the seasons give ideas for pots and sculpture. My aim is to make pots and sculptures which have the same complete “rightness” that is found in plants’.



And it is those pots and sculptures that make this garden that bit different to other plantsmen’s gardens, because there are examples of Gordon’s work scattered throughout.

If you were unable to get to this event, but would like to see the garden, Gordon opens it for the National Garden Scheme every year.



Many of the pieces are unusual pots for displaying plants, but some artwork raises a smile

And if the sight of those pots sets your creative juices flowing, then check out Gordon’s website www.gordoncooke.co.uk where you will find information about the courses that he runs.

Joy Uings



The garden is made to appear bigger by a wonderful ‘trompe l’oeil’. At the end of this rill is a mirror, set at an angle so that it reflects the pillars on the right. It gives the illusion that the garden extends through the arch. Below, the garden has an almost tropical feel.



Walkden Gardens – Update

In last October's newsletter we reported on the visit to the Japanese garden in Walkden Gardens. It is only a two minute drive from Gordon Cooke's house, so many of us took the opportunity to call in on the way. For some it was a return, for others a first visit. It was interesting to see how it has developed.



The first thing we noticed was the ceramic compass (above, detail below) set near the opening of the Japanese garden. This was created by Gordon Cooke, so was a good introduction to the evening.



*Above, structures have been added and
Below, the garden was enlivened by the flowering
Cornus kousa (below)*



Hulme Community Garden Centre

Hulme Community Garden Centre has secured a grant from the Big Lottery Fund. This should ensure the survival of the garden centre for the next five years.

The money will enable three full time staff posts to be created, including for the first time a Project Manager to lead the team of Nursery Coordinator, Volunteer Coordinator and the many loyal volunteers.

The ethos of organic gardening and community involvement is gaining credibility. It is intended that the Lottery Grant will see the Centre build on its strengths and achieve self-sufficiency within the near future.

Historic Gardens of Cheshire

To coincide with Cheshire's Year of Gardens 2008, Dr Timothy Mowl, Director of the Institute for Garden and Landscape History at the University of Bristol, plans to publish the eighth volume of the nationwide series of Historic Gardens and Landscapes of England – on Cheshire.

The Leverhulme Trust has made a grant of £300,000 to ensure the production of ten more volumes of this series over the next five years. The books are scholarly works of reference, rather than 'coffee-table books'. The aim of the series is to identify the most significant historic gardens in each county.

Research Consultant Marion Mako will be researching eighty Cheshire gardens and expects to spend a lot of time in the county over the coming months.

Timothy Mowl is one of the speakers at this year's AGT conference in Cornwall.

Ancient Tree Hunt

The Woodland Trust has launched the **Ancient Tree Hunt** and is asking the public to help identify the nation's oldest trees.

The Trust's press release says 'it is not well-known that the UK has more of these treasures than any other country in Northern Europe, but amazingly we don't know where they are'.

I'm not sure those two facts sit comfortably together; but why quibble when we are being asked to get out there and 'hug a tree'.

Because that is how you recognise an ancient tree – by the number of people it takes, linking arms to encircle its trunk.

Why are they so important? Ancient trees are home to thousands of species of plants and animals, including many rare and threatened species that aren't found anywhere else.

As they get older, the trees develop holes, nooks and crannies and dead and rotting wood, perfect homes for lots of insects.

Groups of ancient trees growing together are the most important of all as the variety of nooks and crannies they provide creates an amazing community of wildlife.

