



## Tattenhall Hall

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### Future events

- 30<sup>th</sup> October CLHA History Day
- 13<sup>th</sup> December Barbara Moth Caldwell's Nursery – Gardens Trust zoom talk
- Winter CGT zoom talks, provisional dates:
- 30<sup>th</sup> November Vela Portugalska on the Summer Garden at St Petersburg
- 4<sup>th</sup> January Mick Brown, Chatsworth
- 1<sup>st</sup> February The Gardens of Brittany
- 15<sup>th</sup> March Anthony Tavener, Plas Cadnant

## CGT Visit to Tattenhall Hall

At last, after nearly 2 years (yes, the last visit was in August 2019), Cheshire Gardens Trust re-started its programme of garden visits. As if to celebrate with us, the weather was beautiful – a warm, dry day with blue skies and just a slight breeze.



Tattenhall Hall is about 8 miles south of Chester and opens under the NGS, so some members may already have visited it. This was the first time for me and there was much to discover. The grounds cover 4½ acres of great variety, from formal gardens to vegetable plots, meadows to woodland, and a beautiful lake, formerly the mill pond, enlarged in recent years. The Grade II\* hall (front page and above) was built in the early seventeenth century for Sir Richard Bostock but by 1810 it had become a farmhouse. The house was bought in 1856 by Robert Barbour who restored it and commissioned Thomas Harrison to design gate piers and farm buildings. At some stage before the current owners moved in, the house was divided. Two couples took over the house. They are plant enthusiasts who have developed the garden with love and enthusiasm and are pleased to share the garden with visitors.



*Aeonium near back door*

On arriving at the hall, we had the choice of going with a group or exploring for ourselves. We chose the latter

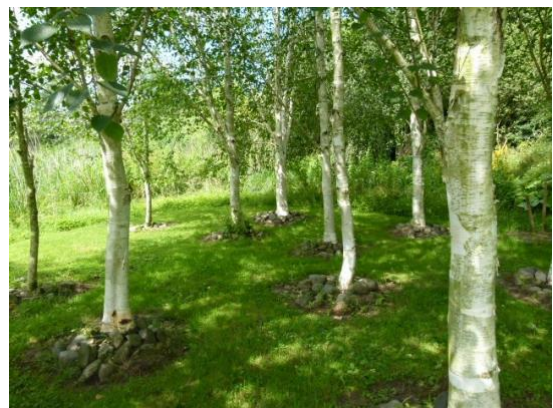
and made our way to the formal gardens which were at their summer best. We passed through a door in the wall and entered the walled garden close to the house. Here was the largest *Aeonium* I had ever seen, with a second one not much smaller.



Further on around the house was a 'hot' border with red, orange, and deep pink flowers, (above) followed by a cooler border of white and pale yellow flowers (below).



The plants were set off by the trees beyond them and all seemed lush and exuberant. There were roses everywhere – on walls, over doorways, in borders, in trees. In the woodland garden *Rosa* 'Kiftsgate' and *R.* 'Rambling Rector' were in full flower. Also here, not too far from the pond, was a delightful glade of silver birch trees (below). providing very welcome shade on a hot afternoon.



It is possible to walk all around the pond as a boardwalk has been built which takes you through the reed beds flanking the water. Everywhere there are wildflower meadows although these had obviously been at their best earlier in the summer. The owners had attended a course at Great Dixter to learn the art of growing meadows.

By now we were ready for tea and cake so headed back to the walled garden to find a shady place to sit and enjoy the refreshments. Eventually we wandered back to the pond and sat by the outlet stream, enjoying the sound of tumbling water, before returning to the car.

For anyone wishing to make a longer visit, Tattenhall village is a very interesting place to look around. This year Tattenhall Hall opened its gardens under the NGS in June so, if you have never been, do look out for next year's opening. It is well worth seeing.



*Time for tea*

**Julia Whitfield**

**Photos Julia Whitfield and Jim Jeeves**

## A CGT Social at Sandymere



*View from balcony on to Alex's Garden*

A most enjoyable visit was made by a good number of members on a thankfully mostly dry afternoon in the middle of a wet August. It was a pleasure to see and chat to members that many of us will not have seen for two years. This was the second visit that CGT had made to Sandymere; the first visit was in July 2016. I had not been able to attend previously, so was glad to be able to visit this lovely garden this time.

