



CHESHIRE  
GARDENS TRUST

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# Newsletter

[www.cheshire-gardens-trust.org.uk](http://www.cheshire-gardens-trust.org.uk)

## Inside:

- \* Humphry Repton – pages 4 and 14
- \* Head Gardener, Gordon Baillie
- \* West Dean Gardens
- \* Caldwell's Nursery – Ken Roe's story

## Some future events:

- \* Emma Hill on James Russell – 9<sup>th</sup> February
- \* Planthunter E.H. Wilson – 23<sup>rd</sup> March
- \* Visit to Birkenhead Park – 30<sup>th</sup> April
- \* AGM at Trafford Hall – 16<sup>th</sup> May



On the 16<sup>th</sup> October 2018 twenty five members of the Cheshire Gardens Trust met in the village of Swettenham near Holmes Chapel for a visit to The Lovell Quinta Arboretum. Rhoderic Taylor has been the curator for 23 years and his welcome, knowledge and enthusiasm made our guided visit very special. Sir Bernard Lovell was the founder of the Jodrell Bank Radio Telescope and the Lovells bought the property at The Quinta in 1948. Sir Bernard had a vision of

transforming the original 5 acres of grassland into an arboretum where he wanted a full scientific collection with specimens of each of the genera listed in W.J. Bean's books of 'Trees and Shrubs Hardy in the British Isles'. Today the arboretum covers 28 acres and has 2,600 trees and shrubs. The first plants were purchased from Hilliers who were moving their nursery premises, half the plants going to Jodrell Bank to start an arboretum there. When Sir Bernard's wife became ill in



1985, the arboretum was taken over by the Cheshire Wildlife Trust. Since 2003 the arboretum has been owned by The Tatton Garden Society with the adjoining wildlife reserve being retained by The Cheshire Wildlife Trust.

Rhoderic has been managing the arboretum following a visit with students 23 years ago. It costs £12,000 per annum to run with the help of six dedicated volunteers. The card index of everything that has been planted passed from Sir Bernard to Rhoderic, who now keeps all the information on computer. Plant records are kept of age, origin and size, with botanical names shown on each label. A 'Tree Register' which includes examples of champion trees is kept up to date by Owen Johnson.



*Volunteers at work in the arboretum*

On entering The Lovell Quinta Arboretum it became clear that our visit was well timed to see the autumnal colours and we were lucky that the weather stayed fine. Rhoderic explained that the ongoing work to maintain and improve the arboretum involves monitoring the size of the trees, ensuring that enough light is coming in by opening up new areas and planting to create

varying heights and seasonal interest. Bulbs have been added too. By the entrance the large beech trees are due to be thinned to let in more light and there is an area of newly planted deciduous azaleas. Beyond, we passed a hop hornbeam (*Ostrya carpinifolia*) and a southern beech (*Nothofagus*) which had been pollarded to encourage the spread and reduce the height. We were shown a memorial planting area where a tree could be chosen from a list at a cost of £100.

There was so much to see on our guided walk with such a variety of trees and shrubs, many being rare, and Rhoderic gave us plenty of information and light hearted anecdotes. We admired the colours of the acers and liquidambers, one especially good example being that of an *Acer rubrum* 'October Glory' (see below). A *Euonymus alatus* (winged spindle tree) and a *Rhus typhina*



'Tiger Eyes' also added shape and colour. Many *Cornus* have been planted to give winter interest with their red, green and yellow stems. The snake bark maples (*Acer pensylvanicum*) were looking good and other plants had berries, fruits or flowers. There were *Sorbus* and *Malus* but the fruit on the Bronvaux medlar was particularly stunning (+*Crataegomespilus dardarii* 'Bronvaux').



*The Bronvaux medlar*

There are many oaks in the Arboretum with different heights, shapes and rarity. These include red oaks (*Quercus rubra*), one of which had been

planted in memory of Sir Bernard Lovell (see below). *Quercus semecarpifolia* (an evergreen oak) has unusual leaves and we had to look closely to see the *Quercus sadleriana* (deer oak) as it never grows more than 18” in height.



The large collection of pines and other conifers is very important to the Arboretum. Rhoderic explained that pines can have three, four or five needles, the five making a circle when pushed together. Some of the pines represented should not have survived in Cheshire! The Japanese umbrella pine (*Sciadopitys verticillata*) is thirty years old and the leaves of the *Pinus sylvestris* 'Aurea' turn golden in the winter frost. The Japanese cedar (*Cryptomeria japonica*) carries interesting cones and we felt the soft foliage of the spreading juniper but were wary of its long needles. We were shown a very rare deciduous conifer *Glyptostrobus pensilis*, (Chinese deciduous cypress). There is an area of endangered conifers grown from cuttings originally sent from Edinburgh.



Autumn colour in the arboretum, to the right golden larch (*Pseudolarix amabilis*)

In the older part of the Arboretum, there is a lake which beautifully reflects the trees around. By the side is an American swamp cypress (*Taxodium distichum*) which spreads its roots and breathes through its 'knees'.



Nearby, the Reith Avenue (see above) was planted with red-twigged limes (*Tilia platyphyllos* 'Rubra') in 1958 by Sir Bernard Lovell to commemorate his lectures for the BBC. Unfortunately the trees were planted too closely together and are now in need of being thinned out. The Poplars Avenue has already been removed. Among many other trees to feature here is the great white cherry (*Prunus* 'Tai Haku'), which spreads wide rather than tall, and the tulip tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) which took twenty years to flower but has been especially superb this year.

