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# Newsletter

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

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## Some future events:

- ✿ International Garden Festivals and Shows – Saturday 7 November
- ✿ Caldwell's Nurserymen Customers – Saturday 23 January
- ✿ Spring Lecture – details to be confirmed
- ✿ AGM at Tabley Hall – Thursday, 14 April



On 15<sup>th</sup> July 2015 the Cheshire Gardens Trust visited Thornbridge Hall near Great Longstone in Derbyshire. This area was already settled in the 1100s when it was known as Thorne Breach (which means clearing in the thorn woods) and it had various owners including the Longsdon family in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the Morewood family from 1790 and then, in 1871, Frederick Craven.

The Craven family owned silk and cotton industries and by using the new railway which opened on 1 June 1863, they could live in Derbyshire while running their business in Manchester.

The modern form of the hall was developed by George Jobson Marples who bought the property in 1896. He created a Neo-Tudor

castellated mansion by enlarging the house to almost its present form; he intended the property to resemble estates owned by the nearby landed gentry.

He bought up much of the surrounding land and built lodges, cottages, glasshouses and the stable block. He landscaped the 100 acres of parkland and gardens, and in 1913 built his own railway station, Woodlands.

In the early 1900s, to modernise the house and buildings, he installed an electricity generator which used water collected from the roof. The water came from a cistern filled by a series of pipes catching rainwater from an extensive roof system. Another innovation was the water-powered operation of the iron entrance gates.

The 12-acre gardens, designed in the 1890s by Simeon Marshall from the James Backhouses & Sons Nursery, were calculated to produce a vision of '1000 shades of green' from George Marples' bedroom window.

In 1930 the property was sold to Charles Boot, head of a Sheffield-based building and demolition firm. He was one of the original directors of Pinewood Studios and during his working life he acquired many statues, facades and fountains from both the film studios and properties he demolished, such as Clumber Park in Nottinghamshire, destroyed in a fire in 1938.



The two stone lions guarding the approach to the Carriage House are from Harlaxton Hall near Grantham. From a Chatsworth House estate manager, he bought a buffet fountain, carved by Henry Watson in 1705, which had originally been in the dining room. On visiting Thornbridge in 1935, the Duchess of Devonshire was very surprised to see it as she thought it was still in store! The figure of Atlas carrying the Heavens on his shoulders (below, left) also came from Chatsworth and cost £8 12s.

From 1945 Thornbridge Hall was used as a teacher training college, then a private home until it was purchased by Emma and Jim Harrison in May 2002. It is now open to the public on Thursdays and for a range of charitable events and weddings throughout the year.

The gardens are divided into distinct areas including the water garden and grottos, the Koi Lake and the 100ft herbaceous border. In the last ten years, there has been the addition of the Orangery, the kitchen garden, the scented terrace, the long border as well as the revamping of the Italian garden. Extensive work has taken place to renovate the Gardener's Cottage, North Lodge, Family Hall and Music Room. A new wing has been built to house the swimming pool and leisure complex.

On leaving the reception hall the first sight is the view over the Scented Terrace and beyond this, the vegetable garden. In the background is the Orangery, completed in April 2009, and located on the site of the original vineries of 1890s. It is useful when, according to the gardeners, the planting is some four weeks behind that of Cheshire; this year there was a frost in June.



*A view of the kitchen garden*

The T-shaped building comprises three sections, each independently heated, with a covered canopy on the side of each wing. In the east section grow *Bougainvillea*, mandarins, lemons,

oranges, *Brugmansia* (angel's trumpets) and two grapevines, Muscat of Alexander and Crimson Seedless. In the west wing are gingers, *Monstera*, passion flowers, *Strelitzia* and bananas. In the centre is a kitchen and dining area.

The working greenhouse was completed in October 2007 and twenty thousand seedlings and cuttings are produced each year for use in the gardens.

The Scented Terrace and the Kitchen Garden were originally the sites of tennis courts. When these were created the top soil was removed and the exposed subsoil compacted before installing the final surface of the courts. When the gardens were reinstated the process was reversed but the soil was so compacted that drainage had to be installed. The soil structure of the two areas is still poor so waste hops from the on-site brewery are used as a mulch to improve the beds.

The Scented Terrace, completed in June 2011, is now planted with more than one hundred David Austin roses, repeat flowering bearded irises, *Philadelphus*, jasmine and honeysuckle. There are also box balls, cones, seven locally made rose arches, two bowers (photo below) and two *Acer griseum* (paperbark maple) to give winter structure.



The main colours are shades of purple, lilac and pink with white. There is a late-summer flowering display in the east-facing Long Border, completed in 2013.

The south-facing kitchen garden, created in 2008, is divided into eight beds with a central dining area and locally crafted metalwork tunnels. It is planted in the potager style combining vegetables, fruits and flowers. The large outer L-shaped beds are used for growing herbs, hops, cordon apples and espalier pears

some of which are at least 70 years old. Both this and the scented garden are surrounded by a rabbit proof fence which works well, except when visitors leave the gate open!

Beyond is an area known as the orchard. This has a number of classical stone statues, stone temples and a fountain, long since defunct. Originally consisting of five tiers only the top two tiers and the base were purchased by Charles Boot in the 1930s from Sydnope Hall near Matlock, Derbyshire. The original clay lining and the lead pipework are still in place and it is intended that work will begin to reinstate the fountain in the autumn of 2015.

