



CHESHIRE GARDENS TRUST

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Newsletter

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Some future events:

- * Ed Bennis' Garden History talks, Mondays 7th, 21st Oct; 6th; 10th January; 3rd, 17th Feb
- * Graham Hardman on Japanese Gardens – 23rd November
- * Simon Gulliver – 23rd March – John Claudius Loudon and his wife Jane
- * AGM – 22nd April – with GT speaker



On a pleasant, breezy day in August, 38 Gardens Trust members met at the home of Kate and Martin Slack, in Ashton Heyes.

Kate and Martin have lived at Ashton Grange for about four years, having moved up from Hertfordshire, where they had an extensive, well established garden. They brought plants, compost and other useful items in car loads from their former home. As well as the garden there is a wild flower meadow and four acres of woodland. The house dates from 1700 but a new wing was

added in the early 1800s. The Victorians added staff quarters and utility rooms and another section was built in the 1920s to provide school rooms for the family's children. Originally there were 35 acres of land around the house; then it was bought by a developer and divided up into several properties. After this the garden and woodland seem to have been neglected. There is evidence that, in the early part of 20th century, there were knowledgeable gardeners, who planted unusual trees and placed an irrigation system in

areas of the garden. But by the 2000s much of the area had become smothered with *Rhododendron ponticum*.



To begin, Kate (see above with Martin) showed half of our group around the garden whilst Martin showed the rest the vegetable garden, the wild flower meadow and the woodland. There is a pond near the house and, having removed and burned large amounts of *R. ponticum* and cleaned out the pond, Kate and Martin were surprised to find that it was considerably larger than they had believed. It now has a beautiful fountain (see below), which can be heard throughout the garden. The pond is fed from the house roof and is home to frogs, newts and moorhens, which have reared several broods in spite of trying to build a nest on the fountain!



The garden proved to be very damp, with rain draining off the fields into it. To help counteract this they dug a circular bed in the lawn and planted it with 100 assorted willow sticks. As well as soaking up the water the sticks have grown into attractive shrubs with different colour stems, and many catkins in spring.

A *Rosa rugosa* hedge has been planted along the garden boundary as well as a yew hedge, which cope with water draining off the field. Many weed trees have been removed and *Betula utilis* var. *jacquemontii*, the West Himalayan birch, planted within the boundary.

When Kate and Martin arrived the large stone terrace outside the house was broken. They remodelled the terrace, making it smaller and used the surplus stone to construct a terrace by a southwest facing wall, thus giving two seating areas which receive sun at different times of the day. *Ceanothus* 'Puget Blue' and *Rosa* 'Margaret Merrill' grow well round the original terrace (see below)



and *Rosa* 'The Mayflower' perfumes the new one. A long window was replaced by a door to allow easy access to the second terrace. As neither terrace had anything particular to look at when sitting on it two new flower beds were created, one pinks, blues and mauves (see below), the other a late summer bed in more vibrant colours.



Some existing beds were full of old trees and shrubs, often in poor condition and these are still a work in progress. In one an oak had to be taken down and sculptor Simon O'Rourke used the wood to carve a sculpture of a hare dancing on the moon.

The removal of the *R. ponticum* has uncovered several interesting trees, a large swamp cypress by the pond, *Prunus serrula*, *Acer griseum*, *Cornus controversa* and a Monkey Puzzle among them.

Martin showed us the vegetable garden. There had been a previous vegetable area but only the greenhouse base remained. The Slacks put up a polytunnel and new greenhouse, and created



Sculpture of hare dancing on the moon

new beds and paths. They are now self-sufficient in almost all vegetables and fruit. Martin operates the four-year rotation system but they grow few root vegetables as they do not favour them. He plans carefully, sowing little and often to provide a succession of crops. Tomatoes in the tunnel are fed twice a week.

As the family had left a 12 years old established orchard in Hertfordshire they were delighted to find a variety of apple trees, which, last year, provided 500kg of fruit. They have added two pear trees and a plum.

The Slacks were keen to create a wild flower meadow and brought wild flowers from their former home. However, Cheshire Wildlife Trust were keen that only Cheshire wild flowers should be used, so, with the exception of cowslips, the Hertfordshire plants remain in a separate bed. Sheep were used to eat existing grasses and the area was then harrowed before being sown. The soil proved to be sandy and the surface bumpy but the seeds, including the important yellow rattle, came through. Knapweed and scabious will be planted for autumn colour. The meadow is still work in progress.

The wood has a preservation order on it but it had not been managed and the Slacks have been allowed to remove dead, diseased and deformed



Martin leading us through the wildflower meadow

trees and to thin out old wood. They are planting hollies, hazel, privet and other native trees along the wood edge. Bluebells and daffodils bloom in spring, so work is only carried out in winter. Some dead trees will be left as wildlife habitat and there are many limes that may encourage the Slacks to introduce bees. As a neglected private wood it did not have historic paths through it, so there has been the task of working out the best placings for paths, avoiding bulbs and stumps.

There are fairies in the wood, evidenced by a staircase to a front door in a large beech (carved by O'Rourke – see below). One hopes they approve of the changes the Slacks are making. It would be very interesting to return in another four years to see how the work in progress has taken shape. Thank you to Kate and Martin Slack for being so generous with your time and showing us your great garden.