At the far side, past the damp area planted with willows, alders and birch trees, there are wonderful views out over the valley of the River Dane. This is a Site of Special Scientific Interest due to the geology of the area. In the Arboretum, wildlife such as birds and butterflies are encouraged but rabbits and badgers are causing a few problems!

Sir Bernard Lovell, who died in 2012, would be thrilled to see his work continued so passionately by Rhoderic, who has maintained the spirit of The Quinta, making it a special place to visit. It was suggested that spring would be a good time to revisit to enjoy the flowering shrubs and trees and bulb displays. Thanks were given to Rhoderic for a most interesting and informative morning and we were pleased that he joined us in the Swettenham Arms for lunch.

**Janet Horne**  
**Photos Jim Jeeves, Margaret Blowey,**  
**Monica Walker**

# Repton's Legacy



Cheshire Gardens Trust members gathered at Reaseheath College in November to listen to Kate Harwood talk about Repton's legacy. It is two hundred years since Humphry Repton's death (1752-1818) and his life and work as a landscape designer have been celebrated in 2018 in many ways and in many places. Kate, an academic, specialises in historic garden design and also lectures in further education. She will be contributing to an academic conference at The Garden Museum in London in January 2019.

Kate talked to us about how Repton's picturesque style influenced garden designers throughout the Victorian age. As Repton's memoirs were not published in his lifetime landscape gardeners had to look to the gardens that were completed and to his Red Books to understand his contribution. He was admired and criticised in probably equal measure by landscapers that followed him. We do not know what influenced him and we can only think that he developed these ideas when he was in Holland, supposedly studying the cloth trade, where he developed his skills as sketcher and private gardener.

The Red Books produced by Repton show before and after watercolours of the landscape surrounding country estates as an aid to selling his designs.



*Above and previous column – Tatton, before and after designs of the Knutsford entrance*

Prince Pückler-Muskau was a German nobleman. Following a career in the army he became a traveller, writer and renowned garden designer. He employed similar techniques to Repton, using flaps to show the effect of light and water on a garden. He travelled extensively in Europe and it is known that he visited some of Repton's gardens. He created two gardens in Germany that still remain; one at Muskau Park (below) and the other at Babelsberg, near Potsdam. Both of these are now World Heritage sites.



*Reptonian fencing at Pückler-Muskau garden*

John Claudius Loudon (1783-1843), was a Scottish landscape gardener and writer whose publications included *An Encyclopaedia of Gardening* and *The Gardener's Magazine*. He

criticised Repton for being too like ‘Capability’ Brown in his designs. As Repton is often seen as Brown’s successor, this is understandable from a man who was not as far removed from him as we are in the twenty-first century. If there are similarities, then Repton continued to evolve his designs throughout his life moving from large landscapes to smaller villa gardens.



*Charles Eliot at Brush Hill, Milton MA ca 1895*

Charles Eliot (above), 1859-1897, was an American landscape designer who was influential in preserving areas of the Eastern seaboard that would have otherwise been developed inappropriately. He is credited as laying the foundations for land preservation, an idea that was copied by the National Trust. He travelled extensively in Europe and through his diaries we can still ‘see’ the gardens he saw, designed by ‘Capability’ Brown, Repton, Joseph Paxton and Prince Pückler-Muskau. He copied Repton’s teardrop beds and wickerwork baskets. He would also ‘borrow’ landscape, such as ruins to enhance the picturesque. Repton’s designs influenced American garden design and this is reflected in the fact that many of his Red Books now reside on that continent.

Repton planted flower beds close to the house in a terrace, and then used balustrades (see opposite column) to separate the house from the parkland. This idea was widely used throughout the Victorian age by many designers, although it was not a new idea. Flower beds close to the house had been popular in earlier centuries and had never really fallen out of fashion. Repton was definitely responsible for bringing this idea back into popular usage. The commercial development of cast iron was responsible for many garden innovations, such as conservatories and trellis work.

Many of Repton’s landscapes are being lost



*Fence dividing the park from the house from Repton’s “Fragments on the theory and practice of landscape gardening”*

because they are considered to be natural, rather than designed, which was the effect that Repton aimed for. He didn’t recommend many specific plants in his Red Books but was very aware of the effect of dark and light on a landscape and how to make trees appear as if they were receding into the landscape. His influence spread around the world, including Australia, and this influence can be seen in twentieth century gardens, such as Horsted Place, designed by Geoffrey Jellicoe in 1955. Repton was recognised as an influential garden designer during his lifetime and this reputation continues two hundred years later.

Thank you to Kate Harwood for a fascinating talk and Reaseheath College for an excellent venue.



*Members of CGT’s Research and Recording Group looking at one of Repton’s Red Books at RHS Lindley Library*

**Jackie Cawte**  
**Photos Freyda Taylor, Kate Harwood and Internet public domain**

**Also see page 14**

# Gordon Baillie at Arley Hall and Gardens

## Third in our Head Gardener series



*Gordon (far right) with the gardeners in the herbaceous border*

It's almost impossible now to think of Arley Hall and Gardens without thinking of Gordon Baillie, head gardener. He is actually coming up to his tenth anniversary; as Gordon says "The time has flown". I can remember thinking how exotic he was with his pony tail, having worked for Sting and Arabella Lennox Boyd.