Leaving the orchard and walking by the Daffodil Bank, the Ladies Walk displays further garden ornaments set off by a bed of alternating lavender and *Penstemon*.

The Koi Lake, now over 100 years old, has a central fountain depicting a boy wrestling with a serpent. Originally gravity-fed, the fountain is now powered electrically as the water flow into the lake is unreliable. The maximum depth of the lake is 6ft and the water flows from it via a 15ft waterfall into the Cascade Garden from where, via a covered culvert, it descends into the large lake at the bottom of the drive.

Looking towards the east front of the Hall from the Koi Lake a bank of variegated holly bushes can be seen. Above this the Italian Garden, with the herbaceous border beyond, is adjacent to the house.



Looking back to the house from the far side of the lake.

The Italian Garden was created in the late 1990s. The hedging comprises more than 850 common yews and, together with tall 'Skyrocket' junipers and Irish yews, gives an impression of an Italian landscape. Charles Boot added the statues and the dolphin fountain in the centre.



*A view of the Italian Garden*

On the northern side of the Italian garden is the Water Garden and grottos. The water in the garden is naturally fed. It comes off Longstone Edge and passes under the village of Great Longstone and the old railway line adjacent to the estate. It flows through the gardens and eventually joins the main lake at the entrance to the drive.

The man-made stream that flows through the Victorian water garden passes through three concrete-lined pools, each of which has a cannon ball shaped plug allowing them to be independently drained for maintenance. The middle pool has duck footprints in the concrete. In 2007 over 100 tons of silted mud had to be removed from the pools. The area is planted with hostas, astilbe, *Osmunda regalis* (royal fern), and *Darmera peltata* (umbrella plant) providing a shady walk down to the lake.



The south side of the hall overlooks the top front lawn and the bottom front lawn which has two cedar trees on the eastern edge. Both lawns are

bordered by ha-has. From here there are panoramic views over the parkland to Ashford-in-the-Water.

One of the three Grade II listed temples originally from Clumber Park is on the upper front lawn (the other two are in the orchard).

To the east of the front lawns is the thatched summer house and the knot garden which was created in the 1990s. This is an example of an 'open' knot garden, the lines of box plants being filled with coloured gravel. In the centre is a statue depicting Hercules wrestling a lion.



*An extensive view can be seen from the Knot Garden*

From the knot garden one can return to the Scented Terrace and leave by the 100-foot long east-facing herbaceous border planted with *Acanthus*, *Delphinium*, *Nepeta*, *Echinops* and *Phlox*. Several Japanese acers are planted in the border to commemorate the Queen's coronation in 1953. The stone urns are planted with pelargoniums, fuchsias, *Nepeta* and surfinias. From this border walk, the south facing views of the Derbyshire countryside can be seen.

Our few hours at Thornbridge Hall in glorious weather allowed us to see the gardens at their best for the time of year. It certainly whets the appetite for a return visit and if you would like to see some great photographs of the gardens throughout the seasons just visit the Thornbridge Hall Facebook page -

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Thornbridge-Hall/158642094194945>

*Jacque Williams*



# Cogshall Grange

It was an absolutely perfect summer afternoon for our visit to Cogshall.

While gathered near the front of the Hall Adrian Lovatt, Head Gardener, explained how the garden came to be developed. The Hall and Grange, previously two properties, were brought into single ownership by the present owners Anthony and Margaret Preston in 2004.

They restored the Hall, c.1830, demolishing a Victorian addition and replacing it with a swimming pool. Little remained of any earlier gardens or planting around the Hall so they engaged renowned garden designer Tom Stuart Smith to create new gardens.

The first phase undertaken in 2009 comprises a modern take on a parterre situated west of the Hall, and a new garden within the walls of the former kitchen garden.

A second phase in 2012 involved the design of additional plantings to tie the Hall into the landscape, producing a softer edge, and the development of an orchard with wild flower meadow.

The first phase was implemented by contractors, after which the present gardening team of three full time staff were employed to maintain the new gardens and develop the second phase 'in house'.



*The parterre garden looked simply stunning, with just five or six plants repeated in drifts, some still and others waving in the wind.*

There was some eager questioning about how the quality is maintained, about pests and diseases and how these are controlled. With an open site rabbits are a problem, eating astrantias to the ground; these have to be controlled, together with squirrels.

Balls of box, merging together on the edge of the parterre garden, caught the attention of garden designers in the party; could Box blight be a problem? Oh yes, even here - so how is it treated?

Adrian joked that the loss of this signature Tom Stuart Smith planting could lose him his job! The Box blight appears in late November. Affected branches are immediately removed. The box is clipped once, around mid June, because cutting later when the Box blight spores are around poses a greater risk. Great care is taken in disposing of the clippings and each gardener undertakes the clipping of box in different areas with their own tools to make sure that there is no cross contamination. Afterwards the tools are cleaned with Jeyes fluid. By observing strict hygiene and carefully following procedures the risk of blight is minimised.

The walled garden, entered by beautiful bronze gates, is just full of interesting planting. It has three different areas overlooked by a graceful and spacious contemporary pavilion for entertaining, one of three designed by Jamie Fobert.



