



Patron: The Viscount Ashbrook
Company Limited by Guarantee, no. 05673816
Charity Number 1119592

Issue No. 50

April 2016

Newsletter

www.cheshire-gardens-trust.org.uk

Inside:

- ✿ The history of Piccadilly Gardens
- ✿ Celebrating Runcorn
- ✿ S is for Sunken Gardens
- ✿ Swedish Gardens
- ✿ Launches of book and website

Some future events:

- ✿ Bolesworth Castle – Wednesday 18 May
- ✿ Summer Social – Saturday 4 June
- ✿ Plantsman's Garden, Holmes Chapel – Wednesday 15 June
- ✿ Sandymere Garden, Tarporley – Thursday 14 July



We met outside Manchester Cathedral on a wet Sunday in February. We were lucky enough to have Ken Moth as our leader. He is a conservation architect, a trustee of the Victorian Society, with a passionate interest in Manchester and its history. His tour featured the public spaces and statues of Manchester rather than its historic buildings.

He suggested that what was, and is important, is “informed patronage” i.e. people with vision and understanding, able to fund public projects. It has been there in the past but the vision is sadly lacking now. Generally the public realm is “poorly designed, detailed and maintained” especially when compared with its Dutch and German counterparts.

Mediaeval Manchester was a compact and thriving town. The cathedral was the local parish church, surrounded by narrow alleys. There may have been a church here in 700 A.D and by the time of the Doomsday Book, its parish was about 60 square miles, making it very busy indeed, with multiple weddings, christenings and burials. It was largely rebuilt in 1492.

Many buildings in the medieval town existed up to the 1970s. It was cleared for development, but lay empty for 20 years. It was only with the IRA bomb in 1996 that the impetus came for redevelopment. The Millennium Commission gave £42 million for Urbis (now the National Football Museum), Cathedral Gardens and Exchange Square.

We moved round into Cathedral Gardens in front of Chethams, completed in 2002. It has a performance space and a series of lawns, planted with silver birch trees. The water feature is by Stephen Broadbent and has a source pool, rill channel, final pool, 7-metre water jets and special night-time effects. (*see front page*)

Then on to Exchange Square, which was also a millennium project, designed by Martha Schwarz, with a water feature along the line of Hanging Ditch. We walked along Cathedral Street, now with posh shops like Harvey Nicholls, but originally a narrow mediaeval market street. From here we could see through to St Anne's Square, originally Acresfield, site of the annual Manchester fair. This was enclosed in 1708, with the proviso that enough space was kept for the fair and a new church built (St Anne's Church, completed in 1712).

In the middle of the square is a South African war memorial, designed by William Hamo Thorneycroft, a dramatic and evocative tribute to soldiers who fought in the Boer War. In 1993 the square was re-landscaped with cannonball bollards and slab seating. A stylised flower fountain was added in 1996. Close by is a statue of Richard Cobden, 1867, by Marshall Wood. Cobden was a major reformer, an advocate of the repeal of the Corn Law, the free trade movement and the anti war movement during the Crimean War.

We then moved along Deansgate to the bottom of Brazenose Street, originally proposed as a grand processional way between the town hall and law courts. At the Deansgate end of the

street is a rather fanciful statue of Chopin erected in 2012 on the 200th anniversary of Chopin's birth. It is apparently the largest statue of Chopin outside Poland.

Halfway along Brazenose Street is Lincoln Square, with a statue of Abraham Lincoln. The original was unveiled in Cincinnati in 1917. A copy was offered to Britain, turned down for Parliament Square, but accepted by Manchester. It is an unconventional statue of Lincoln the man, rather than the urbane statesman. It was moved to the renamed Lincoln Square in 1986. Lincoln is very significant to local Manchester people. The American Civil War, which was fought on the abolition of slavery, halted the supply of raw cotton to the Lancashire Mills, resulting in severe economic hardship. There were suggestions that Britain should intervene on the side of the Confederates, but this was resisted. The Lancashire Cotton Famine Relief Committee wrote a strong letter of support to Lincoln. He was deeply moved and part of his address to the Citizens of Manchester is reproduced on the plinth.



Statue of Abraham Lincoln

We moved on to Albert Square, originally the town yard and space for collection of horse manure. In 1853 it was redesigned and in 1866 renamed in honour of Prince Albert. His memorial marble statue was designed by Matthew Noble, the canopy by Thomas Worthington. Demolition was proposed in 1975, but resisted, and restoration of the memorial was completed in 1978.

Nearby are statues of John Bright, possibly the greatest British statesman of the nineteenth century and the political partner of Cobden; James Fraser, Bishop of Manchester; Oliver Heywood and William Ewart Gladstone. The Jubilee Fountain, built in 1898, was moved to Heaton Park but returned in 1997. In 1986 the square was remodelled to provide a more fitting setting for the memorial and other statues and traffic rerouted round the edge.



Albert Square, bedecked with red lanterns for the Chinese New year, with the statue of John Bright in the foreground and the Jubilee Fountain in the background

In 1864 the City Council proposed the building of a new town hall. The result is regarded as one of the finest examples of neo-Gothic architecture in the UK. It is well worth a visit in its own right.

We then moved to the back of the Town Hall to see the cenotaph, of Portland stone, designed by Edwin Lutyens in 1924. A little further along St Peter's Square, originally the site of St Peter's Church, is being redeveloped as a tram station. Opinions differ as to the eventual outcome

We then walked on through the back streets to the Chinese Arch. This Ming Dynasty Imperial Arch was specially built in China and shipped over in three containers. Completed in 1987 it was a gift from Manchester City Council to the Chinese Community.