Gordon was born and grew up in Glasgow. His first memory of gardening was growing potatoes with his father during the miners' strike in the early 70s. This soon extended to work in the greenhouse and helping out his neighbours. He went off to Strathclyde University for a horticultural degree, two years at Strathclyde followed by two years at the West of Scotland Agricultural College. He specialised in commercial horticulture, which is what he thought he would do for the rest of his career and for the first few years that is what he did.



*Gordon in the glasshouse at Arley*

After completing his degree Gordon travelled to the other end of the UK for a job as glasshouse foreman with Stone Cross Nursery outside Eastbourne. He was in charge of the plant

production line, a skill which he used to good effect for the rest of his career. He also set up his own company with partners, supplying Eastbourne's local authority with plants and hanging baskets for municipal display.

But after 4 years he wanted to do more. He was sharing a house with 9 others and he saw an advert for a gardening job with a cottage. He couldn't resist. He found himself at the top of the South Downs at Friston Place with one of the fairest men he ever met. This was Lord Shawcross, who was the lead British prosecutor at the Nuremberg War Crimes tribunal. The estate was 12 acres, with 4 acres of garden, a formal garden around an early 16<sup>th</sup> century manor house. Gordon had to work on his own, but he was given free rein. He was able to restore the garden to a standard where they were able to open in aid of the local hospital. And he still had a greenhouse to keep him happy.



*Gordon honing his skills in topiary at Knole*

After another four years Gordon was headhunted by Knole in Kent, thought to be the largest private house in England, set in 1,000 acres of deer park. In the sixteenth century it was bought by the Sackville family; Vita Sackville-West, of Sissinghurst fame, was born there. Today, ownership is shared with the National Trust. He was the head gardener and had one other full-time gardener to help him, as well as two gardeners under the WRAGs scheme. Between them they had to do everything, including maintaining the trees around the estate. The garden was very well established, so there was a limit to what Gordon could do. So, in the early 1990s he moved in a very different direction.

Almost unknowingly he worked for Sting and his wife Trudi Styler at Lake House in Wiltshire, a house originally built in 1578. Gordon didn't know he was working for Sting until some time later, since it was Arabella Lennox Boyd, garden designer, who interviewed him and employed him as head gardener. The gardens were extensively remodelled but still retained most of the existing hard landscaping features. Gordon gained terrific experience of working with a designer where money was no object, though the job had to be done properly and to time. The gardens of Lake House were featured in the 2017 book *The Secret Gardeners* by Victoria Summerley and photographer Hugo Rittson Thomas.

But eventually Gordon was looking for more challenge and a garden that was shared with rather more visitors than his gardens to date so he started looking around. Arley seemed perfect so he applied and got the job. Even though he has had appreciative owners in his previous gardens he hasn't had such knowledgeable and interested owners as Lord and Lady Ashbrook. They're often in the garden, but they also sit down with Gordon several times a year to plan and prioritise.



You would think that it was the herbaceous borders or the walled gardens (above) that would excite Gordon most. But these are well established and it's actually the areas that have changed that have involved and interested Gordon more, such as the herb garden, the fish garden (see opposite column) and currently the rootery. There have been a lot of changes since Gordon has been at Arley. A major change is the opening times. The garden used to be closed for four months of the year; now, following the trend, the garden is open for 50 weeks of the year.

All this is a lot to take on. Gordon has four gardeners to help him, all with their particular expertise. Gordon's domain is of course the greenhouse, producing perennials and annuals for

the garden in abundance. In addition Gordon has two teams of volunteers. The Friends of Arley volunteers work mainly in the kitchen garden



*Gordon with Friends of Arley volunteers in the Grove planting bulbs*

under the eagle eye of Ruth Brown. Then Gordon has 14 volunteers, many working towards horticultural qualifications, who come for a variety of times, anything from 2 hours to four days a week.

But, the big project coming up is the Memorial Garden, four interlinking walled gardens, based opposite the chapel, with niches in the walls for peoples' ashes. The garden will be designed by Tom Stuart Smith and it is hoped it will open in April 2019, with full opening in August 2019. An exciting project which Gordon is very much looking forward to.



*The fish garden*

I asked Gordon what he would do if not gardening. He loves the lifestyle, the freedom, being out in the fresh air. But if not, it would probably be science, such as marine biology or evolution/genetics.

Thank you so much to Gordon for giving up his time and to the Ashbrook family for allowing him to do so.

**Sue Eldridge**  
**Photos Sue Eldridge, Gordon Baillie and**  
**Arley Estate**

# West Dean Gardens



View across the lawn to West Dean College

West Dean Gardens in Sussex are quite unusual, combining an eclectic garden with a unique centre for arts and crafts courses. I'd wanted to see it for a long time but was lucky enough to visit in August 2018.

The garden also has a very special partnership running the garden for the last 25 years, Jim Buckland, the Gardens Manager, and his partner Sarah Wain, Gardens Supervisor. They appear in the publication "Head Gardeners" by Ambra Edwards, beautifully photographed by Charlie Hopkinson (published in 2017). They have also written their own book "At West Dean – the creation of an exemplary garden", published in 2018. They are supported by seven full-time staff, a student gardener and around 50 volunteers.