*The pavilion with cloud pruned hornbeam (right), ornamental grass and reflective pool*

The first area on the east side nearest the buildings is a relaxed contemplative garden with a formally spaced group of cloud pruned hornbeams under-planted with spring bulbs succeeded by lush ground cover.

The second area is geometric, a plot of ornamental grass planted in waves like a fingerprint alongside a rectangular reflecting pool.

The third area Adrian described as the fireworks; classic Tom Stuart Smith planting, with

wonderful combinations of herbaceous species set in gravel.



*Looking across the walled garden*

The creation of the orchard west of the walled garden began with spraying out the ground, undertaking a light till, seeding and then cutting four times in the first year to allow species with rosettes to develop.

Now the orchard is mown annually at the end of August or in early September. Yellow rattle helps to keep the grass in check, with wild daffodils and fritillaries adding seasonal interest. Semi mature trees planted in the orchard and parkland have to be watered for up to five years after planting.

The formal lawns are cut twice a week and until recently a large swathe of parkland surrounding the Hall was cut to the same regime.



*The parkland with a recently established Wellingtonia*

The possibility of developing the parkland as wildflower meadow was discussed with Tom Stuart Smith who advocated ploughing up the ground and re seeding. This was considered a high risk strategy and with the amount of work in hand it was decided to simply let the grass

grow out or grow up and see what happened. The result is parkland with waving grass and mown paths, few objectionable weeds, and wildflowers becoming established of their own accord.

The second phase included planting to screen the Grange, enclose and shelter the parking area, and softly link the garden areas with the parkland.

This involved establishing planting beneath existing mature trees in dry shade under quite tough and exposed conditions. The planting is successful but how has it been achieved?

The ground was sprayed off in January, prepared with a small rotavator (great care being taken not to damage tree roots) and planted at densities of 4, 5 and 7 plants per metre square. The planting is best in spring when there is most light beneath the tree canopy where *Epimedium*, *Pulmonaria*, *Primula vulgaris*, *Euphorbia robbiae*, *Omphalodes cappadocica*, hellebores and geraniums all thrive.



Around the car park a simple planting, composed principally of *Cornus kousa* and *Hakonechloa macra* create a satisfying composition.

There was so much to take in, to photograph, to ask about that the wonderful tea was definitely needed, a welcome finale to a glorious afternoon.

We are so fortunate to have been able to visit this private garden and to have Adrian as such an excellent guide.

**Barbara Moth**  
**Photos by Kath Gee**

## Q is for Quarry Garden

Scattered across Cheshire are small quarries, many dating back to the time when landowners would quarry the stone needed for the construction of houses, out-buildings and walls. Many of these are now disused or have been put to other uses.

My local quarry sits on the sandstone ridge which runs east-west across north Cheshire and was owned by the Lyon family of Appleton Hall (south of Warrington). The hall was demolished 40 or so years ago and the quarry has been the home of a rifle club for as long as I can remember. The quarried sandstone can be seen in the boundary walls of the former Appleton Hall estate.

Some quarries have been used in the design of more unusual gardens. Michael Symes *Glossary of Garden History* (Shire Books) defines a quarry garden as "A garden made in a quarry where the precipitous sides are used for spectacular effect".

One which is easily accessible is in **Grosvenor Park**, Chester, which dates back to Roman times, and Maria Luczak of CGT has kindly provided the following resume:

Grosvenor Park in Chester, designed by Edward Kemp and opened in 1867, contains a quarry garden (Conservation Management Plan, URS Scott Wilson 2011). The authors describe it as an 'original and noteworthy feature of the park. *Gresty's Chester Guide* called it the most picturesque portion of the park, and it is a key representation of Kemp embracing the picturesque style'. They also note that the park demonstrates how Kemp contrasted formality, such as the upper axial Holly/Lime avenues, with the informal picturesque. The drama and 'gothic' feeling of the quarry garden was heightened by using it as the setting for relocated features, the Jacob's Well drinking fountain and three arches from nearby St John's and the Shipgate.

As a result of the recent restoration of the park the red sandstone face of the quarry is now more visible and dramatic, as Kemp intended.

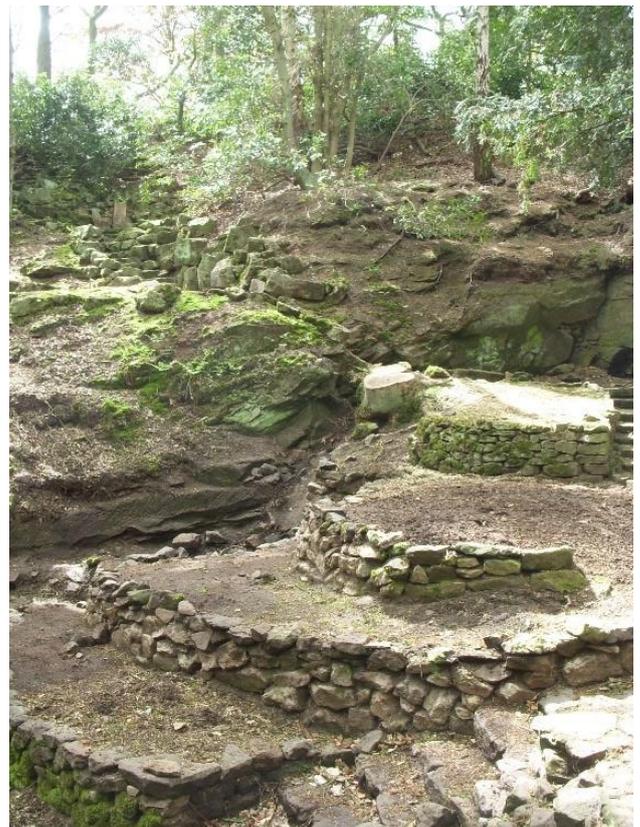
In Tarporley there is a property by the name of "Portal" which contains an intriguing quarry garden. This is described in the book "The