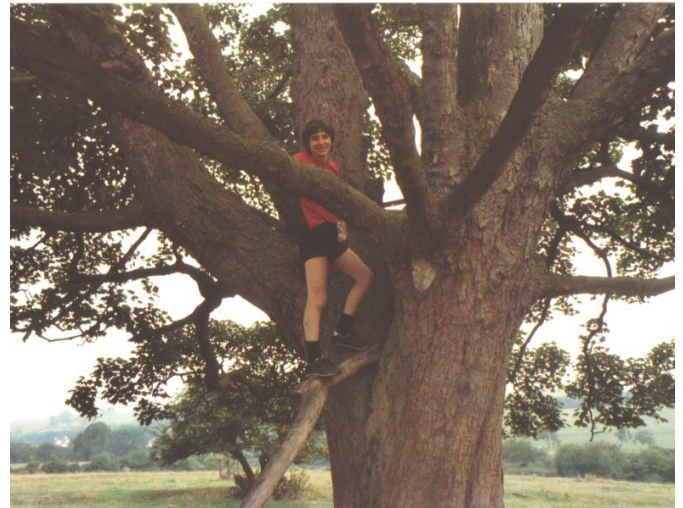
Not sure whether that old, gnarled tree down the road or in your favourite park qualifies as 'ancient'? Help is at hand from www.ancient-tree-hunt.org.uk. There you will find how many hugs it takes – an oak needs three hugs, but a rowan only one – or, if you remember to take a tape measure, the circumferences

are also given. If, like me, you grew up pre-decimal, it helps to remember that five foot = 152 cms.

And once you have identified your very own Ancient Tree, visit the same web-site to Register and record it.

Personally, I intend – once it stops raining – to get out into the garden and check the size of my very own hawthorn and willow. Another five hundred years and they should make it into the list.

Joy Uings



Above: twenty-five years ago, we came across this tree somewhere along the Oxford Canal. Would it qualify?

Find out more about the Woodland Trust at www.woodland-trust.org.uk

Caldwell Nursery Archives

In January we called for volunteers for an exciting project – taking the old and delicate records of the Caldwell Nursery, held at the Cheshire Record Office, and transferring them to computer.

On 20 June, volunteer Pat Alexander, together with



Above: Joy and Pat examine an 1830s ledger

CGT Council members John Edmondson and Joy Uings met with Head of Archives Jonathan Peplar to look at the records and discuss how best to approach the work. It was fascinating. The records date back to the 1780s. The handwriting was remarkably easy to read – the odd word difficult to decipher, sometimes due to changes in terminology. We soon spotted familiar names, like the Warburtons of Arley and noted how the canals were being used for deliveries.

The records show us who was buying; what they were purchasing and how much they were paying. They will also show how all these changed over time.

Over the next few weeks and months, John will photograph all the documents and Pat will devise a database. Once this is done we will be looking for more volunteers to help input the data. We are expecting that this will be done from home, so anyone with access to a computer should be able to help.

Joy Uings

R&R R&R

Where is this Cheshire Garden?

In the April issue this question was posed. Here we get some answers

J.C. Loudon's 1838 description of an extraordinary rock garden (CGT Newsletter No. 14) refers to **HOOLE HOUSE**. Today, both house and gardens have completely disappeared.

Where was it? On the South side of the A56 Hoole Road just before the A56 / Ring Road roundabout. Neighbouring Hoole Hall (now a hotel) is still extant and situated on A56 beyond the roundabout.)

Who created it? Lady Broughton, according to Loudon; Lady Boughton, in Tom Carter's 1984 *The Victorian Garden*, p. 146.

When? Loudon places the garden's creation in 1828. By 1831 he was 'exceedingly desirous' of visiting it but could not then 'prevail on Her Ladyship to accede to his wishes'.

Fifty years later, Hoole House was owned by a Mrs. Hamilton. Its rock gardens and 26 circular flower beds were still intact and kept in immaculate condition by head gardener Mr. Thompson (*The Gardeners' Chronicle*, Dec 9, 1882, p. 747)

More Questions!

At present, this is all we know about HOOLE HOUSE. Of course, research continues.

We need to establish what happened to Hoole House and its gardens from 1882 to its demolition.

Who owned it, and what did they do with/to the gardens?

Was Hoole House a War Hospital in WWII?

When were both house and gardens demolished?

Do owners of today's modern houses still find strange rocks in their garden?