The Chinese Arch

We crossed Portland Street and walked down Sackville Street to Sackville Gardens, in front of the Shena Simon Campus of Manchester College. Originally Whitworth gardens, it was created in 1900 by the City Council. In the centre sits Alan Turing, a bronze seated statue by Glyn Hughes, unveiled in 2001. Turing was instrumental in cracking Nazi Germany's enigma code and also helped create the world's first modern computer. However, he was also tried and convicted for gross indecency and committed suicide in 1954, a "terrible blight on our history".



Alan Turing in Sackville Gardens (previously known as Whitworth Gardens)

On a lighter note we walked on to the Vimto monument on the site of the first Vimto factory.



The site of UMIST (University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology) lies just

below the memorial. It can trace its origins to the Manchester Mechanics' Institution, founded in 1824 as part of a national movement for the education of working men. In its heyday in 1964 it was in the vanguard of Britain's "white heat of technology" era. Bertram Bowden, the Principal at the time, created "a gleaming white campus of modern architecture, artworks and sculptural experiments (including Archimedes), grouped around a series of well-landscaped pedestrian landscapes". In Ken's view this is "the best post-war area development in the city".



Statue of Archimedes and his Eureka moment erected by UMIST in 1990

UMIST became part of Manchester University but with a distinct identity and gained autonomous status in 1994. It merged with the University in 2004, losing its status, and unfortunately the site is now vacant and due for re-development.

We moved through Minshull Street, Aytoun Street and Major Street to Piccadilly Gardens, a very controversial development. Originally it was the site of an infirmary and dispensary. Sir Oswald Mosley, Lord of the Manor, donated a large site on condition that if the infirmary ever moved the site must remain a public amenity.

Piccadilly assumed the role of Manchester's premier civic space. In 1853 Sir Joseph Paxton was commissioned to design a grand esplanade, which, with its major statuary, became a promenade where people could see and be seen.

In 1909 the infirmary moved and the space was laid out as a large public garden, with a sunken area where the infirmary basement had been. It proved immensely popular until 1998 when the area was redesigned largely as a transport hub and became the subject of much criticism. Over the years, trams and buses have taken up more and more space. Most recently an office building has been built on part of the garden, blocking the light, and a concrete "Berlin wall" constructed. The esplanade was demolished and statues repositioned. The central area of grass and fountains has not been successful.

However, the statues remain, of Sir Robert Peel, James Watt, the Duke of Wellington and, of course, Queen Victoria. The latest news is that, after public protests, there are proposals to knock down the wall and redesign the gardens, but we shall see.

This brought us to the end of a fascinating tour of Manchester's urban spaces by Ken Moth, teaching us that we need to look up and around us when in Manchester to appreciate what's there, but also that great design only results from informed patronage.

And then of course, a week later, on a bright but cold Saturday, Ken did it all over again. Thank you Ken.

Sue Eldridge and Ken Moth
Photographs by *Gordon Darlington*

The early history of Piccadilly Gardens

Possibly we should have a little sympathy for the failure, yet again, of the new style Piccadilly Gardens. They have a rather chequered history. In 1750 Piccadilly Gardens did not exist: the town had not yet stretched that far. Just beyond the end of Market Street lay the Daube Holes (see 1751 map, right) the area from which the clay had been extracted to make the wattle and daub houses of mediaeval Manchester.

It had naturally filled with water and was a perfect site for the town's ducking stool.¹

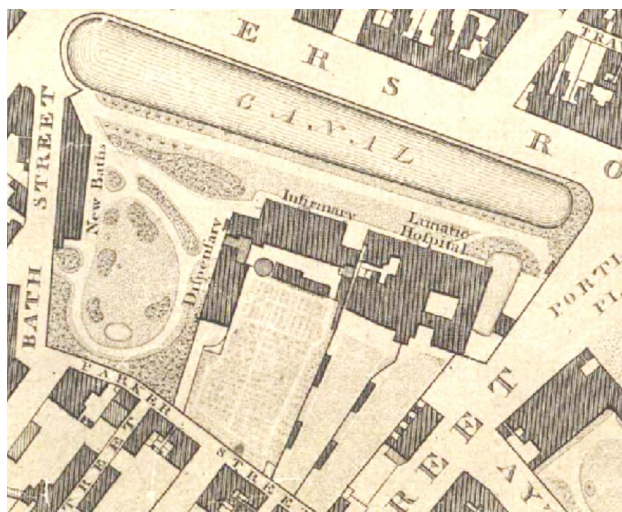


In 1752 an Infirmary was opened in Garden Street, Shudehill. It was such a success that in 1755 the new Infirmary was opened. It had been built on land purchased from Sir Oswald Mosley. The Mosley family stipulated that the land in front, which was partly the daub holes and partly fields, should be used to create a pond surrounded by a walk on the sole condition that it should be open to the burgesses forever.²

It is reported that in 1764 a visitor to the town commented on the state of the pond. It was a *"nasty puddle of water ... which, if kept clean, would be ornamental and useful; but whilst it is suffered to be choaked up with putrefying weeds, will, by its noisomeness, be most likely to fill the [Infirmary] with patients."*³

One writer suggested that there should be a fountain near each extremity of the pond, and also a bridge across the centre to form a handsome entrance to the front of the Infirmary.³ The suggestion to add fountains would be repeated every so often.

Things improved and by the time the 1794 map of Manchester was published, the 'pond' had acquired the classier title 'Canal' (*see below*), although it continued to be known as 'the pond'.