Jenny Wood

Photos Kath Gee, Margaret Blowey and Sue Eldridge

Request from your editor

How would you like to help your editor? We really need someone to compile an index of topics in the newsletter since it began. We have both paper copies and digital but it's quite an effort to trawl through everything. The sort of questions we need to answer are, have we ever visited Little Moreton Hall, has there ever been an article on West Dean Gardens, have we ever covered walled gardens or Southport Flower Show. I don't have any preconceived ideas about how it should be done, but if you think you could have a go, please contact the editor, newsletter@cheshire-gardens-trust.org.uk

Lane End Cottage Gardens



We were welcomed to Lane End Cottage Gardens on a lovely sunny day in July by Imogen Sawyer (see above), who explained the history of the site and the creation of the garden. When she and her husband Richard arrived 25 years ago there was a one acre run down nursery and two cottages on a triangular site wedged against the M6 with road works covering everything in orange dust. The extended family lived here and Imogen ran the nursery, selling trees and bedding plants with plant production and sales areas, and only a small piece of private garden. In 2012 due to long hours of work and health issues the nursery was closed in order to make the garden. Richard met a local lady who held the 'Art in the Garden' event but had found her garden had become too small. He committed Lane End Cottage Gardens to run the event in June 2013. There were only 11 months in which to remove all traces of the nursery (polytunnels, membranes, old foundations) and design and plant their private garden. In spite of three months of rain in 2013, with the aid of a digger and the help of friends and neighbours the deadline was achieved.



Following a brief introduction to the features of the garden, Imogen led us round and answered questions along the way. There was some lovely planting near the gate (above) with a dark leaved *Corylus avellana* 'Contorta', a *Malus* 'Red Sentinel'

crab apple, a lovely pink shrub rose and a deep blue delphinium. By the greenhouse a striking *Hydrangea macrophylla* 'Tovelit' with deep pink flowers and bright green foliage, sat among shrubs with a range of foliage colour.



Leading from the gate was a pergola planted for scent with old roses, *Jasminum officinale* 'Clotted Cream' (above), *Trachelospermum*, *Lonicera* and *Solanum*. This led to a circular lawned area. Sheltered by a beech hedge, tender plants were grown in deep mixed borders. A *Catalpa bignonioides* was flowering, surrounded by large phormiums with orange *Hemerocallis*, *Phygelius*, *Hedychium*, *Kniphofia* and dahlias. A bamboo tunnel was planted which has proved to be very invasive but has provided a harvest of canes for the garden.



The pink rose in the magnolia walk

The Magnolia Walk had a number of Magnolia, *Cornus controversa* 'Variegata', *C. kousa*, *Hydrangea* species like *H. quercifolia*, *H. aspera* and *H. macrophylla* 'Zoro' with dark stems. There were more roses in apricot colours and a *Rosa glauca* grown for its hips. *Liquidambar*, *Sorbus*, and a *Callicarpa*, which was flowering on the day, promised autumn leaf colour and berries. Many of the perennials, such as *Delphinium* and *Astrantia*, as well as shrubs, were white flowered which brightened the shady walk. The Frog Pond with

tree peonies was tucked into a corner.



In the shade behind the greenhouse were *Euonymus*, *Pulmonaria* and a collection of ferns. The path led to a second lawn with a larger pond to the left with water lilies and bog planting. Against the house was a tropical border with small palms, a Cycad, *Musa* species, *Agapanthus*, *Salvia*, *Hemerocallis* and *Sisyrinchium*. A large single flowered yellow rose clung to the house wall (above) and a *Magnolia grandiflora* with lovely flowers exceeded the height of the roof.

Behind the house, which was covered with a variegated *Hydrangea anomala* subsp. *petiolaris* was a formal courtyard. Pots in the corner contained ferns, Chocolate Cosmos (*Cosmos atrosanguineus*) and *Heliotrope*. A cherry and pear tree clothed the fence. A rectangular stone edged pond with *Iris* was surrounded by a collection of stone troughs with succulents, orchids, miniature fuchsia, trailing rosemary and individual pots of pelargonium such as 'Vancouver Centennial'.



To the left was the herb garden (above), a rectangle of wooden edged beds, quartered by a path of stone chippings. An apple tree was trained as a low espalier on wires supported by boat

paddles. An additional area lined with bark chippings contained galvanised buckets and other pots with varieties of mint, pink flowered strawberries and a citrus tree.



The walled fruit garden contained a variety of fruit including a fig and a medlar. On one side was an arched walk (above) covered with trained apples, pears, vines, *Passiflora*, and underplanted with lavender, statice, hardy geraniums and varieties of *Allium*. At the end of the walk were a pair of *Choisya ternata* bushes, where the path leads on to the hen house and vegetable garden. Sweet peas and beans, courgettes and sweetcorn were marked by terracotta labels.



Between the arch and the path to the cottage an unusual *Eucryphia lucida* 'Pink Cloud' was flowering beautifully (above). Another unusual shrub, *Lonicera involucrata* var. *ledebourii* (below), with red tinged orange flowers, red bracts and black berries was growing by the cottage.





Members in the garden

Along the eastern boundary, a woodland walk led from the cottage to the vegetable garden. Under the trees a pale pink *Fuchsia magellanica* and a *Daphne* were flowering. *Sarcococca* and *Rhododendron* were there for other seasons. Underplanting included *Pulmonaria* and *Heuchera*.

Wildlife is encouraged not only by the ponds but by bird feeders in the orchard and a bug hotel. Imogen limits her use of chemicals to keeping the paths clear and using some slug pellets. The hens apparently find slugs quite tasty!