We would be grateful for **CGT members' help!**

If you or friends have any memories, information and descriptions of HOOLE HOUSE before its destruction, and especially any photographs or other visual evidence - please get in touch with me - tel: 0161 434 7653; e-mail ib@wrightmanchester.fsnet.co.uk.

Barbara Wright



The photo (March 2007) was taken from the junction of A56 Hoole Road (left) and Pipers Lane (foreground) looking East towards the A56 / Ring Road roundabout.

Are the evergreens and pine trees remains of the Northern boundary, and Pipers Lane of the former entrance drive, of HOOLE HOUSE?

R&R R&R

CGT Open Garden Weekend 2008

Have you ever thought you might like to open your garden to the public - but been concerned about fulfilling the criteria required by the NGS?

Or maybe your garden does fit the bill, but you would prefer a lower-key event for a smaller audience, without all the hard work normally associated with a larger-scale opening?

As part of Cheshire's Year of Gardens 2008, the Trust wants to hold an Open Gardens weekend next year - possibly May/June - but to be determined by when you feel your gardens are at their best. If successful, we would like to repeat the Open Gardens weekend in future years. Many of you have beautiful gardens of which you are justly proud. If you think you might enjoy the opportunity to open your garden to fellow CGT

members (and their guests), we would like to know.

It could be an afternoon or an evening opening across a specified weekend and we would publicise details in the Newsletter and Events Mailing.

If you want, you could put on teas or drinks and refreshments: but if not, that's OK too.

This event is less to do with award-winning design, an intimate knowledge of plants or horticultural know-how and more to do with wanting to share, socialise and enjoy your garden with like-minded CGT enthusiasts.

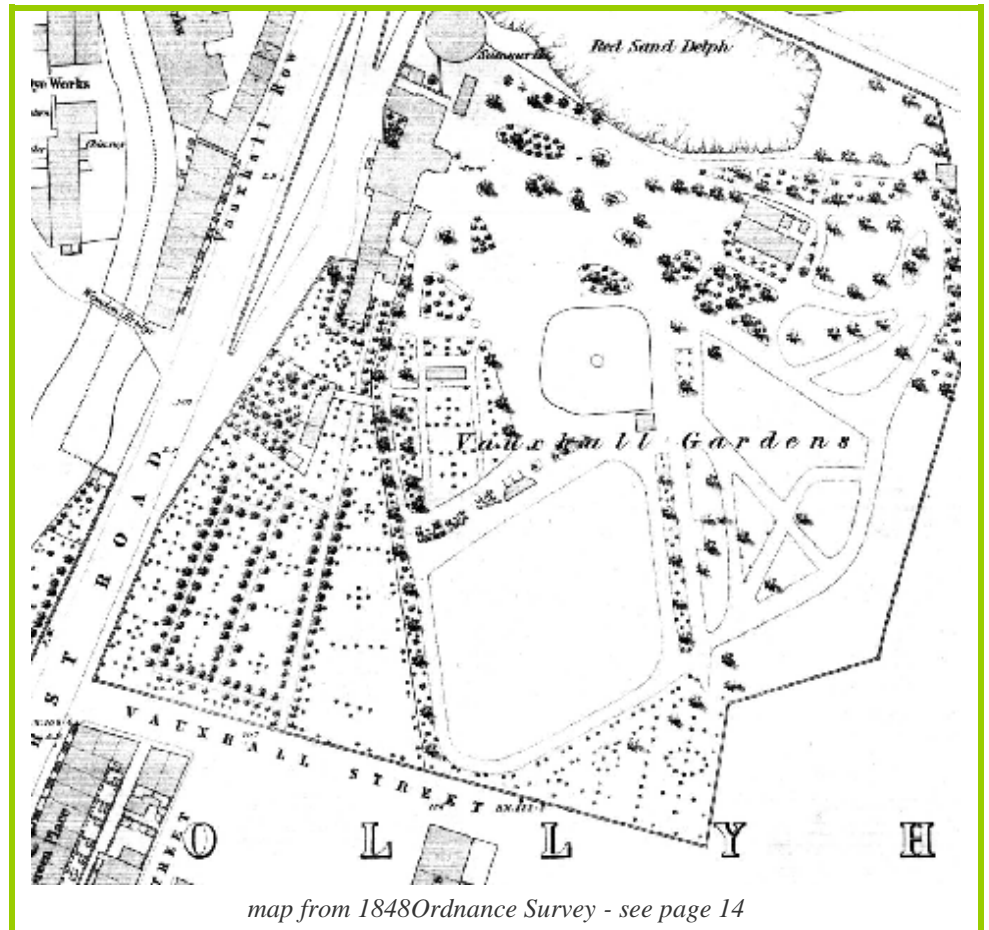
If you would like to get involved and participate in the CGT Open Gardens weekend, please contact:

Tina Theis - tina@tinatheis.com or 0161 442 0657 or 1, Highfield Park, Stockport, SK4 3HD.

Tinker's Garden – “th’ grandest place i’ th’ nation”

(this piece was written 100 years ago)

To two generations of Manchester people Tinker's Gardens, or Vauxhall Gardens as they were latterly called, were a popular holiday resort; and to perhaps another generation they were a tradition, or little more than that. Today there remains no trace of them, but occasionally as we come across one who in childhood's days was taken there, we may hear some account of their glories. To the present generation the institution is not even a name. It is therefore necessary to say something concerning this one-time popular resort. The ground once covered by the gardens is on the left hand side of Rochdale Road, some little distance away from that road, and lying between it and Collyhurst Road. The approach to them was near to the end of Osborne Street.



map from 1848 Ordnance Survey - see page 14

The proprietor for about forty years was Robert Tinker, who in Scholes's Directory for 1797 as “Robert Tinker, Grape and Compass Coffee House and Tea Gardens, Collyhurst. In later years he became a victualler and in 1814 he changed the name of his establishment to Vauxhall Gardens. For a fuller account of the glories of the gardens I must refer the reader to Alexander Wilson's *Johnny Green's Description of Tinker's Gardens* with which this chapter will be closed. On holidays and Sundays great crowds of people resorted to the gardens, where they could promenade or dance (except on Sundays) to the music of a brass band, and where they could partake of tea and other refreshments at small tables standing under overhanging trees or in alcoves covered with creepers. The situation of the gardens seems to have been very favourable to plant growth, and an announcement made in 1814 reads very curiously to-day. It ran thus:— “To the admirers of cucumbers. At these gardens may be seen a cucumber which measures seven feet eight inches long. One from the same plant was sent for the Prince Regent's inspection. It is allowed by all gardeners, and others who have seen it, to be the greatest curiosity of the kind Nature ever produced in this kingdom”.

From time to time balloon ascents were made from the gardens, the last of these being made by Lieutenant

Gale in 1847. Robert Turner died on February 1st, 1836, but the gardens were continued until about 1852 when their glories having departed they were closed. The subsoil consisted of a valuable bed of sand of a peculiar quality, used by iron moulders, and in the course of a few years the site was literally carted away. After the removal of the sand houses were built, and today the spot whereon Tinker's Gardens stood is indistinguishable in the maze of streets and rows of houses that now cover the district.

Mr. Procter in his volume *Manchester in Holiday Dress*, refers to an advertisement issued by Mr. Tinker in 1812, in which he announces special attractions to celebrate Wellington's great victory. The grounds were to be illuminated by means of three thousand variegated lamps which were to transform the gardens to an Elysian retreat. Popular vocalists were to supplement the efforts of the band, and the charge for admission was to be 1s. 6d. The entertainment, it was said, would render the evening “at once intellectual, rural, and delightful”.

From: Swindells, T. *Manchester Streets and Manchester Men Fifth Series*. 1908 p.149/153

Overleaf is Alexander Wilson's song, “Johnny Green's Description of Tinker's Gardens”.

The sentiment in this song is easy to follow, even if some of the words are strange.