*Historic Gardens of England: Cheshire*" by Timothy Mowl and Marion Mako<sup>1</sup> and a photo of the garden is included. It was shown on the 1875 Ordnance Survey map when it was an ornamental shrubbery with winding walkways. By the time of the 1910 Ordnance Survey map it had been turned into woodland, but it is not known when it was flooded.

Another quarry garden which has only recently been restored is at **Manley Knoll**, south of Frodsham. The owners open their gardens each year under the National Garden Scheme and they are well worth a visit. There is a website – [www.manleyknoll.com](http://www.manleyknoll.com) – where there is a series of photographs.

This quarry garden was created in one of the three quarries on the site but, over time, had been allowed to fill with leaves, garden waste, etc.

The present owners have removed this debris to reveal an attractive garden.



*Clearing away the vegetation revealed the form of the Quarry Garden at Manley Knoll.*

(The photos of Manley Knoll's quarry garden were provided by Maria Luczak.)

At **Foxhill**, Frodsham, a small quarry is indicated on the 1875 Ordnance Survey map, but by 1910 a more extensive quarry is shown. It appears that the original quarry was enlarged for large stones placed on the outer edge to enclose the quarry or Japanese style garden. Some of you may remember visiting Foxhill a few years ago.



*Above: the Quarry Garden at Foxhill*

At **Eddisbury Hall**, near Macclesfield, there is a path through a dramatic/picturesque ravine in a former stone quarry from which a path and steps lead to a hillock or high point offering great views across the Cheshire Plain. The effect is of passing through something potentially quite dark and mysterious to reach the light - all very Repton picturesque.



*Ravine south of Eddisbury Hall (Jane Gooch)*

Do you know of any quarry gardens in Cheshire? Or do you know anything about Portal? If so, we should be very pleased to hear from you.

**Julia Whitfield**

**(with additional material from Maria Luczak and Barbara Moth)**

<sup>1</sup> Mowl T and Mako M. 2008. *The Historic Gardens of England: Cheshire*. Bristol: Redcliffe Press Ltd, pages 149-152.



“Then, 80 years or so later, people got sick of avenues and decided that, after all, parks were much prettier as they used to be – wild and untamed. There was a gentleman of the name of Brown – Lancelot Brown – who felt very strongly about this and went round the country altering people’s parks for them – breaking up their avenues, introducing lakes and odd clumps of trees to look as if they had just happened in the course of centuries.

He was fond of holding forth upon what he considered to be the ‘capabilities’ of such and such a park. So his clients christened him ‘Capability’ Brown. Well, Mr. ‘Capability’ Brown came to Castle Ashby, did away with the old formal gardens, faded out some of the avenues rather ruthlessly and did his best to make the place ‘look natural’ so to speak. I’m glad to say he left the great entrance avenue, which is one of the glories of Castle Ashby to-day and I’m grateful to him, too, for his charming artificial lakes and for the little temple which he built above them to give the scene a pictorial touch.

Inevitably, after ‘Capability’ Brown people began to change their minds again and by the time Queen Victoria came to the throne they had decided that the formal garden was the proper thing after all, and Brown was all wrong.

So back came the yew hedges, the terraces, the balustrades at Castle Ashby and they are there to-day, while beyond them we can still enjoy Mr. Brown’s handiwork and the avenues which go back to the time of William and Mary.”

**Northampton Mercury, 23 July 1937**

**Quoting John Summerson from his radio series “Famous Midland Houses”**



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# More from the Caldwell Archives

## Healthy Living – in 1792

I used to think that the English gentry of the eighteenth century lived on beef, venison and claret – and suffered from gout as a consequence. Not so.

Researching the history and development of **Somerford Park** (near Congleton) led to some surprising insights into the healthy diet of the Shakerley family (and, I hope, their employees) - thanks to the **Caldwell Archives**.

Between 1792 and 1796, owner Charles Watkin John Buckworth Shakerley ordered a good variety of seeds for vegetables, salads and herbs as well as fruit trees from Nickson's Nursery in Knutsford (where William Caldwell was an apprentice from 1780).