The gardens between the Dispensary and the New Baths were open to the public. Piccadilly Gardens was then known as Levers Row

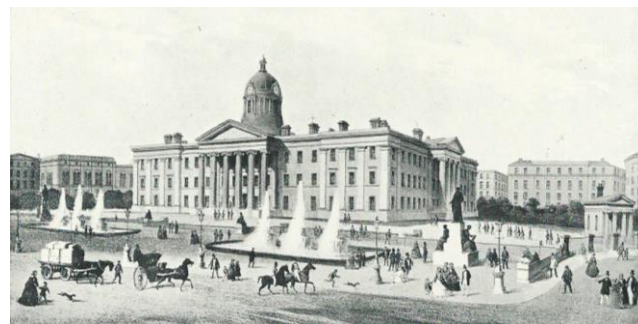
Joseph Aston described it: *"In front of the [Infirmary] is a gravel walk, the whole length of the land, margined with grass, and partially planted with trees. The pool of water in front, adds considerably to its appearance, and renders it a most eligible promenade."*⁴

The canal provided a water source for local streets before 1814 when an Act of Parliament allowed for the creation of a reservoir, but in

1834 it was said that *"The pond ... when full of water, adds greatly to the beauty of the ground; but in the summer it has frequently been supposed to be a nuisance, and is now generally dry"*.³

Yet five years later, Benjamin Love described the pond as *"a fine sheet of water, which is kept pure by the daily admission of a fresh supply."*⁵ It seems that a plan to build a fountain, reported in the Manchester Courier in March 1832, had come to nothing.

In fact it was not until the Queen paid the town a visit in 1851 that the Council decided the look of the place could be improved and had three fountains erected, sending water up 30 feet. The plan was not just to improve the look of the pond, but to deal with the nuisance created by stagnant water. However, the nuisance remained and eventually the pond was filled in, while two of the three fountains were retained.



Manchester Infirmary in 1860, showing Fountains

After 150 years, the Infirmary moved to its new home on Oxford Road. At that time T. Swindells wrote about Piccadilly Gardens:

*"... one hopes that whatever the Corporation may decide upon with reference to the Infirmary site, no encroachment upon the space will be attempted. The area has played so important a part in the history of the city that it should be left intact, in accordance with the condition laid down by the Mosley family a century and a half ago."*²

Joy Uings

Google "Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester" Images to see how the gardens looked at various times last century.

¹ Manchester Evening News, 19 May 1914

² Swindells, T. Manchester Streets & Manchester Men, Second Series (1907) p.69-72

³ Panorama of Manchester and Railway Companion (1834) p.110.

⁴ Aston, Joseph, The Manchester Guide (1804) p.169

⁵ Love, Benjamin, Manchester as it is p.61

Celebrating Runcorn

The weather on 22nd September 2015 was not promising (though later turned warm and sunny), when members of CGT met at The Castle Arms Runcorn for coffee prior to a walk round parts of Runcorn.



This was to celebrate the 1100th anniversary of Runcorn and the 900th anniversary of Norton Priory. Runcorn new town was sixty years old in 2014. We were joined by Claire Broadhurst, from Norton Priory Museum, who was a very informative guide.

We began at Halton Castle, just above The Castle Arms, from where we enjoyed extensive views and it is easy to see why the site was chosen. Nothing now remains of the fortress built by King Alfred's daughter in 915; Halton Castle dates from Norman times. Although it is a ruin it still shows interesting features, such as a sally porte and garderobe. Other features, the wall by the entrance and crenellations which look mediaeval, are Victorian follies, built to make the ruin look more impressive.



Members at the Castle ruins

The castle originally belonged to the Barons of Halton but passed to the Duchy of Lancaster around the time of Henry IV. It still belongs to the Duchy but is looked after by Norton Priory on behalf of Halton council, who rent it from the Duchy, while the land it stands on is owned in

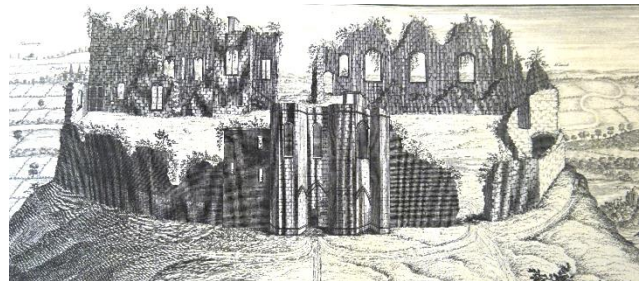
part by the council and in part by United Utilities, quite a mixture!

The second Baron founded an Augustinian community in 1115 and the third Baron endowed a priory at the village of Norton and moved the community to it in 1134.

A close relationship continued to exist between the owners of the castle and the priory till the dissolution of the monasteries, when the priory was bought by a Sir Richard Brooke.

Records show that in the 1400s there were several buildings at the castle, including a chapel and great chamber. It continued in use until the Civil War, when it was a royalist stronghold, besieged twice and eventually fell to the parliamentarians. Sir Henry Brooke (d. 1664) began to pull the castle down.

At the Restoration it was reclaimed by The Duchy of Lancaster. Already damaged it was no longer lived in, fell into disrepair and, by the late 1700s, was already a ruin.



The Castle in the 1700s

In 1737 a courthouse was built, probably using stone from the mediaeval gatehouse and three semi-circular bays in the lower bailey may be lock ups dating from this time but there is no definite evidence that this was their use.



Possible lock-ups Halton Castle

The courthouse later became a hotel and is now the pub where we had our coffee.