It was a good night out!

Heigh! Hall o' Nabs, an' Sam, an' Sue,
Why, Jonathan, art tew there too?
W're aw aloike, there's nought to do,
 So bring us a quart before us.
Aw're at Tinker's gardens yesternoon,
An' whot aw seed, aw'll tell yo soon,
In a bran new song, boh it's to th' owd tune
 Yo'st ha't if yo'll join meh chorus

Aw geet some brass, fro' uncle Nat,
Eawr David lent mea his best hat,
Then off fur th' teawn aw seet full swat,
 Mich faster nor Pickfort's waggin.
Aw paid meh brass, an' in aw goes,
An' eh ! what shady beawers i' rows,
Wheer lots o' ladies an' their beaus
 Wurn set to get their baggin.

There's bonfeoirs fix't at th' top o' pows,
To leet yor poipes, an warm yor nose;
Then a thing to tell which way th' wind blows,
 An' the' fish pond too did pleas mea;
Boh th' reawnd-heawse is the rummest shop,
It's fix't on here an' there a prop,
Just loike a great umbrella top;
 If it's not, Jimmy Johnson squeeze mea.

Aw seed a cage as big, aw'll swear,
As a wild beast show i' Sawfort fair,
There's rabbits, brids, and somethings there,
 Aw couldn'a gawm, by th' mass, mon;
Aw thowt o' pullink one chap's wigs,
For tellink me they're guinea pigs,
Says aw, 'Meh lad, aw' up to yor rigs,
 They're noan worth hawve o'th' brass, mon."

Aw met wi' a wench aw'd often seen,
When aw wi' meh wark to th' teawn had bin,
Hoo're drest as foine as ony queen,
 So aw just stept up behind hur;
Says aw, 'Yung miss, dun yo work for Kays?
Aw've wove their crankys scores o' days
Hoo wouldn'a speak, boh walk'd hur ways,
 An' hoo're nowt but a bobbin woinder.

Boh th' band o' music caps owd Nick,
Aw ne'er seed th' loikes sin aw wur wick;
Thern drest like soldiers, thrunk and thick,
 As merry as hey-makers.
Up in a tree, foive yard fro' the' Greawnd,
On a greyt big table, rail'd aw reawnd,
While lads an' wenches jigg'd to the' seawnd,
 'Oh, merrily danced the Quakers.'

Then next aw seed a swing, by gad!
Where th' ladies flock'd loike hey-go-mad;
They wanted a roide far wor than th' lads,
 They really did, for sure.
Ther'n one wur drest so noice i' blue
An' loike an' angel up hoo flew,
Hoo'd noice red cheeks, an' garters, too,
 So aw thowt aw'd buck up to hur.

Aw made hur link wi' mich ado,
An' mounted up a greyt heigh brow
Wheer folk run up, an deawn it too,
 Just loike March hares, for sure.
So when eawr Kate coom we begun,
An' started off, twur glorious fun!
Mich faster than Cock Robin run,
 When he won at Karsy Moor.

What wark we made, aw'm sheawmt to tell,
We tried, boh could no' stop eawrsel
Till into a beawer yed first aw fell,
 Where aw th' foine folk wur set, mon
Some porter run aw deawn my shirt;
A biscuit stuck to th' ladies skirt,
An whot wi' th' hurt, an' grease, an' dirt,
 By gum, aw feel it yet, mon.

Of aw the things that pleast us, John,
Wur Tinker's house wi' pot dolls on;
There's Blucher an' Lord Wellington.
 An' Blue Beard look'd so glum, surs!
There's cupids under trees and shrubs,
An' men wi' harps, an' some wi' clubs,
An' naked childer up o' tubs,
 Don'd eawt i' lots o' plumbs, surs.

Reet hungry, aw seet mea deawn at last,
An' swallow'd cakes an' ale so fast,
Aw wonder meh waistcoat did no' brast,
 Aw'r full os meh hoide could crom, surs
When aw wur seen at could be seen,
They play'd, 'God save eawr noble Queen',
Aw strid to th' tune reawnd th' bowling green,
 An' asay aw coom straight whoam, surs.