<b><u>Vegetables</u></b>	Salsify	Marjoram
Asparagus	Sea Kale	Parsley
Beans	Spinache	Savoury
Beet (white and red)	Turnip	Tarragon
Borecole		Thyme
Broccoli	<b><u>Salads</u></b>	Tobacco
Brussel sprouts	Cress	
Cabbage	Cucumber	<b><u>Fruit trees</u></b>
Carrot	Endive	Apples ( 5 varieties)
Celery	Lettuce (many varieties)	Apricots
Collyflower	Radish	Cherries (4 varieties)
Fennel	<b><u>Herbs</u></b>	Nectarines
Leek	Basil	Peaches
Melon	Borage	Pears
Onions	Burnet	Plums
Parsnip	Chervil	
Pease	Dill	
Potatoes	Hysop	

The A-Z order is mine. The original spelling has been kept, but amounts, numbers, varieties and colours are omitted).

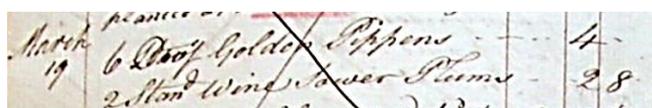
Source:

<http://www.caldwellarchives.org.uk/plants/caldwell-ledgers/surviving-ledgers.html>

If you would like to know what kind of **flowers** were grown in the **Somerford Park gardens** between **1792 and 1796**, here is another list of Charles Shakerley's orders of seeds from the Knutsford nursery:

Brompton Stock	Marigold (3 varieties)
Cardoon	Mignonett
China Aster	Nesturtium
Cockscomb	Nigella
Double Balsam	Poppy
Ficoides	Princes Feather
Hawkweed	Scabious
Hollyhock	Snap Dragon
Honeysuckle	Sunflower
Indian Pink	Sweet Pease
Larkspur	Sweet Sultan
Loveapple	Wallflower
Lupin	Zenia

**Barbara Wright**



An order for Shakerley dated 19 March 1794 for 6 dwarf Golden Pippins (8d each) and 2 standard Wine Sower Plums (1s 4d. each)

## Mr Smith's Yellow Rose

On 20 May, 1835, John Leaf of Prospect House in Hale ordered from Caldwell's nurseries, among other things, two roses. One was Smith's Yellow Noisette Rose.

Now, the 1830s Caldwell ledger is chock full of botanical and cultivar names – often with very idiosyncratic spelling. So checking what they are supposed to be has proved a fascinating part of our duties as we transcribe the ledgers. But this entry was written very clearly, with even, most unusually, noisette correctly spelled.

The names of cultivars can be difficult to track down. Without expecting any hits, I typed "Smith's Yellow Noisette Rose" into the search engine. The result was stunning.

William Smith was gardener to the Earl of Liverpool at Coombe Wood, Kingston, Surrey. His new rose began to be featured in magazines from 1832 onwards. It was popular not only in this country, but also in Europe and America.

The rose was featured in Robert Sweet's *The British Flower Garden* in 1833 where, confusingly, the illustration (opposite) was numbered 157, while the text was numbered 158. Sweet described the plant as vigorous, with deep yellow, highly fragrant flowers and beautifully veined leaves. It was hardy and easy to propagate.

It seems to have retained its popularity for about 40 years when a new cultivar named M. Furtado was described as an improvement upon Mr. Smith's rose. Unfortunately putting that name into the search engine produced no hits, so I can't tell you any more.

However, if you would like to know about its triumphs and failures in America, you can read about it at [www.heritage-rose-foundation.org/#!article-forgotten-rose/cbuk](http://www.heritage-rose-foundation.org/#!article-forgotten-rose/cbuk). There Stephen Scanniello of New Jersey describes his research into this forgotten rose.



## Wildflowers of Crete

Crete is a treat for the senses: for sight, with fabulous views of coastal areas and across the White Mountains, with hillsides of flowers against blue skies; for smell, with almond, orange and lemon blossom and the smell of thyme on the air; for sound with the local birds singing their hearts out; and for taste, with the delicious Cretan culinary delights.

We were there in May 2015 and were lucky enough to spend 2 weeks walking with "Ramblers Holidays"

Crete is the fifth largest island in the Mediterranean, 260 km long, but only 12-60 km wide. It has a tremendously diverse geography. In addition to the wonderfully indented Cretan coastline it has a continuous mountain chain, mostly limestone country, full of caves, gorges and streams. The White Mountains, in particular, are spectacular.

Because of the mountainous terrain and because it was separated from mainland Greece many years ago, Crete has a high proportion of

endemic plant species: around 1700, with one in ten indigenous to Crete (just to give you an idea, this compares with Great Britain, with a landmass 30 times that of Crete, fewer species and only a handful of indigenous species).

On our walks around the island, it was probably the cultivated species that hit us first, especially the acres of olive groves – covering more than half the land under cultivation. Orange (and lemon) trees grow in abundance and meant that we had delicious orange juice at every stop.

*Bougainvillea* gives a blast of colour at every turn and makes the Cretan villages so attractive.



*Bougainvillea*

Even the pelargoniums were 10 times the size of our normal plants. We marvelled at the extent of oleanders and walked through oleander groves on the beach, but unfortunately it is getting to be a thug and overtaking other indigenous plants.

The wildflowers and plants themselves, varied from the enormous to the dainty. Probably top of the pops was the dragon arum (*Dracunculus vulgaris*), which we found everywhere, both in coastal areas and particularly in Samaria Gorge. It is a dramatic purple arum, growing to 1 metre plus.