As well as continuing with her garden design work, Imogen opens the garden once a month plus twice a year for NGS on different dates each year. This year an apple event is planned. Gardening and Art and Craft courses are also held. I am sure many of us will visit again to see a different view of this interesting and varied garden.

Thank you to Imogen for showing us her interesting garden. For more information, see <https://laneendcottagegardens.co.uk> and there are more photos on the gallery section of our website <https://www.cheshire-gardens-trust.org.uk/?Home>

Monica Walker

Photos Monica Walker and Sue Eldridge

RHS Bridgewater – progress to date



Aerial view of Weston walled garden

Over the last two years you've probably all had a glimpse of RHS Garden Bridgewater, on television, in the RHS magazine 'The Garden' or on their website, or from talks, Tom Stuart Smith at Arley or Marcus Chilton Jones at the CGT Spring lecture. I knew it was a big project but nothing quite prepared me for the sheer scale of the site. I was lucky enough to go on a guided tour of the site in July. I saw part of the Weston Walled Garden (above) when the paths were laid, the walls repaired (reusing 80,000 original bricks), irrigation put in and the walls covered in wiring ready for training a huge array of climbers and fruit trees. The soil was just starting to be bought in ready for the planting. This was to be the Paradise garden designed by Tom Stuart Smith, which featured in July's edition of our newsletter. It was vast but beyond that there was another walled garden which will house the kitchen garden designed by the Harris Bugg Studio. And surrounding these will be the orchard and the

Well Being and Learning Gardens, 11 acres in all. Mind blowing and all this will be open in summer 2020.



Putting in the wires in the walled garden

The Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) got planning permission for the project two years ago. Currently the biggest gardening project in Europe, the 154 acre site will be the 5th RHS garden, with ambitious aims. Obviously not all the site will be open in 2020. The first phase will include the walled garden, a new Welcome Building and Learning Studios, restoration of the historic lake and a new Chinese Streamside Garden leading down to a new lake.

The garden is based on the site of Worsley New Hall in Salford. The Gothic style mansion was designed by the architect Edward Blore for the 1st Earl of Ellesmere between 1840 and 1845. The gardens were landscaped over a 50 year period. In particular William Andrews Nesfield (see January



Plan of entire site

2018 edition of the newsletter) designed the formal terraced garden, situated below the house on sloping ground, leading down to the lake and extensive landscaped parkland.

Worsley New Hall became a British Red Cross hospital during the first World War but afterwards, with the departure of the Egerton family, the hall fell into disrepair and was eventually demolished in 1943. Thereafter it had a number of tenants including the Scouts, a garden centre and a rifle range.



Before the tour we met quite a few of the team; Royston (above) and Elaine, volunteers and tour guides, Graeme Wotherspoon from the fundraising team and Tracy Snell, Garden Manager, Woodland and Ecology. Tracy has a team of 7 arboriculturists responsible for all except the walled garden. At the moment it's "clearing, clearing, clearing" and then the planting starts with 32,000 plants for the entrance garden alone. Later they will be developing the Chinese streamside garden running through woodland near the restored lake, working with the Chinese community and experts from China. The lake has been drained and will be partly refilled. Eventually the Nesfield terraces will be reclaimed and an arboretum developed, but not in the first phase.

As part of the tour we explored some of the walled gardens and looked at associated buildings;

the head gardener's cottage and the bothy, the potting sheds and frame yard with cold frames, greenhouses and other essential gardening structures. There is a possibility that this may be open to the public.



We then walked up through the woodland (above). Most of the trees on site have been self-set and there has been a massive amount of clearance of trees and shrubs, much done by volunteers, helped by the resident pigs. We then walked up to the rim of the drained lake. Much had been filled with scrub and saplings and it is likely that only half will be refilled initially.

Above the lake the terraces, which had been cleared a few years ago, are now a mass of brambles with remnants of stone fountains and urns. Restoration will be part of Phase 2 of the project. Walking back down through the woodland we came across a number of stone structures, a rose garden, a Scouts pow-wow (see below) and a chapel built by the scouts with stone from the terraces. It would have made an amazing adventure playground for youngsters.



One can't help but admire the energy, imagination and enthusiasm of all the people working on the site and wish them well. I can't wait for my first visit to RHS Bridgewater.

With thanks to the RHS for organising the tours and letting me use some of their material <https://www.rhs.org.uk/gardens/bridgewater>

Sue Eldridge, photos Sue Eldridge and RHS

Emily Chandler, Dunham Massey

Sixth in our Head Gardener series



Emily Chandler (far right) with some of her team of gardeners

Emily Chandler carries her responsibilities lightly. In the National Trust garden at Dunham Massey she has six full time gardeners, an apprentice and two seasonal gardeners, one full time, one part time. In addition there are 150 volunteers, doing a variety of jobs. Half of the current gardeners started as volunteers. Across Dunham Massey as a whole there are 600 volunteers.

But Emily didn't start out as a gardener. She came from a naval family in Portsmouth, though her mother was a keen gardener. She did a degree in criminology at Liverpool John Moores University and then wondered what to do. She mainly did office work, starting in stock control at Littlewoods until she was made redundant, followed by finance at Liverpool Council. Eventually she started to rethink her career and took an RHS level 2 in Horticulture at Myerscough College.