Sir John Timpson and his family moved here in 1987 and the garden has understandably developed over the years, from only clumps of azaleas and little else. They were supported by Mark Derwent of Colvin and Moggridge who drew up a 10 year plan in 1989 and finished 28 years later. For more information see <https://www.colmog.co.uk/portfolio/sandymere-hall-cheshire/>.

At the front of the house there are formal walled gardens with lots of blue and white plantings, including *Agapanthus*, *Geranium 'Rozanne'* and *Cosmos*, which are matched by the blue painted metal fences. From here we walked through the tennis courts where the beds were planted with hot colours, then on to a lake with many different types of ducks in residence (below). Beyond this lake were the greenhouses and fruit, vegetable and lavender beds.



*CGT Members in the formal garden*



*Duck Lake*



*The end of the rill with beautiful wrought iron bridge*

Back across the sweeping lawns behind the house, we followed the rill alongside the formal terraces until it turned into a meandering shady stream lined with large clumps of hostas. This brought us to Alex's boathouse on



*View from Alex's boathouse*

another lake surrounded by mature trees. A fitting memorial to Sir John's late wife, who sadly died in 2016, and so was never able to see the completion of the transformation she inspired at Sandymere's garden.

After exploring the extensive grounds we returned to the house where we all gathered for refreshments served by Rachel Pemberton, Sandymere's Head Gardener. From this room above the swimming pool, there were wonderful views of both front and back gardens from the balconies either side of the room, which we enjoyed while socializing and eating cake!



*The balcony overlooking the garden*

Our thanks to Sir John Timpson and to Rachel Pemberton for their hospitality and for sharing their garden with us. Sandymere is open for the National Garden Scheme for one day each year.

**Isabel Wright**

**Photos Isabel Wright, Beric Bartlett and Jim Jeeves**

## Plant Heritage

Plant Heritage is a national charity that aims to maintain the diversity of our garden plants through the [National Plant Collections](#), the [Plant Guardian](#) scheme and a network of [Local Groups](#).

A National Plant Collection is a registered and documented collection of a group of plants. These can be linked botanically by plant group, or perhaps have a shared history or geography. Holders of collections can be individuals, botanic gardens, plant nurseries, local authority parks or groups of people, who share the collection across different locations. National Plant Collections are also made available for people to view, either by appointment, on special open days or as part of a garden open to the public.

Plant Collections have become more important for a number of reasons. Climate change, the advance of new pests and diseases, loss of gardens, a diminishing nursery trade and lack of knowledge in the general population all conspire to reduce the diversity of our garden flora. Plant Collections have also become a sanctuary for plants in the



*Delphinium Collection at Temple Newsam, Leeds City Council*

wild where loss of habitat can lead to a loss of species in a given genus.

The **Plant Guardian** scheme involves looking after a plant that is rare in cultivation so we can all be involved in conservation.



*Astilbe Collection at Holehird Lakeland Horticultural Society*

**Local groups** based in many counties support the national organisation through publicity and fund raising but function as local horticultural groups with regular meetings, plant fairs and other events.

More information can be found on the Plant Heritage website (<https://www.plantheritage.org.uk>) which gives information about local group meetings, plant fairs and National Collections.

**Plant Heritage Cheshire** meets at Toft Cricket Club, Knutsford WA16 8QP on the last Wednesday of months January to April and September to November. Some of our members enjoy propagating plants so we have a stand at the Arley Spring Fair and Arley Garden Festival where we sell plants and provide information about Plant Heritage. For many years we have also had a display at Tatton RHS Show. We have a close association with Arley Hall as Lady Ashbrook, mother of the present Lord Ashbrook, was one of the founding members of Plant Heritage Cheshire and our President for a number of

years. We hold an annual lecture in her name which, this year again, will be a Zoom presentation rather than an actual lecture at Arley Hall on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> November -see below.

#### **Autumn Programme for the Cheshire group**

Wed. 29<sup>th</sup> September: Talk on 'Hardy Geraniums'  
Speaker: Sue Clarke, National Collection Holder of *Geranium sylvaticum* and *G. renardii* forms cultivars and hybrids. This meeting will be the first since February 2020 because of the Covid pandemic and general restrictions.

Wed. 27<sup>th</sup> October: Talk on Rhododendrons.  
Speaker: Nick Lightfoot, Garden and Collections Manager, Ness Botanic Garden.