We all love euphorbias in our gardens, but an impressive sight was seeing a whole hillside clad in what are effectively euphorbia shrubs

(*Euphorbia dendroides*), the leaves taking on an orange tinge.



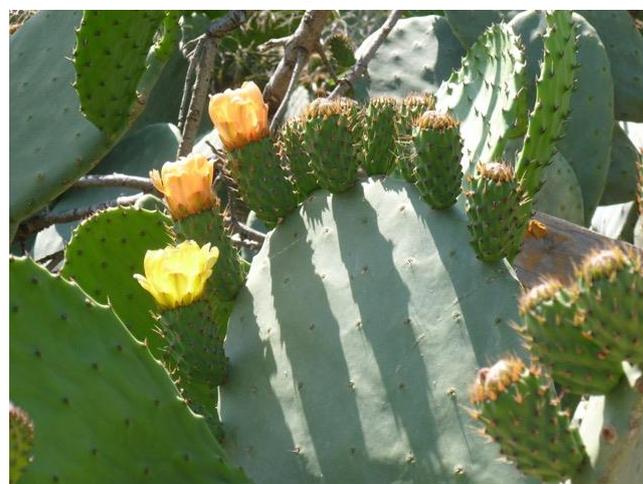
*Euphorbia bushes on a hillside*

One of the most spectacular sights we saw was only glimpsed from the bus and took us a while to identify.

It was Cretan ebony (*Ebenus cretica*) covering a hillside with pink and orange.

One day we walked up to a fort on top of a hill, with views all round. The hillside was covered in *Phlomis*, (Jerusalem sage). A few weeks earlier it would have been quite spectacular, as it would have been in full flower, but it still looked good with its impressive architectural structure.

Other plants on a grand scale were the prickly pears and enormous agaves.



*Prickly pear*

Sometimes we managed to take our eyes from the distant views and look downwards.

Tiny scarlet or blue pimpinels carpet the ground, in one place across an olive grove. Everywhere we saw Cretan versions of Queen

Anne's lace, *Daucus carota*, some with the characteristic dark centre.

Other familiar flowers were vetch (the very pretty mauve *Vicia tenuifolia* and the white clover like flower of *Vicia hirsuta*), and small field gladioli (*Gladiolus italicus*).

Everywhere there was *Cistus* (rock rose) combining beautifully with other native flowers and often, as the name suggests, growing straight from the rock.

There were many varieties of *Geranium*, mallow, *Campanula* and *Convolvulus*, covering the ground in a mauve haze.

Two very unusual plants were the caper flower – the beautiful *Capparis spinosa*, growing close to the ground and the strange *Sarcopterium spinosum*, leaving a hexagon of twigs.

Even stranger was the squirting cucumber (*Ecballium elaterium*). It gets its name from the fact that, when ripe it squirts a stream of liquid containing its seeds which can be seen with the naked eye. The plant, especially its fruit, is poisonous. We kept well clear.

And then there were the herbs – oregano, mint, sage, thyme....

Sue Eldridge



Above: the caper plant

Below: Squirting cucumber



## The Transformation of Gordon

Back in August, Gordon Baillie, Head Gardener at Arley lost his trademark pigtail when he took part in Macmillan's "Brave the Shave" fundraising event. Last we heard he had raised £700 for the cancer charity. If you want to support the move that saw him facing the barber for the first time in 30 years, why not email a donation to [gordon.baillie@arleyhallandgardens.com](mailto:gordon.baillie@arleyhallandgardens.com).



## The Greenings: Nurserymen & Designers

In CGT Newsletter No. 47 (July 2015), Sue Eldridge described a visit to Adlington Hall and noted that the Legh family archives recorded a visit from Mr Greenings of Richmond Park to advise Charles Legh on the design of the garden. The resulting garden was a rococo style wilderness with follies and garden buildings in the gothic, Chinese and classical styles

Thomas Greening (1684-1757) and three of his sons ran a nursery at Brentford End, Middlesex, where as well as producing plants, they obtained many aristocratic and royal contracts. The Rev George Harbin visited Thomas Greening's garden on 20th August 1719 and made detailed notes of the finest fruit and flowers grown.

Queen Caroline was responsible for the landscaping of the gardens of Richmond Lodge, now part of Kew Gardens. After her death responsibility for the upkeep was given to the head gardener, Thomas Greening the elder, assisted by his son Robert from 1738, and it was presumably one of these who came to Adlington. Under their care new features were created at Richmond, including the Small and the Little Wildernesses and the New Mound.

Robert produced designs for Wimpole Hall, Cambridgeshire, and later managed a family farm in Herefordshire, where they worked on Lord Bateman's estate at Shobden. Robert

became Queen Augusta's head gardener at Richmond, but died in 1758 and his brother John spent several years sorting out his affairs.

John Greening was the Duke of Newcastle's head gardener at Claremont, working with William Kent on landscaping schemes, but also laying out the formal flower gardens and the walled garden. Between 1754 and 1764 he was the King's gardener at Hampton Court and Windsor Great Park. Thomas Greening the younger (c.1710-1757) worked with his father at a number of gardens, and in 1751 he took over Kensington Gardens and St James' Park.

The Parks & Gardens UK website lists six gardens (below) associated with Thomas Greening Senior, but the practice of naming the eldest son after the father can cause confusion over attributions.