It bangs booath play heawse, fair an' wakes,
For gam o' all maks, ale an' cakes,
Aw'll bet a quart, an' theaw'st howd th' stakes,
 It bangs th' king's creawnation.
Aw'd ha' yo't goo next Monday noon,
For if't rains poikels, late or soon,
Aw'll goo again, if aw goo bowt shoon,
 For it's th' grandest place i' th' nation."

"And such was the opinion of many of the folk who lived in Manchester and the district seventy years ago."

Why not up-date the piece into 21st century speech, pen something similar for your own favourite garden, or use the descriptions to sketch your interpretation of the gardens. We'll print the best.

Digital Archives Association

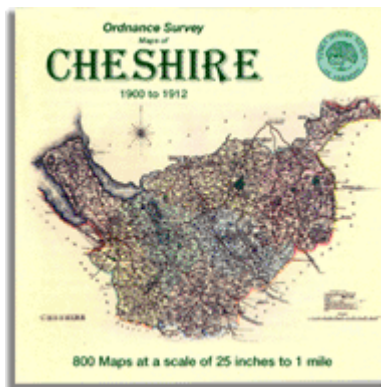
If you are the sort of person that loves old maps, but prefers to research from the comfort of your own home, within easy reach of the kettle, then I have discovered just the thing for you.

It was a serendipitous discovery. Searching for something else on the internet, I came across a reference to the Digital Archives Association.

In their own words, this is a small group of amateurs producing high resolution images of historical maps on CD.

So far they have produced

- three CDs of Manchester maps covering the period from 1741 to 1851, including the OS 60" to the mile map of the 1840s (see detail on page 12)
- two CDs of Cheshire maps – one 25" (1904-10) and one 6" to the mile (1870-75)
- one CD of Warrington OS maps - 60" to the mile



*Ordnance Survey 25 inch
third edition 1904 – 1910
Maps of Cheshire*

There are also Town Plans of Runcorn and Widnes plus maps of Derbyshire, Lancashire, London, Yorkshire, Flintshire & Denbighshire and canal maps of the 19th century. Prices range from just £15 to £25 per CD plus p&p.

Check out their web-site at www.digitalarchives.co.uk or contact Neil Spurr, 3 Cedarways, Appleton, Warrington, WA4 5EW. Tel: 01925 265794.

Joy Uings

A second wet year for the schools' garden competition

Last year's Garden 'Design & Build' Challenge for Schools in Manchester (see Oct. 2006 newsletter) was such a success that it was repeated this year.

Holding it in term time and as a stand-alone event rather than as part of the August Carnival meant that about 300 children from five primary schools were able to attend to see their gardens side by side.

As last year, each school's interpretation was different, but there were awards for each.

The schools are in inner-city Hulme and Moss Side where children have little opportunity otherwise to learn about how edible plants grow from seed.

Below, the rain didn't dampen the enthusiasm of the children. This garden took the term bedding plants very seriously, with several large boxes taking the place of a mattress on a real bed-frame



The children braved some pretty awful weather. It was even wetter than last year.



*Left:
Andrew Goodliffe demonstrating
Life Straws, which will filter a
year's worth of polluted water.*

*Normally associated with the
Third world, they are currently
being used in Yorkshire flood
areas.*

*The whole event was captured
for television by Manchester's
Channel M.*

As Ed Bennis, one of the organisers, said "Is rain now a tradition or will that be broken next year?"

He continued: "It hits a lot of education points from healthy eating to team work, art, history geography.

"Teachers have found the garden and plants a useful means of getting kids interested in many areas.

"It stimulates their imagination – this should be done in more affluent areas as well."



*Applause from the mayor as the
awards are made*

Joy Uings

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, 26 Sandford Road, Sale, M33 2PS or e-mail joy.uings@btconnect.com.