Wed. 24<sup>th</sup> November: AGM followed by a talk 'Evergreen plants for small gardens'  
Speaker: Anthony Norman, Conquest Plants Nursery.

Talks start at 7.30pm

Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> November 2pm: '**Arley Memorial Lecture:** 'The Fight against extinction- Botany and Horticulture at Chester Zoo' ZOOM presentation, speaker: Phil Esseen, Curator of Horticulture & Botany, Chester Zoo.

To join the Arley lecture there will be a charge of £5. Please email [plantheritagecheshire@gmail.com](mailto:plantheritagecheshire@gmail.com) and the link will be sent when payment has been received.

We are a small and friendly group and we welcome new members or visitors to our regular meetings. If you are interested please contact Sonia Chapman ([soniachapman042@gmail.com](mailto:soniachapman042@gmail.com)).

**Article and photos Sonia Chapman, Chairman of Cheshire Plant Heritage and CGT Member**

## Plans in the Pipeline

Since July Cheshire Gardens Trust has been consulted on the following Planning Applications:

**Vernon Park** (Grade II), Stockport, proposal to erect secure fencing to bowling greens

**Sound and Broomhall** Neighbourhood Plan

21/4434N **Crotia Mill**, Doddington Estate, David Whitby Way, Weston - reserved matters for mixed development

21/4654M **Tabley Mere Roaring Bridge** (Grade II Park) - temporary proposals for rockfill buttress – see next article

21/03249/LBC **Eaton Hall** (Grade II)- Repair, clean and redecorate the iron gates on Belgrave Drive

21/02977/AGR **Burton Manor** (Grade II Park) - Steel portal frame agriculture building for storage of animal feedstuffs (within the registered parkland)

21/03336/FUL **Burton Manor** (Grade II Park) - Erection of Modular Ancillary Cafe and associated works. RSPB Burton Mere Wetlands (within the registered parkland)

In addition the following Neighbourhood Plans were received in 2020, but deadlines are not till later this year:

Marton due 6.12.21

Handbridge due 7.12.21

Old Rode due 8.01.21

See the following website for more information on Neighbourhood Plans

<https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/planning/neighbourhood-plans/neighbourhood-planning.aspx>

All applications have been considered and if you would like to see those we considered merited a response, check the planning log

[Cheshire Gardens Trust - Planning Log \(cheshire-gardens-trust.org.uk\)](https://www.cheshiregardens-trust.org.uk)

**Barbara Moth and Sue Bartlett**

# The Roaring Bridge at Tabley

The Roaring Bridge at Tabley, so named because of the noise made by the waterfall, carried one of the original drives to Tabley House. It is situated within the Grade II registered park between Tabley Mere and the moat by Tabley Old Hall. This delightful sketch c1810 - 1820, is thought to be by Georgiana, wife of Sir John Fleming Leicester. It shows the bridge with the castellated boathouse behind. Both features remain, but the mere, enlarged by John Webb in 1803, has been classed as a reservoir due to its size and must therefore comply with reservoir legislation laid down in the Reservoir Act of 1975. The integrity of the banks and overflows are now giving cause for concern.



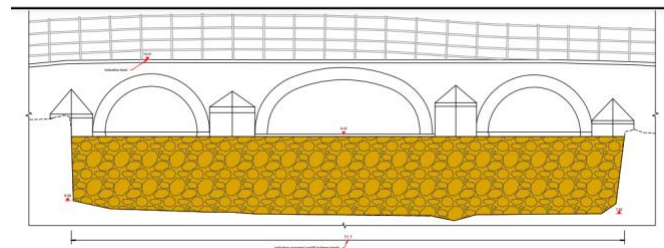
A photograph of the bridge taken about 20 years ago