Recent digs have uncovered artefacts from The Civil War, coins and shell casings from WW2, pipes and pots, a mediaeval wall, post holes thought to have supported a wooden structure and two skeletons. The skeletons, a male and

female found just outside the castle wall, were unexpected and why they were there is a mystery. It has been difficult to date these accurately, from their position in the soil, as the land has been disturbed so many times in the past that historical layers have become muddled. They have been sent for carbon dating.

Richard Brooke (great-grandfather to Sir Henry) bought Norton priory for £1,545 1s 9d in 1545. He demolished part of it but incorporated the Abbot's lodging and the undercroft into his Tudor house. In 1750 a Georgian house was built with grounds and a walled garden.



Norton Priory House

The family did not want the Bridgewater canal to go through their estate and held up the construction for several years. Eventually the canal was completed but the Duke of Bridgewater had to pay £2,000 in compensation and this money may have been used to build the walled garden. Later, railways cut across parts of the estate.

The Brookes continued to live in style and in 1868 alterations were made to the front of the house. The 1881 census showed eighteen servants living in the house and there were other outside workers living elsewhere on the estate. The garden would have provided fruit, vegetables and flowers for the house.

Like many similar families, the Brookes found it difficult to maintain such a house and estate after WW1 and pollution from the growing chemical industries made it a less pleasant place to live. They left in 1921, the house deteriorated and was pulled down in 1928.

The garden had been used commercially for a time and then for rearing pheasants but in the sixties it was neglected.

In 1966 the estate was given in trust for the public. The garden was eventually restored in the 1970s and opened to the public in 1984.

The garden was our destination and we left the castle to continue our walk.

The church by the castle, St Mary's, was built in 1851/2, the architect being George Gilbert Scott. We passed the former vicarage, built in 1739 under the patronage of a wealthy barrister, Sir John Chesshyre and the parish library, built by him for the villagers in 1773 with the curate serving as librarian.



The Parish Library

Halton village is much older. Now incorporated into Runcorn New Town, it had been part of the Norton estate and we were able to see two of the huge gateposts which would have been at the entrance of the drive to the house. The village's Main Street has several attractive houses, some dating back several hundred years.



Houses in Main Street

Runcorn new town was designed to be a series of separate communities (of different housing designs) linked to each other with a figure of eight bus way to each other and with a central "shopping city." Landscaping in the town was to the design of Neil Higson, who went on to work at Milton Keynes. There are green spaces and shrubberies around the housing areas.

We skirted the Castlefields estate. This was built in 1972. The planners wanted to avoid high rise and Castlefields was designed with deck access housing, "streets in the sky". Unfortunately some of the innovative new estates, including Castlefields, did not stand the test of time. The deck housing proved unpopular and the estate

deteriorated to become an area of social deprivation and crime. Most of the estate was demolished in 2002/3 and replaced with more traditional housing.

The secondary school built to serve the area, Norton Priory High, stood in extensive grounds. It closed in 2001 and, shortly afterwards, was burnt to the ground. The area is now called Phoenix Park and contains areas of woodland with associated wild life.

We left the park and walked along a path which would have been the driveway to the garden, crossing the canal. We learned that an adjacent field had been part of a mediaeval moat system for the priory. The garden has been restored as a Georgian garden and although it was late in the season there were still colourful flowers and fruit trees to admire, as well as froths of seed heads.



In the Walled Garden

The garden covers two and a half acres and holds the national collection of tree quince.

A tree of life gate marks the entrance through which the Brookes would have walked when visiting the garden.

The shop and reception are housed in the gardener's cottage and other buildings contain a small cafe. The shop, amongst other items, sells preserves made from fruit grown in the garden.



Enjoying refreshments at the Garden

At this point we were free to explore the garden at our own pace, enjoy refreshments and, eventually make our own way back to our cars at the Castle Arms, after a most enjoyable, varied and informative visit to a town that does have more to offer than rows of chemical works!

My thanks to Barbara Moth who provided me with photographs and background information.

Please note that, although the garden is open, Norton Priory Museum is closed for refurbishment.

Jenny Wood

www.nortonpriory.org

www.runcornhistsoc.org.uk

www.flickr.com/photos/jrjamesarchive/9263200658

(Runcorn master plan)

Marbury Country Park

Over the last few years members of Friends of Anderton and Marbury have been researching the history of Marbury. Most recently the focus has been on the Marbury estate, parkland and arboretum.

Little is known about the layout of the Marbury estate and parkland prior to the 1800s. A mural, c1740, (*see next page*) shows formal gardens close to the hall with avenues of trees lining the Carriage Drive.

An 1819 engraving places the Georgian mansion in parkland. There are trees along only one side of the Carriage Drive shown on the 1843 tithe map. There were also avenues of trees where the present Lime Avenues are growing.

Shortly after James Hugh Smith Barry inherited

Marbury Hall in 1841, he commissioned leading landscape gardener William Andrews Nesfield to redesign the gardens surrounding a remodelled hall.

It is not known when work on the new garden design was started but, by 1858, the area between the hall and Budworth Mere appears to have been terraced. The walled garden (now Marbury Hall Nurseries) had been constructed and possibly an orchard had been planted. Formal rose gardens had been laid out.