She was lucky enough to get a training place at Ness Botanic Gardens, through HBGTP (Historic and Botanic Gardens Trainee Programme). She loved it, though it was not an easy ride. On Friday she was in an office, the following Monday she was responsible for the potager and a small team of volunteers. She learnt a lot, but the placement was only for a year. She then moved to Birmingham Botanic Gardens, this time on a rather more structured programme. But again it was only for a year and she wanted to move back to the north west.

At this stage it was the recession and no-one was recruiting. She eventually managed to get a job in garden maintenance with Chester University. As well as more general garden maintenance on sports pitches, car parks and bedding schemes, she quickly found her way to the rather ramshackle

greenhouses and polytunnels and starting sowing seeds for the vast number of bedding plants used. She was very happy there but realised that possibly this was not what she was trained for. A job as a gardener came up at Dunham Massey and once she applied she realised this was what she really wanted.



Roses with alliums in the Rose garden

Emily had to get used to being a "proper" gardener again. She was given the beds outside the house to look after and she started introducing more herbaceous planting. When Emily started at Dunham Massey the two big developments, the Winter Garden and the Rose Garden, were more or less complete. But this meant other areas of the garden had been neglected. There were a lot of pests and diseases to contend with, honey fungus, phytophthora root rot, verticillium wilt, bacterial canker on the acers, willow leaf beetle and pieris lacebug and a lot of trees and shrubs were lost. This is because of a very wet garden and light sandy soil, which loses a lot of nutrients. Dunham is tight on biosecurity measures, but disease and bugs still get in.

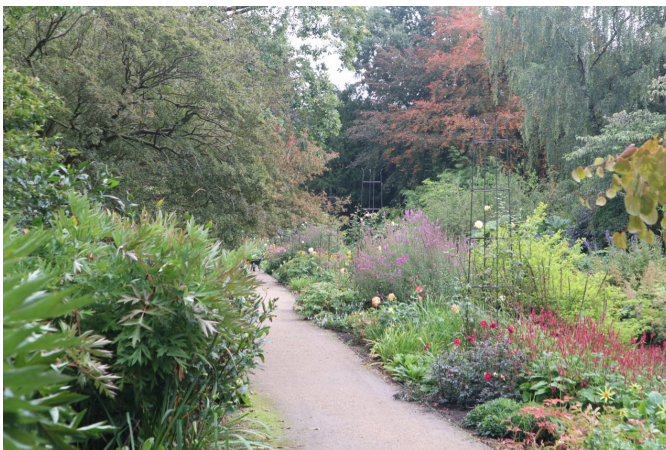


The Winter Garden in August



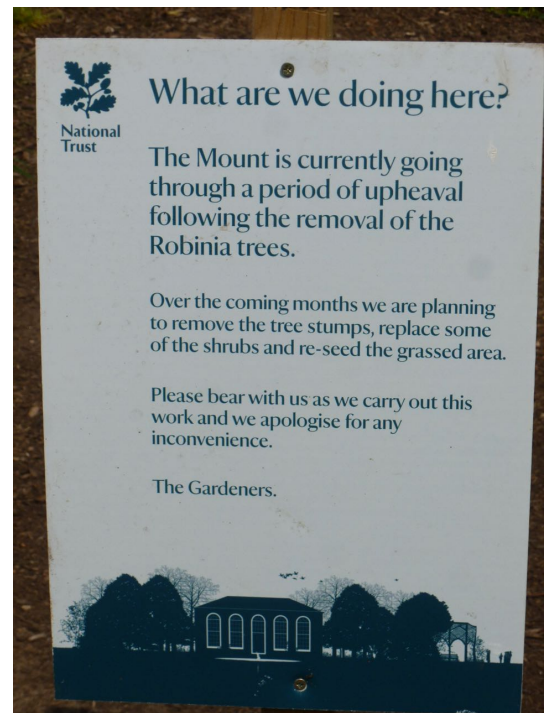
The herbaceous borders at the back of the house that Emily started on

After two years as a gardener Emily was successful with her application to be head gardener and she has now been in this role for five years. She has tried to introduce more summer colour and all year round interest, alongside raising horticultural standards. She took on particular responsibility for the long border at the opposite end to the house. Much of this area was full of shrubbery, particularly *Rhododendron ponticum*, which was full of honey fungus. This has been replaced by herbaceous perennials and grasses.



The canal borders (see above) have also been revitalised and a grass path replaced with gravel, improving access during the wetter months. She's also trying to introduce more woody structure to the Winter Garden. But a particular problem has been the mound, which was covered in tall *Robinia pseudoacacia* trees. Two fell down causing quite a lot of damage and more were discovered to be suffering from the dreaded honey fungus. At the same time a historical survey revealed that the trees were not particularly significant and the mound was actually Elizabethan. It was decided to take all the trees down and return the mound to its original purpose, which was to act as a viewing point (see next column).

There are many historical layers in this garden. George Booth, the 2nd Earl of Warrington inherited the estate in 1694 and planted hundreds



of trees throughout the park. The three mile long wall which enclosed the estate and created a deer park, was completed in 1751. The development of lawns, an orangery, shrubberies, and Edwardian borders around the house followed. Then in 1856 the family abandoned Dunham Massey and the garden was neglected. The family returned in the early twentieth century and the last Earl, the 10th Earl of Stamford devoted himself to restoring Dunham Massey, though it was a hospital during WWI. He left Dunham Massey in its entirety to the National Trust in 1976.