The gardens are quite isolated, nestled at the foot of the South Downs, a few miles north of Chichester, but close to Goodwood racecourse. There has been a garden on the site since 1622, when the original manor house was built. In 1804 the current house was built, the gardens were enlarged, the park laid out and the walled kitchen garden established. Many of the trees date to this time. Frederic Bower, who acquired the estate in 1871, developed the gardens and opened them annually to the public. Twenty years later William James bought the estate and made improvements, including extending the range of glasshouses in the kitchen garden, and constructing the pergola. His son Edward (1907 – 1984) inherited the house and grounds. He was a poet and lifelong collector of art, particularly surrealists such as Dali and Magritte. His own work spanned writing, painting, sculpture, design and architecture. But he spent a lot of time abroad and was unable to devote time to the gardens so they became neglected.

Eventually, in 1964, Edward vested the estate and

its treasures in a charitable trust, The Edward James Foundation, which has been able to maintain and extend the garden.

Today, the star of the show is the kitchen garden. I saw it at the end of a very hot summer, but it still looked stunning. The colours of both the vegetables and the cutting flowers were fantastic. There were herbaceous borders, climbers, pergolas and unique fruit trees, as well as the vegetables.



The first part you come to is the fruit garden (above), with over 100 varieties of apple and 45 varieties of pears, many trained into wonderful, traditional shapes. Then through into the area housing the glasshouses. They have an impressive collection of thirteen Victorian glasshouses, built by Foster and Pearson. I could have spent all day here. They were full of colour (see below), with exotic plants, orchids, strawberries, figs, nectarines, peaches, gourds, grapes and melons.



To one side was a brilliant cutting garden, with dahlias, *Rudbeckia*, larkspur (*Delphinium consolida*), *Calendula*, *Veronica*, *Helenium*, *Crocsmia* and *Achillea* (see page 9).

Not far away are the sunken garden and Edwardian pergola. The climbers on the pergola



*Larkspur and Rudbeckia in the cutting garden*  
were more or less over, but the structure was beautiful with views out to the rest of the garden. At over 300 feet long it is one of the largest in the country (see below).



*Harold Peto's pergola*



The rest of the garden is beautiful with many mature specimen trees, such as cedars (above). From the main lawn there are views out to the Downs. The adjacent 50 acre arboretum has national collections of *Liriodendrum tulipifera* (tulip tree) and *Aesculus hippocastanum* (horse chestnut), as well as giant redwoods, red oaks, *Davidia involucrata* (handkerchief tree), azaleas and rhododendrons.

West Dean College, which now occupies the house, is part of the Edward James Foundation. It is one of the largest flint faced buildings in England, remodelled by Ernest George and Harold Peto, who also designed the pergola. The college was opened in 1971 as a centre for education and training in conservation and visual and applied arts. It offers a wide range of degree, diploma and post-graduate courses in conservation, arts and crafts.

Overall a unique place. I'm very grateful to West Dean for allowing us to publish information on their gardens.

For further information see

<https://www.westdean.org.uk/gardens>

**Text and photos Sue Eldridge**

## Winter Gardens



Gardens can be wonderful in early spring, with bulbs, early perennials and flowering trees and shrubs.

The National Garden Scheme is running its 4th Snowdrop Festival in 2019, see:

(<http://ngs.org.uk/gardens/snowdrop-festival.aspx>).

Six gardens in Cheshire will be open, two by arrangement:

**Trafford Hall**, Wimbolds Trafford, near Chester, open 16<sup>th</sup> February 2019 for snowdrops (we're also visiting for our AGM in May).



**Bucklow Farms** in Plumley, 2 miles south of Knutsford (open 24<sup>th</sup> February). This has a carpet of snowdrops and spring bulbs, with leaf, stems and berries showing the colours of autumn/winter.

**Weeping Ash Garden**, adjacent to Bents Garden Centre in Glazebury Lancashire (open February 17<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>), created by retired nurseryman John Bent, featuring more than 100 varieties of snowdrops.

And **West Drive Gardens**, Gatley, with snowdrops and hellebores (open 17<sup>th</sup> February).

**Rosewood Gardens, Neston and Well House, Malpas** are open by arrangement in February and March.

In addition **Trentham Gardens** will have a special opening through NGS on March 28<sup>th</sup>, when garden team members will provide a tour of the gardens 10am-12 noon £6.30.



*Hamamelis mollis*

In addition, of course, there are the winter gardens that we know and love, among others:

**Dunham Massey's** winter garden is open throughout the season. It has many winter shrubs, trees and evergreens, many scented, such as witch hazel (*Hamamelis mollis*), viburnums and Christmas or sweet box (*Sarcococca confusa*). There are thousands of bulbs, with irises and *Cyclamen* in addition to snowdrops. The birch triangle, with its white silver birches, black stem dogwood and white *Cyclamen*, is iconic.



**Rode Hall** (see above) will be open from 2<sup>nd</sup> February to 3<sup>rd</sup> March (closed Mondays). It has over seventy different varieties of snowdrops that can be seen in the magnificent setting of Rode's Humphry Repton landscape.