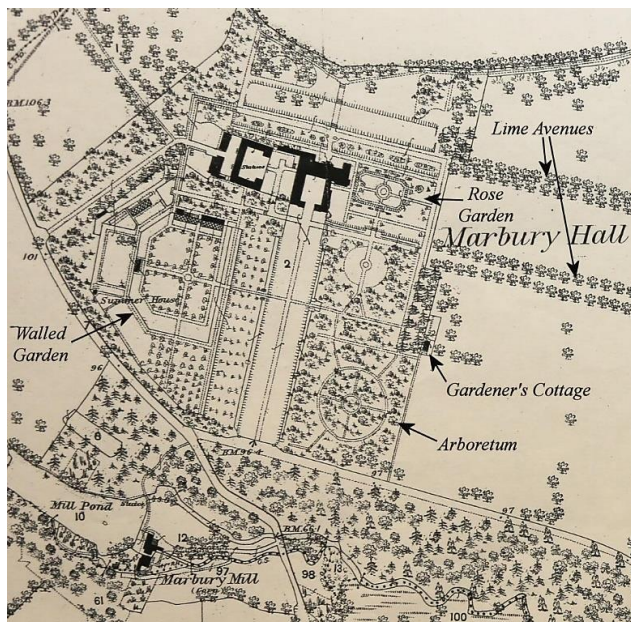
The Ordnance Survey map of 1910 (surveyed 1877), shows that the avenues of trees along the one side of the Carriage Drive had been removed. The age of the oldest trees in the Lime Avenues indicate that they probably replaced



Tapestry depicting Marbury Hall and gardens c. 1740

the earlier avenues of trees (species unknown) in the parkland. Paths for the area we now know as Marbury Arboretum existed and had been laid out in a similar cartwheel pattern to the rose garden. The gardens also included Nesfield's typical parterre, clipped yew hedges and banks of rhododendrons lining the Carriage Drive.

It is not known when other features in the park were introduced. An ice house, a weir, ornamental canal and a summerhouse are shown on the Ordnance Survey map of 1910 (*below*).



A path, marked by small ornamental sandstone posts, would have led from the summerhouse (close to the site of the Woodland Hide in Big Wood) down to what is believed to have been a grotto. Some maps show evidence of a well near

this area. The remains of an ice house can still be found today between the slip-way on Budworth Mere and the Ice Pond. Today, it is merely a shallow circular hole with brick edging. The double wall construction can still be seen clearly. An interpretation panel near the ice house helps visitors understand a little about its purpose.

It would seem that the main structure of Nesfield's design for the arboretum was a circle of Lawson Cypress with an avenue of Turkey Oaks and a Yew Avenue, which led from the head gardener's cottage (since demolished) towards the gate to the walled garden. This Yew Avenue can still be found across the end of the arboretum.

Some older trees, like Yew and Oriental Plane, were retained and so pre-date the new layout. Marbury Arboretum is now a collection of mainly evergreen trees, including pines, hollies and cedars. A few of the trees are native to this country, but many others originate in Southern Europe, America or Asia.

The gardens and arboretum were well maintained until 1939, when Marbury Hall and Parkland were requisitioned for the war effort. Restoration of the arboretum began when Marbury Country Park was established in 1975. Ongoing management has included felling dead or dangerous trees, controlling invasive vegetation and replacing specimen trees. Further restoration took place in 2014/2015. A new entrance path was created and the wooden

plaques, which help visitors identify 17 specimen trees amongst the hundreds of trees in the arboretum, were replaced.

An interpretation panel was installed at the entrance to the arboretum to encourage visitors to explore it. There is a plan to produce a map showing the position of specimen trees across the park.

Visitors will find that there are ongoing improvements in Marbury Country Park, including new toilet facilities, ranger and volunteer accommodation. There is a large car park for which there is a charge. More information about the 'History of Marbury Hall and Parkland' and Friends of Anderton and Marbury can be found at www.marburyhall.com and www.foam.merseyforest.org.uk



*Japanese Red Cedar
Marbury Arboretum*

Mary Jeeves

S is for Sunken Garden

“A garden deliberately laid out at a lower level for ease of viewing”.¹

In Cheshire sunken gardens seem largely to be features of Arts and Crafts gardens. Here they provide a change of level and interest in sites with perhaps topographical variety or where a sheltered defined space is desired near the house but without interruption to longer views.

At Jodrell Hall, the Ordnance Survey map of 1909 shows the sunken garden made by Egerton Leigh IV from 1897. The outline of the sunken garden (*below*) is still defined by a modest change of level.



At Burton Manor formal areas of the garden were designed by Thomas Mawson and include a sunken garden east of the house. The garden is defined by coursed sandstone retaining walls with an axial arrangement of stone paths and semicircular steps. Paths at the higher level enable visitors to look down into the garden which was probably less shady and more richly planted in the past.



At Tirley Garth and Manley Knoll the houses are situated to take advantage of the westerly views from the sandstone ridge towards Wales.

At Tirley Garth there is a small sunken garden west of the entrance, and at Manley Knoll (*below*) a sunken garden below the terraces in front of the house. The garden contains a formal pool with sheltered planting beds.



¹ Symes M. 1993. *A Glossary of Garden History*. Shire: 114

Swedish Gardens

Quarry Bank Mill on a brisk early-Spring day was the charismatic location for a lecture about Swedish Gardens by landscape architect Cecilia Liljedahl and former Head Gardener Ole Andersson.

In his introduction Ed Bennis characterised Sweden as one of those 'places people never think about going to', to which he might have added 'in order to visit magnificent gardens'.

However, as 50 members and guests of CGT were about to find out, there are many reasons why we should change our minds.



First up - **Cecilia Liljedahl** (*above*), who is now a Project Manager of Gothenburg Green World, having for 20 years previously been a Manager at Sofiero Palace Garden in Helsingborg. She talked about historical influences on the development of Swedish garden design.

Before the C18th most designed landscapes were associated with palaces and other important buildings. Carl Linnaeus, who is better known as the founder of binomial classification, also founded the Botanic Gardens at Uppsala in the mid-C18th and sent many students from Uppsala University on plant observation and collection expeditions.