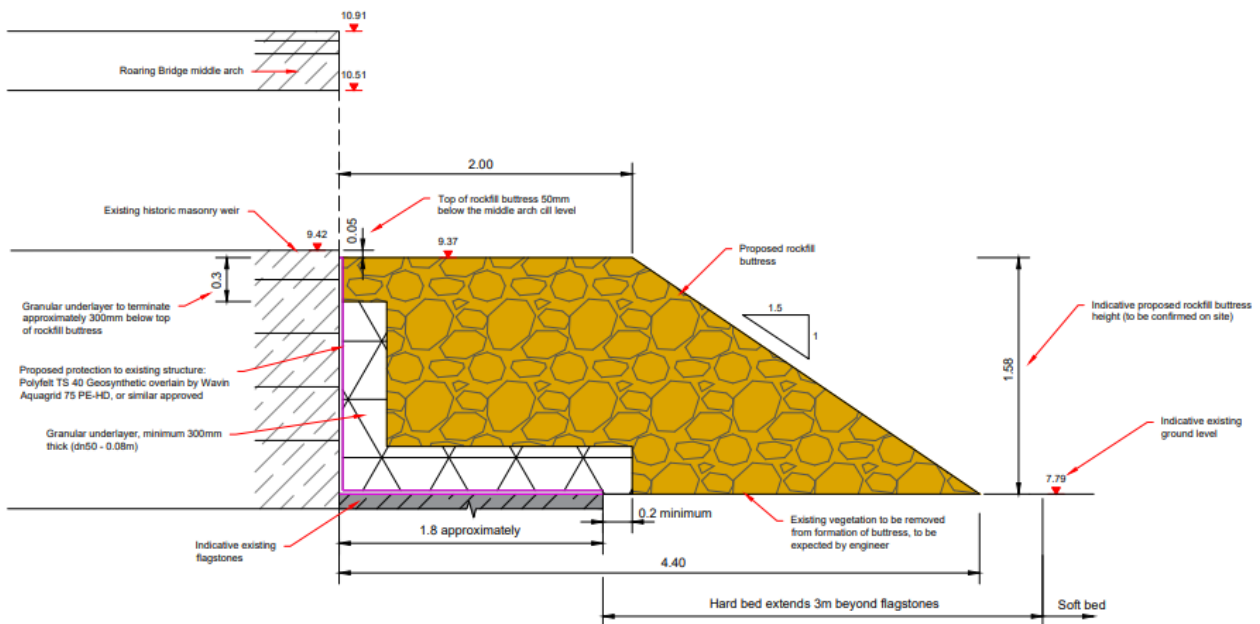
granted for a temporary building such as a wedding marquee, the duration of the permission is specified. This allows the applicant to decide on the desirability and business case for a permanent installation. Our concern is that a temporary permission without a time limit, may become permanent allowing further deterioration of the Grade II listed boathouse and Roaring Bridge. They are significant features of the registered park which includes the House and Church of St Peter, each Grade I, Tabley Old Hall Grade II\*, and Tabley Old Hall moated site and gatehouse which is a scheduled monument.

Barbara Moth

Cheshire Gardens Trust has recently been consulted on a planning application 21/4654M to reinforce the overflow by placing a rockfill buttress beneath the historic weir. (This is one of a number of measures proposed to ensure integrity of the water body.) The proposed rockfill buttress is 'temporary', but how long is "temporary"? When planning permission is



Proposals for rockfill buttress front view



Proposals by Mott Macdonald for the rockfill buttress – side view

# Simon Tetlow, Tatton Park

## Fifteenth in our Head Gardener Series



*Simon Tetlow at Tatton Park*

Tatton Park is familiar to us all, but we sometimes forget how many layers of history it has. Since 1715, different owners and landscape designers have had their influence on the landscape. In 1791 Humphry Repton produced a Red Book for Tatton, proposing links with the wider landscape. In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, Lewis William Wyatt produced designs for the Orangery and the area around Charlotte's Garden. Joseph Paxton designed Tatton's spectacular Fernery and the Italian garden. Planting in the Arboretum was built up over many years and, of course, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the famous Japanese garden was built.



*Dawn redwoods (Metasquoia glyptostroboides) in the arboretum*

Simon Tetlow has been at Tatton Park for nearly 22 years. He spent six years as Sam Youd's deputy and prior to that was plant foreman. He became Head Gardener in 2014, following Sam Youd's retirement, with a key focus on the fruit and veg garden. There have been many challenges, including a cut in funding and subsequent staffing, deterioration of the greenhouses and most recently the Covid pandemic.

Simon was born in Middleton in North Manchester. He grew up with a father and uncle who were keen gardeners and Simon was encouraged to grow things for himself. He took a fairly traditional route and studied Biological Sciences at Bristol Polytechnic. This was followed by a degree in agriculture at Devon Agricultural College. As part of the course he spent an idyllic time in Northumberland working on crop trials of oil seed rape. He preferred working to studying and got a job in Wexford in Ireland, working on an organic dairy farm. He's passionate about the organic movement.