Corsham Court, Wiltshire  
The Gnoll, Neath, Glamorganshire  
Virginia Water near Windsor  
Kirtlington Park, Oxfordshire  
Nieuport House, Herefordshire  
Shobdon, Herefordshire

**John Davies**

Ref:

Michael McGarvie & John Harvey, 'The Revd George Harbin and his Memoirs of Gardening 1716-1723', in *Garden History*, vol.11, no.1, Spring 1983

## Before Reaseheath

Saltersford Hall near Holmes Chapel was built in 1839; it was a family home and modest estate until 1895. In that year Cheshire County Council leased the buildings and 90 acres of land to found **Cheshire's first Agricultural and Horticultural College** under direct administration by CCC.

The College was founded to supply training in agriculture and agricultural sciences and to provide instruction in horticulture. *"Special attention was paid to practical instruction so that students might become familiar with the routine of actual practice and have a close grasp of the details of the business of farming. At the same time the important principles were dealt with in courses of lectures"*.<sup>1</sup>

Inaugurated in April 1895, the College offered 3-year residential Diploma courses. Students who failed the examination but obtained a satisfactory standard were given a Certificate in Agriculture.

After affiliation to Manchester University in 1909, the College also offered Degree courses: *"the first year was spent at University, while the second and third years were taken partly at the University and partly at the College"*.<sup>2</sup>

In 1901 the College had 7 lecturers/instructors, 19 students aged 16-19 and 15 students aged 13-15. The College also employed a matron, a cook, 4 housemaids, a kitchen maid and 2 laundresses.<sup>3</sup>

## World War I

During WWI the number of male students declined and in 1916 the College became the training centre for **Women's Land Army** recruits.<sup>4</sup>

In the same year, the College also began a programme of **training disabled soldiers** for work on the land: *"The main endeavour is to make the men good all-round farmers. Some of them will be able to manage small farms on their own, others have obtained or are obtaining sufficient practical knowledge to assist in gardening, dairy work, or poultry-raising. All spend much more time in actual work than in attending classroom lectures; but they are learning a little botany and chemistry, and enough veterinary surgery for simple purposes. Some of the men have already been placed in good situations."*<sup>5</sup>

The College moved to the Reaseheath site in 1919, where it has continued to thrive.

At Saltersford, the dairy-and poultry farm and 7 acre gardens and glasshouses continued to be used by Saltersford Approved School from 1920.

The School closed in 1954, the estate was sold and soon after the Hall was demolished. Today the site contains several private properties and Saltersford Hall Farm. Aerial photographs suggest that only the straight hedges and field boundaries created by the College remain.

**Barbara Wright**

<sup>1</sup> Lamberton, J.K. 1951. *The Cheshire School of Agriculture and its Activities*, a paper read to the North Western section. [www.onlinelibrary.witney.com](http://www.onlinelibrary.witney.com)

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Census 1901 ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk)). Apart from W. Nield instructor in horticulture (49), the lecturers under Principal Edric Druce (29) were a young team: J.N. Jack (28) lecturer in agriculture, D. Turner (27) lecturer in surveying, W. Suthurst (26) lecturer in chemistry, H.C. Sampson (22) lecturer in natural science, Margaret Duff (20) dairy instructor

<sup>4</sup> The image collection of the Imperial War Museum ([www.iwm.org.uk](http://www.iwm.org.uk)) holds a photograph of September 1917, captioned: "A woman pupil at the Cheshire Agricultural College at Holmes Chapel being taught how to handle cattle during a course on aspects of animal husbandry".

<sup>5</sup> Article in *Ford Frances Times*, NW Ontario, Canada. 14/09/1916: "Farm Training for Soldiers, promising results of a government experiment in England". [www.onlinelibrary.witney.com](http://www.onlinelibrary.witney.com)

## 'England's Places'

Historic England is the public body that looks after England's historic environment, championing historic places by helping people to understand, value and care for them, both now and for the future.



Their Architectural Red Box Collection (called 'England's Places') is now available on-line at <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/archive/archive-collections/englands-places/>. It includes images dating from the earliest photography in the 1850s up to the early 1990s. Subjects include churches and country houses, historic buildings and modern architecture. There are street scenes and village-scapes which bring to life Victorian and Edwardian England, alongside photographic records of buildings threatened with destruction during the mid-20th century.

We are told that the Red Box Collection is often a useful resource for garden history research. Although a quick look shows that photographs of grounds is mostly confined to the immediate surroundings of the house, there are enough treasures – including several photos of the glasshouses at High Legh Hall – to warrant a rummage by our researchers.

'England's Places' pages can also be viewed on a mobile or tablet.

## Resignation of Chairman

It was with regret that the Council of Management accepted the resignation of Barry Grain, both as Chairman and as Council member. Barry's appointment introduced both a younger age group and a different focus to the Council. His enthusiasm for sharing his passion for gardening with people of all ages produced a lot of ideas and saw him hosting the successful Trees in Historic Landscapes workshop in September.

Unfortunately, Barry felt that he could no longer do the role justice. The garden he created at RHS Tatton missed a gold medal by a whisker and with Cholmondeley booked to be at Chelsea in 2016 he felt it was necessary to drop some commitments.