During this century grander gardens in Stockholm and the south of Sweden started to show the influence of Versailles. Orangeries and exotic plant collections became more widespread.

Practical gardening was also in the blood of the rural population. In the C19th Germany became the dominant influence, especially in the more densely populated industrial cities, where green space was considered to be an important element. Late C19th major city parks followed German and English styles – for example, the Palm House in Gothenburg was influenced by Crystal Palace.

The need for space for health and recreation was recognised by doctors, who went on to form a Garden Society for the encouragement of independent food production, kitchen gardens and seed distribution. In the present day, Swedish people have developed a strong interest in gardening especially in cottage gardens and the use of perennials. To complete the circle, a garden designed by Ulf Nordfjell in celebration of the tercentenary of Linnaeus' birth won a gold medal at RHS Chelsea in 2007.

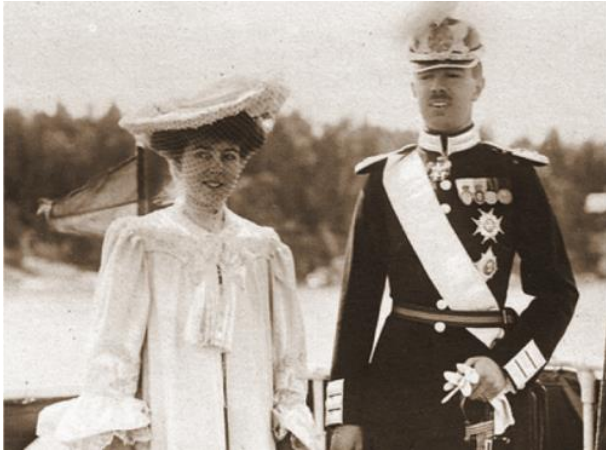
In 2010 Cecilia founded The Swedish Society of Parks and Gardens (www.swedishgardens.se) influenced by the European Garden Heritage Network and organisations such as The National Trust and County Gardens Trusts in England. In her view, Swedish gardens are characterised by an integration of natural elements with sympathetic ownership. Many are in the hands of private Trusts or Foundations or are owned by a city – for example in Malmö, at Katrinetorp Manor, where a former, typically rural, country house and park has been engulfed by the expanding city. Restored from 100 years of neglect, Katrinetorp now fulfils a vital new function as public accessible and useful greenspace. Gunnerbo House, in Mölndal near Gothenburg, is a former C18th private house which is now at the cultural and recreational heart of the city.

Next - **Ole Andersson** introduced himself as a 'fourth-generation gardener'. His subject was Sofiero Palace Garden, located on the outskirts of Helsingborg, which he summarised as 'historical but modern – very English in a Swedish way'. He has been involved with the restoration and 'digging up' of the hidden gardens.

Ole gave an account of the rather romantic history of the garden; from its origins as a summer house for the Swedish royal family via its virtual neglect as 'a sleeping beauty palace' during the latter part of the C19th through to its eventual rebirth when it became the pet project of Crown Prince Gustaf Adolf and his wife Margaret, eldest daughter of the Duke of Connaught and granddaughter of Queen Victoria.

The Crown Prince had met Margaret, who was a painter and photographer, keen on architecture

and gardening, in Egypt. The newlyweds were given Sofiero Palace as a wedding present in 1905 and for the next 15 years they spent every summer there, latterly in the company of their five children.



Above, Margaret of Connaught with Crown Prince Gustaf Adolf

Below, Princess Margaret of Sweden practising photography c.1912



Margaret died of pneumonia in 1920 at the age of 39 but by then, together with her husband, she had established the fundamental elements of a significant garden in an unusual setting – by the sea with views of Denmark and Elsinore Castle. She saw the potential of Sofiero's 35 acres for transformation into an English-style garden, whose flower borders in particular were influenced by the Arts and Crafts Movement and English garden designers of the early C20th.

Her husband was the plant scientist of the partnership. For more than 50 years after her death he continued to visit Sofiero every summer and the garden became famous for its collection of his speciality plant – the Rhododendron. From 1923 until his death in 1973 he planted 10,000 plants of 500 species. Their children were obliged to help in the garden and seem to have developed a strong bond with Sofiero, such that even after her marriage to Frederick IX of Denmark, their daughter Ingrid continued to visit every year.

In 1973 the Palace and Gardens were left to the City of Helsingborg in the will of King Gustaf Adolf VI, with the proviso that whatever happened to the house, the gardens should be preserved. Given the anti-royal sentiment of the time there was some initial resistance to the legacy but eventually the value to the community of the Palace and Gardens has come to be fully realised.

Sofiero Palace Garden won the Briggs and Stratton Award for Europe's Best Park in 2010.

**GOTHENBURG
GREENWORLD**
2016

Cecilia then returned to talk about Gothenburg GreenWorld 2016, a festival which is intended to promote both the city and the region (www.gothenburggreenworld.com). There are 12 themes, including botanical exhibitions, Land Art, international collaborations, food and organic gardening, urban organic life, Garden Art, glasshouses and greenhouses, gardens and green installations in Gothenburg, open garden days and harvest festivals, and international garden photography.

Four gardens in or near Gothenburg will be at the heart of the festival, which also includes a further four parks in the region, linked to form the Gothenburg Garden Route. GGW 2016 is intended to provide 12 months of seasonal green experiences, divided into eight seasons. It was inaugurated in late February 2016 at the Gothenburg Botanic Gardens, where 5000 visitors enjoyed early Spring sunshine and

temperatures of 4°C. A principal aim of GGW 2016 is to enhance the greenness of the city for its citizens as well as for its visitors.