*The Fernery at Tatton Park, Simon's favourite part of the garden*

But, In December 1986, his father died suddenly. Simon moved back home to support his mother. He started working as a postman and found himself looking into front gardens, identifying plants he didn't know using the Collins guide to garden plants. He had found horticulture. He decided to retrain and enrolled on a City and Guilds Course at South Manchester College. It was very practical and included things like hedge trimming and a machine workshop. Alongside this he was also doing the RHS General course and continuing as a postman 2 days a week. He started the 2<sup>nd</sup> year but met someone who introduced him to the idea of Employment Training. He was invited to start at Hare Hill on £40 a week + travel expenses. He was cycling from South Manchester and was allowed to start a little later than normal. The Head Gardener then was Mike Scott, who had started his career at Tatton. Hare Hill was only just being opened up, rhododendrons were being replanted and there was masses of pruning to do. Mike Scott acted as a mentor and encouraged Simon to go for additional work at the weekend.

Simon was now, of course, working for the National Trust. He secured a job as Head Gardener (and the only gardener) at Benthall Hall Shropshire, a 5½ acre garden, with an orchard, a rose garden and a wilderness

garden. The house was built in 1535 and it has been a family home for 500 years. George Maw, a previous tenant carpeted the garden in autumn crocuses.

The family were passionate gardeners and Simon learnt a lot. As part of his role, Simon had to research historic fruit and vegetable growing and learnt more about plants as one of the family was interested in flower arranging. He also trained through the Trust, taking courses such as tree surgery. He was there for 8 years but his mother became ill and Simon wanted to move back nearer home.



*The orchard at Tatton*

The Tatton job came up, it was closer to home and had a lot to attract him, including the development of the fruit and vegetable garden and the layers of historical development. He started in July 2000. He was on a 3 year contract to develop the fruit and vegetable garden with a dedicated team, including 2 gardeners and volunteers. There were difficulties, since much of the site had been run by the Tatton Garden Society, but he got a lot of support from the National Trust and others. It was up and running in 2005. He's particularly proud of the fruit garden but there is still plenty to do there.

The structure of the garden team changed and Simon then went on to become Garden Team Manager. Originally there were 12/13 staff but that has now reduced to 9, while at the same time the garden role has expanded. In addition there are around 70 volunteers.



*Wildflower planting in the Golden Brook area*

Because of fewer staff the approach to the garden has had to change with possibly more emphasis on the upper, more formal garden.

A lot of the basic jobs have needed attention, such as drainage, paths and tree cover. Simon is trying to open the garden out, to lift tree cover in some cases, and improve views. He is keen to increase access and develop the narrative of the garden, linking areas of the garden together. The garden has very much been a spring garden, with its rhododendrons, azaleas and other flowering shrubs and Simon is keen to introduce more autumn planting, with hydrangeas and new trees. He is trying to develop the Golden Brook area, improving views and planting wildflowers. Nearby they have planted cherries around the Japanese garden, expanding the area of interest (see below).



The demographic of the garden staff is ageing, as in so many other gardens. Simon is keen to introduce new blood and is currently recruiting to replace staff retiring. Unfortunately it has not been possible to have an apprenticeship or WRAGs scheme.

The next challenge is the restoration of the greenhouses. This has been an ongoing problem; material and skills have been severely lacking. There has been ongoing lobbying of the National Trust. Costs of restoring in wood would be prohibitive. East Cheshire County Council pays the bills but the National Trust sets the rules. The present plan is for the current greenhouses to be removed and new greenhouses built, to the original specification but in aluminium, at a cost of around £1.2 million as opposed to £8/9 million. Watch this space.

Simon loves the garden, especially the many layered history and the links to the wider landscape. If he were to choose a favourite area it would be the Fernery. Simon is not going anywhere; he is keen to see the projects through, particularly in the fruit and vegetable gardens.

I am very grateful to Simon for giving up his time to talk to me and wish him well for the coming years



# Bluebell Cottage Gardens



*Grasses in the sunshine in the herbaceous borders*

Just when we thought that summer was over, the warm, sunny weather returned in time for 36 of us to visit Bluebell Cottage Gardens, Dutton. Situated at the end of a narrow, winding lane, the gardens occupy a secluded spot. The 'car park' is on the edge of a large meadow that had been recently mown.