**Ness Botanic Gardens** is open daily except for the Christmas holidays. It has a wonderful collection of snowdrops, other spring bulbs and camellias (see below), many in a beautiful woodland setting, as well as witch hazels and trees known for their bark.



**Arley Hall** gardens will be open in January, February and March this year (every day 10am – 4pm, till 5pm in March), so this will be an opportunity to visit the Grove and woodland area in winter. The woodland walk is quite magical in February and March, with hellebores, snowdrops and other bulbs (narcissi, *Chionodoxa*, anemones, fritillaries) at the edge of the path as well as early flowering shrubs.

**Quinta Lovell arboretum (near Jodrell Bank)**, which we visited recently is expanding its range of bulbs and will have snowdrops during February.

**Text and photos Sue Eldridge**

# Thank you Jacqui



Another Goodbye and another Thank You ...  
 ... This time to Jacqui Jaffe who is leaving the Events Team after many years of hard work. Jacqui has always been ready to step in and help out and would turn her hand to anything. Invariably busy behind the scenes, she could be relied upon to deal with all aspects of organising our events and she played an important part at the Gardens Trust Conference, registering and

meeting and greeting delegates. She was also our Membership Secretary for some time. Jacqui's good sense, practical suggestions and interesting ideas for talks and visits have been a real asset to the Events Team. Thank you Jacqui. We look forward to seeing you at future events.

**Tina Theis**

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Jacqui was the last of the original group of people involved in organising events. We now have a fairly new team of people and we thought you would find it helpful to know who they are. I've added their email addresses so you can contact them with suggestions for events:

Chair - Margaret Blowey [rhmeh@aol.com](mailto:rhmeh@aol.com)  
 Jackie Cawte [jackiecawte@sky.com](mailto:jackiecawte@sky.com)  
 Gordon Darlington [darlington807@btinternet.com](mailto:darlington807@btinternet.com)  
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 Julia Whitfield [ewhitfield2008@btinternet.com](mailto:ewhitfield2008@btinternet.com)

**Editor**

## Events coming up

### Planthunters Fairs

#### March 2019

**Sun 10** National Memorial Arboretum (also 11 May, 27 July), Alrewas DE13 7AR 10am-4pm, free

**Sat 16** Carsington Water (also 27 May, 10 Aug.), Ashbourne DE6 1ST 10am - 4pm Free entry to fair and country park, P&D car park

**Sun 17** Alderford Lake (new venue), Whitchurch, Shropshire, SY13 3JQ 10am-4pm free.

**Sat 23** Sugnall Walled Garden (also 7 July), Stafford, ST21 6NF 10am-4pm, £1, free parking

**Sun 24** Ness Botanic Gardens, South Wirral CH64 4AY (also 1st Sept) 10am-4pm £1

#### April 2019

**Sun 7** Bramall Hall, Stockport, SK7 3NX 11am-4pm £2

**Sun 14** Consall Gardens, Staffordshire ST9 OAG, 10am-5pm, entry to gardens and fair £3,

**Good Fri 19** Whittington Castle, Shropshire, SY11 4DF 10am-4pm Fair free, car park £1

**Sun/Mon 21/22** Dorothy Clive Garden, Willoughbridge, Market Drayton, TF9 4EU 10am-5pm (also 25/26 Aug) £4 gardens and fair

**Sun 28** Cholmondeley Castle Gardens (also 30 June)

For further information see <http://planthuntersfairs.co.uk/index.htm>



*Bramhall Hall*



### Gardens Trust Winter Lecture Series: London

Wednesday evenings 6.30pm, from January to April. The Gallery, Cowcross Street, London EC1M 6EJ. Individual lectures £10 for GT and CGT members, £15 non-members. London season ticket: £45, non-members £75. Book online or contact Sally Jeffery:

[sally.jeffery2@gmail.com](mailto:sally.jeffery2@gmail.com) or phone: 07817 128147

**The Elizabethan Garden at Kenilworth: its History and Restoration**

30<sup>th</sup> January, Dr Anna Keay

**Oxford Botanic Garden: Past, Present & Future**, Professor Simon Hiscock 20<sup>th</sup> February



**Nicholas Hawksmoor's designs for the Gardens of Castle Howard, North Yorkshire**, Dr Sally Jeffery 6 March

**John Brookes: his landscape legacy**  
Dr Barbara Simms 27 March

**Studying Orchards in Eastern England**  
Professor Tom Williamson 10 April

**Other Gardens Trust events**

**GT Birmingham Spring Lecture by Joe Hawkins**

**Finding my place: The Rediscovery and Restoration of Hagley Park**

at the Birmingham and Midland Institute  
6:30pm, Wednesday 17 April, followed by a visit to Hagley Park, Worcestershire with Joe Hawkins

2pm, Wednesday 1 May, £22 including cream tea  
**Secrets and Scandal at West Wycombe Park, Buckinghamshire, with Richard Wheeler**

10.30am to 4pm, Thursday 30 May  
Cost for members from £45 includes refreshments, book online

**The Picturesque Garden in England In honour of Michael Symes**, Rewley House, Oxford, Friday 31 May to Sunday 2 June, £159  
Book online or phone 01865 270380

**Visit to Castle Howard Archive and Gardens:** Nicholas Hawksmoor and the garden in Wray Wood

10.30am to 4.30pm, Thursday 11 July 2019  
£70 for GT/CGT members, £90 for non members  
Further info on GT website or email or phone Sally Jeffery sally.jeffery2@gmail.com or: 07817 128147

**The Gardens Trust's Annual Conference and AGM 2019** will be held in Queen's College, Oxford, Friday 6 to Sunday 8 September 2019  
**For further info or to book online see**

[www.thegardenstrust.org](http://www.thegardenstrust.org)

**STOP PRESS**

**Faces of Change: Nature's Champions Dunham Massey**

23<sup>rd</sup> March for three months  
30 portraits from the National Portrait Gallery  
Gertrude Jekyll, Roy Lancaster, David Attenborough, Octavia Hill and more.