As Head Gardener, Emily is now mostly office based, though living on site she has the opportunity to look at the garden when no-one else is there and she puts in an hour or two of gardening when she can. She is part of the Dunham Massey management team and contributes to developments. She takes pride in the garden and loves sharing it with other people. She doesn't think she would enjoy working in a private garden.

There is still a lot to do and she's not leaving any time soon. But eventually she would like to take responsibility for a larger National Trust garden, possibly in the south, possibly by the sea, but it very much depends on what turns up.

With grateful thanks to Emily Chandler for giving up her time and to the National Trust for allowing her to do so.

For further information see <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/dunham-massey>

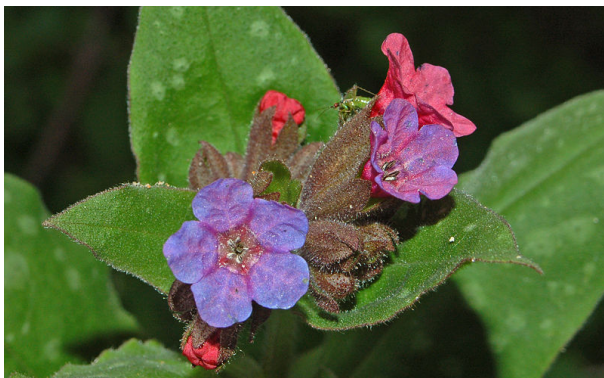
Sue Eldridge
Photos Sue and Stephen Eldridge

'Coddings and Cream', 'Chimney Sweep' and 'Cuckoo's Bread and Cheese'

The Egerton Leigh of High Legh who died in 1876 was worried that words and phrases peculiar to Cheshire would fall out of use. The 1870 Education Act introduced the School Inspector, referred to by Leigh as "Vastator" (the destroyer or ravager). With society becoming more homogeneous, these words might only survive if written down.

So he collected them altogether into *A glossary of words used in the dialect of Cheshire*. He never saw the fruits of his labour, dying while the book was being printed.

I stumbled across this book one day (you can find it on Google Books) and was fascinated. Some words are still familiar, but others are not known to me (a Maid of Kent), though may be known to those who grew up in Cheshire.



Pulmonaria officinalis, Ettore Balocchi

Something like 150 entries are to do with plants. The common poppy (*Papaver rhoeas*) had two names: Headaches and Thunder-bolts, while self-heal (*Prunella vulgaris*) was known as Allheal, Carpenter's Grass or Proud Carpenter. Lungwort (*Pulmonaria officinalis* – see above) was either Beggar's Basket or Ladies' Milk Sile – apparently "From some legend of the Virgin's milk having soiled (Cheshire, siled), or stained the plant".

I was particularly intrigued by the names for garlic (Churl's Treacle and Rosamund), rock cress (Dusty Husband), knapweed (Hard Iron and Hard Yed), gooseberry (Feaberry, Gonder and Grosier) and the willow herb (Ranting Widow). This last (though it is not clear which willow herb!) was apparently introduced into Cheshire, from Yorkshire, by Gerarde who is referenced several times. Ladies' bed straw was known as Cheese Running – "The people of Cheshire, especially about Nantwyche where the best cheese is made" writes the herbalist Gerarde, himself a Nantwyche man, "do use it in their Rennet, esteeming greatly of that cheese,

above others made without."

Goosefoot was the name given to several different varieties of *Chenopodium*, but they were also known as Dirty Dick (*C. album*), Fat Hen, Good King Henry and Lamb's Tongues (*C. bonus-henricus*) and Dirty John or Stinking Goosefoot (*C. vulvaria*).



Ivy leaved toadflax, Hans Bernhard

The lovely little ivy leaved toad flax had the names Mother of Thousands, Thousand Flower and Pedlar's Basket. Haws were known as Bird's Eggs and pennyroyal as Lurkey Dish. Knot grass (*Polygonum*) was called Lake Weed. Leigh explained "It has another name in Cheshire, not to be named to ears polite", apparently forgetting that he had already given this name (Arsesmart), earlier in the book! Britten's book Dictionary of English Plant names provided a 17th century explanation: "if it touch the taile or other bare skinne, it maketh it smart, as often it doth, being laid into the bed greene to kill fleas".

The word Lawyers was used for "Long brambles in covers from which you can hardly escape being caught and surrounded by them, as lawyers twine round their clients the meshes of the law."

Two of the pears to be found in the Caldwell ledgers also had surprising names. The Aston Town Pear was known as the Tarporley Peach "as it is generally ripe about the time of the Tarporley races" and the Green Chisel Pear was known as the San Jam Pear because it was usually ripe around St. James' Day (25th July). There was a Sanjam Fair held at Altrincham on that day which was "almost proverbially wet".

The Alder was known as Owler or Oulder: "Ollerton, a township in the county, formerly Owlarton, was the alder town. In former times (mentioned in

Magna Britannia) young men used to hang up boughs at the doors of their sweethearts and female acquaintance in May. If a damsel found an “owler” branch, she might at once know some one considered her a scold; if a branch of a nut-tree, that she was considered a slut.”

It was not only plant names that were intriguing. I particularly liked Beggar’s Velvet (the fluff under the bedsteads in untidy homes) and the cure for Smallpox – “Take a bun from the shop of a person (whose wife when she married did not change her name) without paying for it, or saying thank you! and give it to the patient.”