Owner Sue Beesley won BBC Gardener of the Year in 2006. Shortly after that, she and her husband bought the cottage, its one and a half acre garden, rundown nursery, adjacent meadow and bluebell woods. Sue has run the garden and nursery for the last 14 years and she has significantly increased the range of hardy herbaceous perennials for sale. The essence of the original garden remains, but areas of lawn have been reduced to grass paths with a naturalistic effect.



*Exploring the nursery*

Sue aims for the garden and nursery to be environmentally friendly, using peat free compost, recyclable pots, mulching not feeding, not staking and leaving seedheads for their aesthetic value as well as for seed collection. Propagation is from the nursery's own plant stock if possible.

Sue invited us to explore the different areas of the garden. We entered through an archway from the nursery, leaving temptation there till later. A metal arch aptly decorated with apple and pear led to a wildflower



*Through the archway and into the orchard*

meadow with heavily laden fruit trees. Metal and wooden sculptures scattered throughout the garden reflect the fruits, seedheads and flower shapes. The spring garden also provides shade for later flowering plants like *Thalictrum*. Much of the garden lies on a west facing slope with beds of perennials including *Echinacea*, *Crocsmia* and *Aster* giving late summer colour. Specimen grasses brought drama. Drought resistant plants filled the gravel garden. The large informal pond in the centre of the garden still had a few water lilies in flower. Small pools linked by a cascade is a recent development and the gardens continue to evolve.



*Decorative stakes in the herbaceous border*

We were served excellent homemade cakes and tea/coffee in the shade of the gazebo. We are grateful to Sue and her staff for their hospitality. A return visit in spring or early summer would give an opportunity to see the bluebell woods and wildflower meadows.

**Mary Jeeves**

**Photos Jim Jeeves and Sue Eldridge**

## Stockport's many Public Parks



*Cale Green Park*

Amazingly there are 30 public parks in Stockport listed on Cheshire Gardens Trust website so it will take some time before we cover them all. Many are purely recreational but some have historical significance, part of large country estates or donated by mill owners. Many were developed as parks for people in the Victorian era to encourage health and well-being in an industrial area.

With the development of Stockport as an industrial centre in the 1890s an expansion of building took place to the south-east of the town, encroaching on the farmland which had existed up to 1850. The Stockport-Whaley Bridge railway was built in 1857. The Davenport family of Bramhall sold land for the station which along with the ensuing suburb was named after them.

Local business owners built villas and sold off parcels of land for house building. Among these were Samuel Ratcliffe Carrington whose hatworks was in Cale Green and who owned Cale Green Farm, and Samuel Rigby, a cotton waste dealer who built 'The Mount'. By 1883 the Cale Green farmland was owned by Henry Bell a local brewery owner. His son, also Henry, a Methodist who was mayor of Stockport, donated land to the Cricket and Lacrosse clubs and a parcel of land to the Council to be used as a public recreation ground and this became Cale Green Park.



*Postcard of Cale Green Park Bandstand/Shelter, courtesy of Stockport Image Library*

**Cale Green Park** was laid out in 1902 in a formal style with a figure of eight pattern with formal beds and shrubberies, and trees along the boundaries and as specimens. (Stockport Image Archive has a number of postcards). It is bounded by the railway to the south, and Beech Road to the North. To the east evergreens lined the railings along Heath Road and street trees were planted there at the same time. There are two gated entrances, a Pavilion/bandstand, a memorial stone made from a carved boulder (below), and a cast iron flagpole base on a square plinth, all of which are listed on the Stockport Historic Environment database (see below).



The Park Mess Room is a late nineteenth century former stable block which belonged to The Mount. This and part of the grounds and entrance gate from Bramhall Lane were added to the park in the 1920s, having been gifted to the Council by Samuel Rigby. 'The Mount' became the residence of the Stockport Parks Superintendent.

The Park retains the evergreens (holly and laurel) alongside the railings on Heath Road. Formal beds are planted with roses. There are many mature trees including a horse chestnut near the bowling green, a *Cedrus atlantica* 'Glauca', lime, beech, *Sorbus* and a group of willows. Later additions include a group of three Dawn Redwoods (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*), a Weeping Silver Pear (*Pyrus salicifolia* 'Pendula') and a number of ornamental cherries.