## Garden History course

Do you fancy something to get your teeth into over the next year, more than just a day course or morning talk? Ed Bennis, our Chair, has kindly offered to repeat a series of lectures that he gave to Cheshire Gardens Trust members some years ago. The course would run over 6 weeks, possibly autumn 2019, spring 2020, at a convenient venue. Each session would be 2.5 hours in two parts, with a break in the middle. Please contact Jackie Cawte straight away if you would be interested [jackiecawte@sky.com](mailto:jackiecawte@sky.com).



*Villa d'Este, Tivoli, outside Rome*

- 1 a. When Landscape became Garden  
b. The Gardens of Dal-al-Islam
- 2 a. The Medieval Garden  
b. Italy: The Renaissance Garden
- 3 a. France: The Renaissance Garden  
b. Tudor Britain
- 4 a. The House of Orange and the English Renaissance
4. b. The 18<sup>th</sup> Century Dichotomy: The Beautiful and the Picturesque
- 5 a. Horticulture Excess in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century  
b. Chinese Gardens
- 6 a. When Garden became Landscape  
b. Summary and questions followed by a course lunch

# Caldwell's Nursery – Ken Roe's story

In 2011 a group of Cheshire Gardens Trust volunteers started interviewing family members, staff and customers from Caldwell's nursery which closed its doors on 31<sup>st</sup> January 1992, after 200 years in business. It was part of a huge project to capture the history of this remarkable nursery.

One of the staff interviewed was Ken Roe, who joined Caldwell's in 1946, age 18. He started cycling to the rose nursery at Ollerton, 13 miles there and 13 miles back, but then progressed to a motorbike (see below), much to the disgust of his father.



One of his first jobs was tying up the roses with raffia, following the 'budders', as well as planting the original seedlings. Immediately after the war getting horticultural supplies from Holland was almost impossible, so the nursery had to be fairly inventive. They collected rose hips from the hedgerows and Ken helped plant the seed. In order to produce standard roses they needed briars so Ken reported:

There was little automation at the nursery, "but, during the war they had acquired a machine from George Monroe, who were big suppliers of horticultural machinery, called a Rowtrak, a rotivator. That was a killer really, it broke two of my ribs at one stage. It was a very crude machine, which was very underpowered. It was just a plough with an engine on the front in place of the horses. A one horse plough with big heavy shafts in the front and you had to physically manhandle this thing round to start another row and you'd get cracked in the ribs with them, and it would suddenly jerk and spin. It was not an easy thing and you could break your arm starting the engine if you weren't careful. So, that was my introduction to horticultural machinery".

Ken left Caldwell's in 1952 and had a long career in horticulture. He used the Rowtrak when he set up his own market garden in Tabley. He described the machine as being very crude and



noisy but very robust. It had polished ash handles and the engine had a cast aluminium casing that polished up like silver.

So, imagine Ken's surprise when he was visited by Brian Carter, an old friend, bringing with him the Rowtrak. Brian, who goes to vintage agricultural shows, knew of Ken's fondness for the machine and his wish to be reunited with it. About 12 months ago Brian spotted the derelict auto cultivator at a sale. He bought and partially restored it (see photo), much to Ken's delight.

In 2012 a team of keen CGT members, with Jacquetta Menzies as designer, produced the King Canute garden at Tatton Flower Show, celebrating Caldwell's nursery, and winning a silver-gilt medal. The Caldwell family, staff and customers were invited to Press day and all had a wonderful time, including Ken who entertained everyone with his stories.



*Ken Roe (far left) with Caldwell's family and staff at Tatton*

There are plenty more stories on the Caldwell's website <http://www.caldwellarchives.org.uk> so do have a look.

With thanks to Ken Roe and his daughter Christine Wardle for providing photos and memories.

**Sue Eldridge and Barbara Moth**

## Discovering the Real Repton

Well, that was a full-on Repton experience in early November! First, on November 1<sup>st</sup>, Kate Harwood gave an afternoon talk at Reaseheath on **Repton's Legacy**, (reported elsewhere in this issue). Kate was again at Reaseheath on the following morning to speak on **Repton's Landscapes**. Then on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> November, the Garden Museum in Lambeth was the location for the next Repton experience - a seminar entitled "**Discovering the Real Repton**" which brought together the research findings discovered during this year of the Bicentenary of Repton's death.

What an amazing amount of new information has come to light in this single year. One outstanding example was given at the start of the seminar by the Chair Stephen Daniels of Nottingham University announcing that a further Repton garden had been found. Linking a Repton drawing of a Thameside garden at Westminster with correspondence found by Sussex Gardens Trust, it was shown that Repton had laid out the Speaker's pleasure garden at the Palace of Westminster and that it had a view to the Church of St Mary's Lambeth, now the Garden Museum. How extraordinary could that be!