Some words are still familiar, like Elbow Grease, meaning hard work. But this was accompanied by a Cheshire proverb from 1670: “She has broken her elbow at the church door”, said of a woman who as a daughter was a hard worker and did not spare the “elbow grease” who, however, after marriage became lazy and indolent.

And, in case you are wondering, Coddlings and Cream was the great hairy willow herb (*Epilobium hirsutum*), also known as Apple Pie; Chimney

Sweep was the field wood rush (*Luzula campestris*) and Cuckoo’s Bread and Cheese was the wood sorrel.

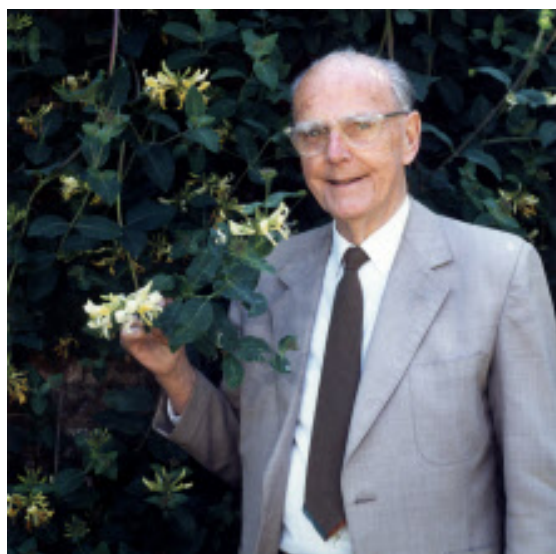


Great hairy willow herb *Epilobium hirsutum* –courtesy of J.F.Gaffard

Joy Uings

Photos courtesy of Wikipedia

Graham Thomas, National Trust adviser



Graham Thomas, the National Trust’s first Gardens Adviser, next to *Lonicera periclymenum* ‘Graham Thomas’, the honeysuckle named after him

In rescuing some of the greatest gardens in Britain, in some cases from near dereliction, Graham Thomas (1909–2003) helped shape our ideas about the traditional British garden. A passionate rosarian, he also saved many old rose varieties from extinction and contributed to their revived popularity. Members may be interested in reading this article about Graham Thomas, one of the most important figures in 20th-century gardening and the National Trust’s first Gardens Adviser, on the National Trust’s website, here: <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/features/graham-thomas-the-man-who-saved-our-gardens>

With grateful thanks to Jacqui Barber, National Trust, Assistant Editor, Curatorial Content Online

Plea from our Membership Secretary

If you have not already done so, could you consider setting up a standing order for your membership fee to help reduce admin and to save postage and paper. The email contact is membership@cheshire-gardens-trust.org.uk or by post to Membership Secretary, 4 Albany Grove, Lymm, Cheshire, WA13 9LX. Thank you.

Also, what about considering CGT gift membership as a Christmas present this year? One year membership: Single £15 Joint £22. Contact our Membership Secretary as above.

Plans for Dorfold Hall



The south front of Dorfold Hall, site of Nesfield's parterre, where the lawns have been completely re-laid.

In May the research and recording team visited Dorfold Hall to look at the site of proposed events facilities in the former stable yard. A Statement of Significance prepared in association with the recent planning application provided us with detailed information on the history of Dorfold.

Happily for us, Krista, one of the gardeners, saw us looking at the stable block and gave us an excellent impromptu tour of the grounds explaining current work and aspirations (see below).



The last remaining glasshouse in the 18th century walled garden. This is to be restored as part of the proposed works.

After extensive consultation, planning permission for "the proposed erection of wedding and events venue with landscaping, car parking and associated development" was granted permission in July. For full details see planning application see: <http://planning.cheshireeast.gov.uk> and search for 19/1088N under search criteria.



The former gardener's house which is to be converted to guest accommodation.

Text and photos Barbara Moth

Davenham Hall Parkland

Davenham is, like many other villages, a place under pressure from housing development. Davenham Hall and its environs had already been identified by the Research and Recording group as a place under threat and research prioritised. After an initial visit to the parkland of Davenham Hall in July 2018 we continued our researches and presented our draft report to the current owners of the Hall, now a nursing home, requesting access for recording purposes. On our visit to the

gardens of the Hall we noticed a new fence and a large pile of tree branches heaped up in the parkland where a tractor was busy cutting silage. We decided to revisit the parkland walking along the public footpath, now fenced each side. Recent parkland tree planting had been removed together with the tree guards which were heaped in a corner by the drive to Davenham Hall. The parkland trees had had their lower branches cut off to a considerable height, presumably to

facilitate tractor access. The sward was very uniform suggesting that it may have been ploughed up and re sown. A small thorn tree, one of a pair either side of the path, had also been removed.

This historic landscape with its meadow and parkland trees forms a key component of Davenham Conservation Area and the parkland trees are covered by individual Tree Preservation Orders. It is understood that new tree planting and other work to conserve the parkland had been funded by a Countryside Stewardship grant.

Conservation Officers at Cheshire West and Chester were contacted to ascertain whether permission had been granted for the tree work. It was confirmed that permission had not been granted and officers issued an enforcement notice. It is good that action has been taken so that the owner is made aware that they cannot ignore law and planning policy but irreversible degradation of the parkland has taken place, and in time the parkland trees will be lost as ploughing takes place within the root zone.



Davenham Hall Parkland in July 2018



Davenham Hall Parkland in 2019

Text and photos Barbara Moth

Research and recording snippet

When we research a historic designed landscape, we sometimes come across some intriguing information about the site's former owners. This appears only rarely in our reports, so we would like to share with you some 'snippets' from Cheshire's social history.