Some of the activities include installations in Gothenburg between June and October, by Tetsunori Kawana, a Japanese ikebana artist who specialises in bamboo sculptures; Land Art in collaboration with Arte Sella from Italy; and organic food cooked by Patrick, the chef at Gunnebo House, using produce from the kitchen garden there.

There will be a focus on Gothenburg Botanic Garden, well-known for its trees, perennial borders, topographical features, individual gardens and bulbs from the Middle East; and on Gunnebo House, built in the C18th by an English trader, John Hall and now run for the benefit of local people and visitors by Mölndal City. This is one of the best-preserved wooden manor houses in Sweden, architecturally inspired by Italian villas and surrounded by a landscape in the English style.

The Garden Society of Gothenburg Garden, with its new rose garden, a collection of Camellias and the Crystal Palace Palm House, is also one of the four main parks; as is Liseberg which, despite its long history as an Amusement Park, is one of the greenest locations in the City.

Other venues include Tjolöholm Castle, built between 1898 and 1904 in the Arts and Crafts tradition, with an English-style garden that is currently being restored by British garden designers Helen and James Dooley; and the gardens at Råda Manor, Växtrum i Lerum and Jonsered.

As Jacquetta Menzies said in her vote of thanks to the speakers, CGT members should show our appreciation of their coming all this way to see us by 'going all that way to see them'.

Having had our appetites well and truly wetted there is unlikely to be a shortage of takers for the trip to Sweden in September.

Chris Driver

Garden Study Visit to Sweden

1- 6 September 2016

Cecilia and Ole will be helping to organise this trip which will begin with 2 nights in Malmö with a visit to an historic city park with a modern addition, a community garden run by Englishman John Taylor and new parks in Bo01 known as the *City of Tomorrow*.

Then it will be north to Helsingborg and a visit to Sofiero, then on to Gothenburg with its historic Botanic Gardens. There will be a visit to Gunnebo and to a private garden.

Details of the itinerary (costs, etc. to follow) were emailed out at the beginning of April. If you've lost your email or need further information contact Ed Bennis at embennis@gmail.com or phone him on 0161 291 0450.



This year, while recognising Capability Brown's achievements, it is worth also remembering that his style has not been always approved of, as we can see in this comment regarding Tatton Park:

"The mansion is situated upon an eminence, from which the ground declines to the south. This decline was formerly covered by one of those monotonous sloping lawns so beloved of "Capability" Brown and other English landscape

gardeners of the last century, but has just been cut into terraces and gardens by the present Lord Egerton. At the foot of this decline is a thick grove of yews, cypresses and other evergreen trees, whose dark foliage forms a pleasing contrast to the white balustrades, urns, and fountains of the terraces; beyond this grove most delightful gardens spread away to the banks of a charming lake with islands, rustic bridges and a little temple erected in imitation of the Choragic monument at Athens. The late Sir John (*sic*) Paxton greatly improved this portion of the estate, and his genius for this kind of landscape gardening seems to have had a good opportunity of displaying itself here."

The Graphic, 7 May 1887

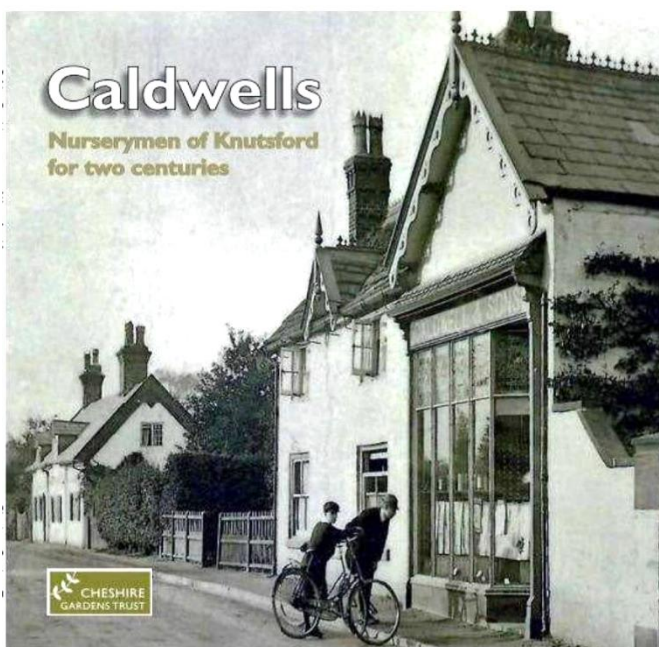
Caldwell Exhibition and Book Launch

A Caldwell exhibition ran at the Knutsford Heritage Centre throughout February and on the 18th we had an extra special event – the launch of our very first book – Caldwell's: Nurserymen of Knutsford for two centuries.

The book is a collaboration between members of the Caldwell Project team but would not have been possible without the help of the Caldwell family – particularly David in Australia – and their staff and customers.

The appearance of the book, with its many illustrations, is the result of hard work by Moira Stevenson and Jon Hall.

At just £7.95 (plus £1.80 if you order by post) it is very affordable for yourself, but would also make a delightful gift for a friend.



Order forms are available on the Caldwell website (www.caldwellarchives.org.uk) and the CGT website (www.cheshire-gardens-trust.org.uk).



The exhibition featured information boards, Caldwell catalogues, seed measures and other artefacts.

In the photo the blue apron is an original Caldwell one with the King Canute logo, while the two beige aprons with the Project logo were created for the Caldwell garden at RHS Tatton in 2012.

A photo of the wonderful King Canute statue, created by Christine Wilcox-Baker, features on the back cover of the book. The statue itself now lives in Knutsford.