Kate Harwood gave a paper at this meeting too; this time on the **Restoration of a Repton Landscape** at Panshanger in Hertfordshire (see below). There, the house had been demolished in the 1950s and the land sold to Tarmac. Unfortunately planning permission for gravel extraction was granted 7 years before the site was listed as Grade II\*. Once all the

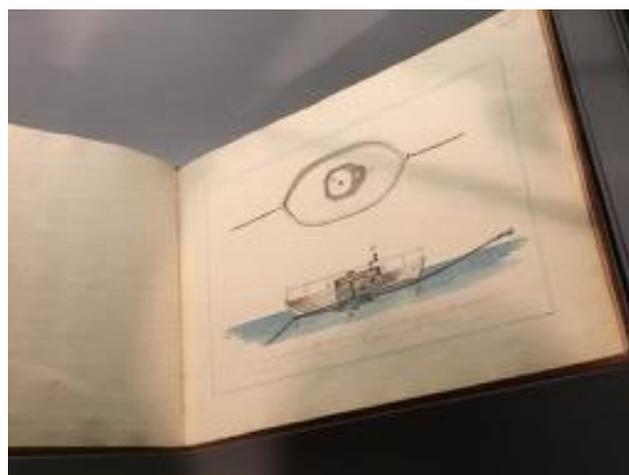
gravel had been removed, the landscape could be restored under the guidance of local garden historians and kept in the public eye by bringing the Press on board.

The highlight of the day was "Sweet Sylvan Scenes" sung by the Gleees, a five part piece sung as an 18<sup>th</sup> century evening's entertainment. The words from two poems by Mary Newbery (with music by William Crotch), were based on Repton's description of Heathfield Park in his Red Book. This performance eloquently demonstrated the integration of 'the polite arts' in Repton's day.

In all there were 14 speakers at this seminar. You can read summaries of the talks at: <https://gardenmuseum.org.uk/events/discovering-the-real-repton/>.

Finally, after the seminar we had access to the fabulous Garden Museum exhibition "**Repton Revealed**" in which 24 Red Books, some from overseas, are displayed. You can get more information at <https://gardenmuseum.org.uk> or for an animation narrated by Jeremy Irons have a look at <https://vimeo.com/298383446>.

The exhibition closes on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2019.



*Repton's design for a ferry boat at Holkham Hall – an interesting variation on Repton's technical abilities*

**Text and photos Freyda Taylor**

## A new course from Jane Roberts

### **Members of the pea family and their ornamental use in historic gardens**

A series of six talks at Gawsworth Hall on Tuesday mornings Sept 10, 17, 24, Oct 1, 8, 15 10am -12.30pm Cost £68.00

Emphasis will be put on identifying members of this family – trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants.

Instruction will be given on how to use a hand lens, identification keys and books. Time will be spent looking at particular plants, examining their features in detail using fresh and dried specimens, photographs and photocopies.

Further information from Jane on 01260 271186 or email [botanical.surveys123@btinternet.com](mailto:botanical.surveys123@btinternet.com)

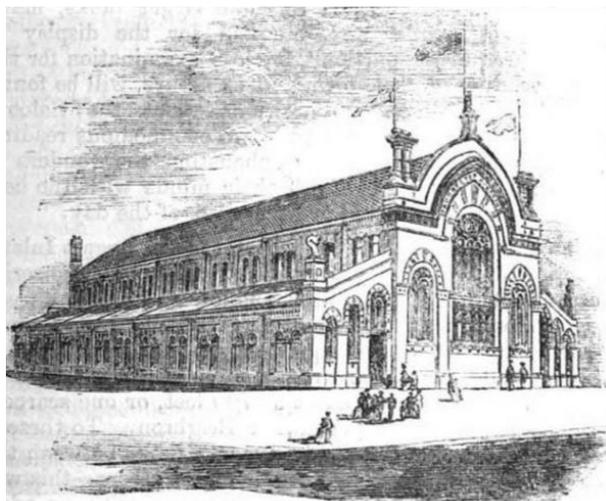
# The Manchester Aquarium

The scientific study of the natural world had become an abiding passion by the early nineteenth century and one of the lesser known fads of the period was aquariums. Adverts for aquariums began appearing very early in the century, but it wasn't until the 1850s that they became the fashion.

The early aquariums were intended for the home, but the idea of visitor attractions – think Blue Planet – began to surface. An unsuccessful one opened at Regent's Park Zoo in 1853. The Crystal Palace was destroyed by fire in 1866, but five years later The Crystal Palace Aquarium Company opened its doors. This was followed by the Brighton Aquarium. In the year it opened (1872), Manchester businessmen decided their town could do with just such a popular visitor attraction.

The Manchester Aquarium Company was registered in April 1872, with a share capital of £10,000 (about £1m at today's prices) and by August in the same year, a piece of land, close to the recently opened Alexandra Park in Whalley Range, had been purchased. Plans for the new Aquarium and Winter Garden were put on display in the window of a shop on the corner of Market Street and Corporation Street.

It was anticipated that the Aquarium would open at Whitsun 1873. But lack of finance delayed completion and it wasn't until 1874 that it opened. Clara Alcock of Sale declared it 'very similar' to the one that had recently opened in Southport and described the building as large and handsome.