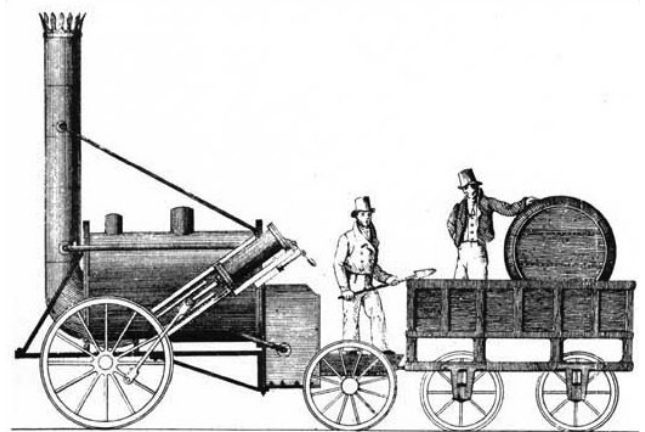
Researching the gardens within a large estate near Congleton, I found a 'Fiat of Bankruptcy' issued in 1841 against the estate's owner, a banker and silk manufacturer in Macclesfield. What was the cause of the bankruptcy?

The main reason appears to have been his (private) bank's injudicious investments during the 1830s. At that time, Stephenson's "Rocket" plied the rails between Liverpool and Manchester...and someone got the great idea to use steam power for the **first automobile!**

The Manchester branch of the private bank of 'Daintry, Ryle & Co' had invested £120,000 (more than £7 million today) in "a scheme for running steam carriages upon ordinary turn-pike roads. This testing of two carriages was undertaken at night in the Stretford area. They were capable of 15-18 miles per hour. Just about the time when the demand

for fresh funds was no longer bearable, during one of these nocturnal experiments something went wrong and, dashing through a hedge, the engine tumbled into a turnip field, where it lay for several months, no one caring to claim it. The scheme collapsed." (quoted from: Hartley, Grindon Leo. 1878. *Manchester Banks and Bankers*. Palmer & Howe).

Do any of our readers know more about the inventor(s) of this first car?



Stephenson's Rocket

Barbara Wright

Cheshire Gardens Trust – Blue Sky Thinking

At the request of the Council of Management, a working party was set up to consider how the Cheshire Gardens Trust might evolve. Comprising Sue Bartlett, Barbara Moth, Tina Theis, Moira Stevenson and David Cash, some of the group's recommended actions have already been put in place whilst others are planned for the future. Here is a summary of the findings.

Firstly the **key strengths** of the trust were assessed as:

The professionalism and reputation of the trust resulting from the skill base and knowledge within the membership, the high standards of our outputs and the commitment and dedication shown by key volunteers.

The **Events** programme (lectures, visits and occasional foreign trips) which are popular, varied and well attended.

The work of the **Conservation and Planning** group which is regularly consulted for specialist opinion by the local planning authorities and occasionally consulted directly for pre-application discussion in relation to Cheshire's many valued parks and gardens.

The Work of the **Research and Recording** group which produces high quality reports and publications including exceptional work to create the Caldwell's Nursery project

A well established and maintained **Web-site** alongside the quarterly **Newsletter** which provide good communication to the membership about ongoing activities.

A reasonably secure **financial standing**, developed after many years of careful stewardship.

The reputation of Cheshire Gardens Trust as a friendly and welcoming organisation.

Discussion about the **key issues** currently facing the CGT then took place out of which a series of **recommended actions** were identified as follows:

Leadership – after many years at the helm, Ed Bennis has expressed a desire to hand over the reins. We are grateful to him for continuing until a new leader emerges. Future chairpersons will be elected for a fixed two-year term with the option of a further year to set down and then deliver his/her agenda. A vice-chair from the CoM will be elected.

Council of Management– more members are encouraged to stand for the CoM for a maximum three-year period. CoM meets on six occasions

annually with each meeting focussing on a specific topic in addition to regular issues. The six topics are Events, Conservation and Planning, Newsletter, Research and Recording, Budget/ Membership, and Website/ Publicity. A representative for each of these topics will lead a brief discussion outlining what has been done and is planned for the future.

Increasing/Diversifying the Membership – numerous ideas were put forward such as encouraging existing members to 'spread the word' to friends, arranging one high profile event each year as a 'crowd puller', re-enforcing links with relevant educational establishments (Ness, Reaseheath and Myerscough Colleges).

Conservation and Planning – our current modus operandi for reviewing planning applications needs to change because it places too great a workload on a very small number of willing volunteers. Members across the county will be contacted to see if they can help with specific cases as or if the need arises (volunteers requested!). General training will be given. In addition, a one-day workshop will be arranged, probably linked to a topical subject of interest and hopefully in concert with The Gardens Trust and neighbouring county trusts.

Events– some events are oversubscribed which could become an issue if membership increases. If a high-profile speaker event is planned, it needs to be in a suitably large and accessible location. The Events team may consider more 'repeat' events (morning and afternoon) which allow a larger number to benefit. Perhaps a UK/ Ireland based trip may be considered.

Bursary – the existing scheme is supported, especially if recipients give positive feedback so that members can hear about and understand the benefits.

Website– over the longer term, the web-site will be reviewed and updated. The newsletter is now placed on the web-site simultaneously with its distribution to members and consideration given to also placing CGT submissions made in our capacity as statutory consultees for planning applications on the website.