The Caldwell Project has been running now for several years and we continue to discover fascinating pieces of history – see the July issue to learn something of the nurserymen that Caldwell's traded with nearly 200 years ago.

But one of the unexpected results has been the impact that the Project has had on the Caldwell family and staff. The closure of the nurseries was a very sad occasion for all involved, but particularly for the owners.



This photo of Mavis Caldwell and Don Leaman is very special. It shows that historical research can be a precious gift to the families involved and reminds us of the humanity behind the story.



From left: Lord Ashbrook; Mavis Caldwell, Frank Passant (who spent his entire working life at Caldwell's) Don Leaman, Sid Taylor (who worked at the nurseries from 1946-1992) and Carol Leaman.

New Website

It has been a long time coming, but we were pleased to launch the new Cheshire Gardens Trust website at the AGM in April. And this is what it looks like at: www.cheshire-gardens-trust.org.uk.

CHESHIRE GARDENS TRUST

Join Us

Search

HOME ABOUT US EVENTS GALLERY DISCOVER RESEARCH LEND A HAND CONTACT US CALENDAR

Cheshire Gardens Trust Homepage

ENJOY

Meet people who share your interests at our visits and talks. These take place all year and we often go 'behind the scenes'.

FIND OUT

Cheshire has some wonderful parks and gardens. You can discover who designed them, who built them and how they are now managed.

DO

There's lots to do. You could research the history of a garden, help build a show garden, give a hand at events.

DID YOU KNOW...? In the 18th century a florist was someone who grew and raised new varieties of florists' flowers - tulip, auricula, polyanthus, carnation, pink, ranunculus and hyacinth

Latest News

- The Hynning, Lancs.
- Sweden Garden Tour 2016 Update No.1
- 2016 Cheshire Plant Fairs
- CGT New Web Site
- FOLAR
- Caldwell Book Published February 2016
- New Home for King Canute
- Lord Ashbrook's 80th Birthday
- CGTs & GHS: Latest merger news

News Archive

Newsletter Archive

CGT Landmarks

Useful Links

There is all sorts of useful information. Check out the events – you can download a booking form if you've lost the one Tina sent you, or need another because your friend has decided to come too. Find out what the Research & Recording team have been up to; learn more about Garden History and see how you can get involved.

There is a Gallery where we have put photos of Events, with Foreign Trips and Landmark Events each getting their own page. If you were wondering what to do with those photos you've taken, why not get them on the website?

And please let us know what you think of it. How could it be improved? Do you have a fascinating titbit of information that could go on the DID YOU KNOW banner? Is the Calendar useful?

We are hoping to make this a dynamic website which changes and develops over time – but Time is the key thing. All those who have been involved in setting up the website are already doing a great deal for the Trust – one reason why it has taken so long to get this going. Your help in developing the website is crucial.

Securing the future of Cheshire Gardens Trust

It is now twelve years since the Trust was launched at Arley. It has been a very successful twelve years. But it also means that those of us who were the founding members – and who are still on the Council of Management and undertaking a wide range of tasks – are twelve years older.

If Cheshire Gardens Trust is to have a long-term future, we need younger members to step up and begin to learn the ropes so that there will be someone to take over in due course. Helping out at this stage and reducing the demands on individuals will help them continue for longer.

Sent out with this Newsletter is a list of the sort of roles that go to make the Trust what it is. Please read it carefully to see how YOU could be a part of our future. Get in touch, come along to meetings, find out what is involved ... and then join in!

We are in urgent need of a new Membership Secretary

Ownership of a computer and printer are needed, but people skills are most important as the role is often the first contact a new member has with the Trust. Activities include sending out annual renewal reminders; passing standing order requests onto the necessary banks; recording cheques and sending on to the Treasurer – and welcoming new members with a standard letter and the most recent copy of the Newsletter.

If you would like to fill this role, please email Sue Bartlett at bartlettbs@googlemail.com to arrange a time when she can discuss with you by phone what it entails.



William Spencer at Tatton during build-up for the RHS show 2012

It is with great sadness that we report the death of William Spencer in January of this year.

William was the MD of The Locker Group, manufacturers of woven wire mesh and wire cloth, who very generously sponsored the materials and fabrication of the 'King Canute' sculpture for our 2012 silver-medal winning Show Garden at RHS Tatton.

William responded without hesitation to an approach from the CGT to help with a sculpture. It was clear from the start that he felt strongly that he and his company should support innovative work by artists or not for profit organisations and we were incredibly fortunate to be in receipt of such public spirited generosity.

Christine Wilcox-Baker worked closely with William and his team at their Warrington headquarters where the sculpture was made and remembers him fondly.

'He was a very professional businessman and at the same time generous and open to any ideas which challenged what could be done with the specialist materials that are the core of what Locker's do' she said.

'King Canute' now resides permanently in the garden of the Knutsford Town Council offices. A fitting home in the town he gave his name to and a fitting tribute to William for his support and generosity.

Dates for your Diary

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Henbury Hall, | 22 May – Garden Open Day; 16-17 July – Rare Plant Fair |
| Combermere Abbey | Garden Open afternoons will be held on 25 May; 29 June; 26 July; 24 August; 21 September www.combermereabbey.co.uk/abbey-gardens/garden-open-afternoons/ |
| The Gardens Trust | Brown Tercentenary Conference 1-4 September in Cambridge. Details http://cambsgardens.org.uk/event/special-conference-on-lancelot-capability-brown/ |

Copy date for July newsletter is 30 June

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, tel: 07900 968 178 or e-mail joy.uings@btconnect.com.