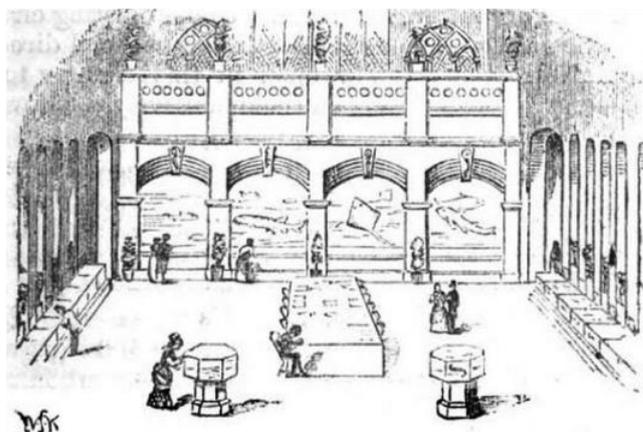


The Manchester Aquarium—Exterior, facing Alexandra Park.

The above drawing is taken from the third edition of the official guide-book to the

aquarium, published in September 1875, by which time 20,000 copies had been printed and the original curator had been replaced by William Sackville-West from the Brighton Aquarium.

In all, there were 68 tanks containing a huge variety of fish and strange underwater creatures – axolotls, sea horses (very popular), sea anemones and sea cucumbers. Some of the creatures listed are difficult to identify, there are several dianthus – white, brown and pink – but it seems these were likely to be a type of sea anemone.



The Manchester Aquarium—East End of the Saloon, showing Tank 1 of the Deep-sea Series, Tidal Tanks, Octagon Tanks, and Reading Table.

Tanks varied in size and some were for fresh water and others sea water. Tank 1 of the Deep-Sea Series, shown above, included “*Sturgeon, Large Bass, Skate-toothed Sharks, Large Cod and Skate*”. The mention of Sharks sounds ominous, but Google “skate-toothed sharks” and all that comes up are books from the nineteenth century, so probably not a shark as we would know it!

The Manchester Aquarium may have been set up with good intentions, but it needed to be profitable, as it was funded via share capital. It seems that visitor numbers were too low to make it successful. Possibly in a better economic climate shareholders would have been prepared to give it more time, but the world was entering into a prolonged economic depression. The story is one that is familiar to us: a bank in the United States failed and the panic that ensued created a domino effect. In Britain it was the start of 20 years of economic stagnation and although northern towns were less affected than other parts of the country, paying for food and rent took precedence over visitor attractions.

By July 1877 it was effectively all over. Visitor numbers had not been sufficient. The company was wound up, a last-ditch appeal to the local authority to take it over failed and the whole thing was put up

for auction. The building was purchased by the Bishop of Salford who was afraid that it might end up as a less salubrious place of public entertainment: St. Bede's College had opened up alongside just the year before. Elsewhere, aquariums were more successful: the Brighton aquarium has survived through many decades, occasionally re-inventing itself and is now a Sea Life Centre.

Writings about the aquariums seem to have concentrated upon the animal life, but anyone who has kept a pond or indoor aquarium knows that plants are also important. The well-known Shirley Hibberd published his



“*The Seaweed Collector*” in 1872. This opened up a new area for plant enthusiasts who may have only come across seaweed in rock pools at the seaside. The colour plates show the variety of form as well as of colour.

Many thanks to Ann Brooks, who has written about the history of Aquariums, for the basis of this article. You can find the Official Guide Book to the Manchester Aquarium, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition and Shirley Hibberd's *The Seaweed Collector* on Google books. For a brief history of Brighton aquarium see <https://www.visitsealife.com/brighton/discover/history>

Joy Uings

## Walter Menzies



We are sad to announce the death of Walter Menzies, husband of long-time CGT Member Jacquetta Menzies. Walter died before Christmas and his funeral was held in Aberfeldy at the end of December. Jacquetta said the funeral went well, “big turn-out - everyone sang, no fighting, plenty of crying and laughing”.

Walter was probably best known for his work

leading the Mersey Basin Campaign and in particular for his focus on sustainability issues. He played a leading role in raising awareness about the importance of sustainable development in the NW and in addition, was a founding member of The Groundwork Trust. Walter was also a member of the Cheshire Gardens Trust and we always enjoyed his lively presence on some of the international tours and at our events, most recently at our 2018 AGM at Henbury Hall – his wit and warmth in evidence as always. In 2015, he was part of our CGT study day on the development of Port Sunlight Riverside Park – a new development reclaimed from a former landfill site. Walter opened the proceedings and set the scene with an excellent talk on the role of the Land Trust in reclaiming the site. He will be sadly missed.

Our heartfelt condolences to Jacquetta and family at this sad time.

Tina Theis

**For information, the events team will be sending out the next events mailing in early February mainly by email. Paper copies will still be sent to those without email or where we are unsure.**

**Copy date for April newsletter is 31<sup>st</sup> March**

**Contributions to the Newsletter are very welcome. If you want to comment on articles in this edition or would like to contribute one for the next, please contact the Newsletter Editor, 148 Chester Road, Hazel Grove, Stockport SK7 6HE or email [sue\\_eldridge@hotmail.com](mailto:sue_eldridge@hotmail.com)**