At his last Council of Management meeting we discussed some of the ways he felt its working

could be improved. Despite no longer being on the Council, Barry will continue to champion the cause of Cheshire Gardens Trust.

We are now looking for a new Chairperson, a matter which will be discussed at our next Council Meeting on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> November 6.30pm at the Coach House at Arley.

Council meetings are open to everyone and we welcome members to come and give their views on this matter, or indeed on anything else of concern.

So, if you would like to see the Council of Management at work, why not attend this or one of our other meetings?

We are all volunteers and the broader the range of members who contribute ideas the better Cheshire Gardens Trust will be.

## The Gardens Trust

Over the past few years our umbrella organisation, the Association of Gardens Trusts (AGT) and the Garden History Society (GHS) have been discussing the benefits and practicalities of merging the two bodies. The GHS was founded in 1965. It is a single member organisation, with an academic bent and publishes the twice yearly journal GARDEN HISTORY. It also has a statutory duty to comment on any proposed changes to historic sites held on the 'Register of Historic Parks and Gardens of special historic interest in England'.

The AGT is much younger, its members are the County Gardens Trusts and the members of the County Trusts themselves are perhaps a more disparate grouping, although some County Trust members are also members of the GHS.

As you can imagine, the difficulties associated with merging two such disparate organisations are considerable and there has been a good deal of discussion as to whether or not it was, in fact, a good idea. However, the functions of the two organisations do over-lap, particularly in the area of conservation of designed landscapes.

Furthermore funders like English Heritage (now Historic England) were urging merger.

Both the AGT and the GHS held their AGMs on the same day this year (24 July 2015) and the proposal to merge was on each agenda. Despite many misgivings, the County Trusts voted in favour (24 for, 7 against, 1 abstention). Likewise, GHS members voted for the merger.

The new organisation is called The Gardens Trust (TGT). The Board consists of members from both GHS and AGT. They have the task of meeting some specific aims within a tightening budget.

The aims are:

- To speak with a more powerful voice for the protection of parks, gardens and designed landscape;
- To play a key garden conservation role in the planning system as a statutory consultee;
- To provide support to strengthen the local activity of the County and Country Gardens Trusts

- To be an internationally regarded centre of excellence in the study of garden history;
- To live within the means of the merged organisation and be financially sustainable over the long term.

Over the past few years, the Cheshire Gardens Trust Council of Management has commented upon the proposals, raising various issues, some of which have been dealt with.

Although we have continuing concerns around some aspects of the TGT business plan, we have supported the merger.

The role of statutory consultee on all development affecting registered parks and gardens has now passed to TGT. A leaflet is being produced for Local Authorities. This will introduce the new organisation and confirm this role.

To mark the passing of the AGT, a scrapbook 'Memories of Gardens Trusts' was created for Gilly Drummond who began the Gardens Trust movement when she set up the Hampshire Gardens Trust more than 30 years ago. (Follow the link on [www.gardenstrusts.org.uk/](http://www.gardenstrusts.org.uk/) to view it).

Gilly was awarded the OBE in the New Year's Honours of 2008. Her reply to our congratulations was typical Gilly:

*"This award is for everyone involved [in the work of the County Trusts] and I do hope you will convey this message to all in the Cheshire Gardens Trust. I was just lucky to be on the receiving end!"*

Gilly has now been honoured with a daffodil named after her. Narcissus 'Gilly Drummond' was raised by Ron Scamp of Falmouth. It was registered in June 2015 and will be on sale next year.



Above: Steffie Shields, outgoing AGT Chair (right) makes presentation to Gilly.

## CGT AGM - Time for a change...

After more than 10 years, we are changing the way we organise the AGM and Spring Lecture.

Rather than combining the two at one event – they will be separated.

The Spring Lecture will be in March and the AGM in April.

We are still putting the finishing touches to these changes, so watch this space.

For our Spring Lecture, we have invited guest speakers from Sweden to tell us about Swedish gardens and garden design – in anticipation of our planned tour there in early September 2016.

Our AGM in April will be on Thursday 14 April at Tabley Hall.

We have all passed the brown signs on the A556, but how many have ever visited?

The Hall boasts a beautiful collection of furniture and paintings and has one of the finest salons in Cheshire, overlooking a stunning landscape.

Tabley House was designed by John Carr for Sir Peter Byrne Leicester and completed in 1767. His son, the 1<sup>st</sup> Lord Tabley, was a patron of British Art and a great collector.

He assembled a splendid collection at Tabley and we will be able to see paintings by Turner, Dobson, Lely, Reynolds, Cotes, Northcote, Callcott, Fuseli, Lawrence, Opie, Martin and others.

After a self-guided tour of the house, we will have light refreshments before a brief talk about Tabley.

Our AGM will follow – and there will be plenty of time for socialising. As there will be no lecture, the evening will finish earlier too – at around 8pm.

The AGM is a crucial event for the Trust and one which relies heavily on our members' presence – so, pencil-in the date and we'll see you there.

**Copy date for January newsletter is 31 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, 26 Sandford Road, Sale, M33 2PS, tel: 07900 968 178 or e-mail [joy.uings@btconnect.com](mailto:joy.uings@btconnect.com).