Please let us know your views on the above. We urge you to get involved in any of the activities mentioned and would be delighted to hear from you! Contact info@cheshire-gardens-trust.org.uk

Sue Bartlett and David Cash

A visit to Crewe Hill



In June we joined the Clwyd branch of the Welsh Historic Gardens Trust to visit Crewe Hill, a 4-acre estate near Farndon overlooking the River Dee and the Welsh hills. Built by the Barnston family it has been a home since the late 18th century. In around 1830 a walled garden was built with 5 gardeners looking after this garden alone. In 1945 the estate fell into disrepair, cows grazed in the walled garden and one gardener remained.



The pergola in the walled garden

Since 1985 the gardens have been restored with a pergola, pool and fountain in the walled garden and new planting, topiary and a Japanese inspired pond



with an oriental bridge (above) within lawns at the back of the house. The surrounding woodland includes a nut walk, tree house, moon gate, bamboo garden and ponds surrounded by a stumpery and small log amphitheatre. The gardens are now looked after by one full time gardener.

With thanks to the Clwyd Branch of the Welsh Historic Gardens Trust for a lovely visit.



Text and photos Jacquie Williams

A message from the Gardens Trust Forum

Dear County Gardens Trust member:

I am writing to tell you about the national Gardens Trust and to encourage you to join at our new special reduced membership rate for people who are already members of a County Gardens Trust.

The Gardens Trust is the only national charity dedicated to the conservation of designed landscapes, parks and gardens in England and Wales and to researching their history and campaigning on their behalf. We rely on the support not only of County Gardens Trusts but also, importantly, of our individual members in order to carry out our essential work.

Protecting historic parks and gardens

You probably already know that County Gardens Trusts work hard to protect historic parks and gardens in their counties by offering conservation advice and commenting on planning applications that may have a detrimental effect, but did you know that this work carries particular weight because of the national Gardens Trust's position as the statutory consultee for registered parks and gardens, therefore with a legal role in the planning process? Our dedicated conservation officers work closely to support volunteers in the County Gardens Trusts to make sure that local landscapes are protected.

Campaigning

There is a county Gardens Trust in every part of England, and similar groups in Scotland and Wales. By bringing everyone together with one voice, we try to ensure that proper attention is given to shared issues close to all our hearts, from the survival and proper maintenance of public parks, to recognition for undiscovered 20th century landscapes, to making sure that historic parks and gardens can be enjoyed by people from all across our diverse society.

Education, events and research

The Gardens Trust supports excellence in research and its dissemination through the GT Newsletter and Journal as well as a very active programme of research symposia, lectures, conferences and visits, some undertaken with partnering organisations, such as the Garden Museum or a partnering CGT. We organise lectures in London, Bath and Birmingham; an annual Research Symposium, showcasing new research, that is part of the AGM conference weekend; and garden trips within the UK and abroad. We run courses in garden history and host a weekly garden history blog.

Training

We have become the sector leader in providing training for volunteers and others on conserving historic parks and gardens, making sure that research and recording work is as useful as possible, networking amongst CGT volunteers and the heritage sector, sustaining and growing the efforts of County Gardens Trusts, and encouraging the sharing of historic parks and gardens with wide audiences.

The Gardens Trust is a charity, and although we

are fortunate to receive grants from Historic England and other organizations, we cannot survive without the financial support of our individual membership, or indeed obtain grants without that support. Please consider joining us to support the work that we do.

On joining the Gardens Trust you will also receive several benefits for yourself, including the Gardens Trust News magazine, the twice-yearly Journal *Garden History*, a regular e-newsletter if you wish to receive it, and reduced price offers. You may wish to attend the AGM weekend conference and one or more garden visits, lectures, or conferences. However, even if you cannot attend these events, individual membership is crucial to the survival of the Gardens Trust, and I hope you will consider joining to help ensure that our charitable work can continue into the future. You can join at <http://thegardenstrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/GT-CGT-Membership-form-September-2019.pdf> at the new reduced rate of £25 for people who are already County Gardens Trust members, reduced from the normal rates of £35 for a single membership and £43 joint. Or you may send in the joining form attached if you receive newsletter by post.

I do hope you will consider joining the national Gardens Trust in support of our unique endeavours conserving and championing designed landscapes, parks and gardens as an important adjunct to your support of your County Gardens Trust. Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Dr James Bartos, Chairman, The Gardens Trust, September 2019

Events

The Gardens Trust Cheshire meet up

6th November 2019, 10.30am-4.00pm
Quaker Meeting Rooms, Union Walk, Frodsham Street, Chester CH1 3LF

Cheshire Local History Association History Day, featuring 3 CGT members

26th October 2019 9.45am – 4.30pm
Winsford Lifestyle Centre, The Drumber, Winsford, CW7 1AD

Sharing Repton Case Study Day

28th November 10.30am-4.30pm
Birmingham and Midland Institute, 9 Margaret

Street, Birmingham B3 3BS

Plant Heritage – The Elizabeth Ashbrook Memorial Lecture

17th November 2pm. Arley Hall
Lord Ashbrook – Gardening with trees and shrubs – The development of The Grove at Arley Hall

Tatton Park – Maurice Egerton's Kenyan Legacy Exhibition

Closes – 3 November 2019

For further information see various websites, CGT, The Gardens Trust, Tatton or contact the editor

Copy date for January newsletter is 31st December

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