More recently some areas along the south and western edges have been designated wildflower areas and a wildflower meadow was planned at the north end following the demolition of a 1950s park superintendent's house.



*Hallam Coronation Garden*

A local mill owner and benefactor, Ephraim Hallam (also a Methodist, an alderman and magistrate) had built a cotton waste spinning mill (making candlewicks and coarse cloth for bedspreads) in an area between Bramhall Lane and Buxton Road. On his death in 1897, Hallam Mill was sold. His wish to donate a piece of land adjacent to the mill as a park in honour of Queen Victoria's Jubilee was honoured. Hallam Recreation Ground was also opened in 1902. This was renamed **Hallam Coronation Garden** in 1953 in honour of the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II (Memorial Stone). This small park retains its original layout and has mature trees and shrubs around the edges. Modern play equipment replaced the original swings. It is a well used haven sandwiched between the mill and housing, and the shops along the main road.



*Torkington Lodge*

To the south east of the town, adjacent to the A6 is **Torkington Park**. The estate was owned by the Legh family for 500 years until the mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Torkington Lodge, a Grade 11 listed Regency building, was built in the 1780s. It was renovated in the 1820s and

rented to the Misses Hughes in the 1830s for an educational establishment for young ladies. It was sold in 1858 to the Barlows, a Quaker family with business interests, exporting cotton and importing tea.

Hazel Grove and Bramhall Council acquired the house and grounds in 1935 and developed it as a park, using the Lodge for council offices, latterly the NHS. It has been managed by Stockport Council from 1974. There are wide open spaces, trees, streams, as well as plenty of space for youngsters and a great toboggan run in the winter. It has football pitches, a bowling green and tennis courts. There is a children's playground with a rainbow sculpture, which gained extra significance during the pandemic. In the summer it has been the venue for fairs and carnivals.

Behind Torkington Lodge is The Secret Garden (below), a walled garden. This was originally the fruit and vegetable garden for the Lodge, but was remodelled as a formal garden in 1935. It was renovated and reopened in 2000 by Jeff Turner, popular TV gardener.



**Monica Walker and Sue Eldridge**

For more information see the following websites

<https://imagearchive.stockport.gov.uk>

(search for Cale Green Park and Torkington Park)

<https://assets.ctfassets.net/ii3xdrqc6nfw/4kb8xllYekOScWY888uCck/4cf47547a234fd6a236092f221f0c620/calegreenparleaflet.pdf>

<https://interactive.stockport.gov.uk/shed/Search/ViewDetails/574%20LocallyListed>

<http://davenportstation.org.uk/cale-green-park.html>

<https://assets.ctfassets.net/ii3xdrqc6nfw/55aQTrPbcISYoseeSuiysY/07810e2e13c857ef86c8283d3c1cf753/torkingtonparleaflet.pdf>

## One House Walled Garden

In mid-June this year, two of us visited a garden open under the NGS. It appealed to me because it was a walled kitchen garden dating back to the early 1700s, and had been hidden for 60 years before being restored by some dedicated volunteers. The name of the garden was also

intriguing – One House. Why such an unusual name?

I started researching the site and found that it had been the first property to be built in the Macclesfield Forest, way back in the twelfth century. According to

The Parks and Gardens website [The One House | Parks and Gardens \(en\)](#), it is believed to have been granted to a forester, Richard Davenport, around 1150. In 1166 the Hulley family took over the site and it remained in that family until they sold it in 1912. The house was eventually demolished in 1939 after the estate had been resold, the new owner intending to build another house on the site but he died before this happened and the estate was inherited by the Gibbs family who started a nursery here. After World War II, the walled garden became part of Grove Farm but when this farm was sold in 1999, the walled garden was bought by Louise Baylis and she has been responsible, with a team of volunteers, for rescuing and restoring the garden. The nursery closed some years ago.



*Cheshire XXXVII. Published 1881. Held by National Library of Scotland.*

The map above shows the site, complete with One House, as it was in the late 1880s. The walled garden is the rectangle just below the name "One House" with the large cross shape. One House is to the right side of the lane.

It was a lovely early summer day when we visited. One of the first things that struck us was the steep slope on which the garden sits. The volunteers did an amazing job of digging out tons of soil, repairing collapsed walls, removing self-sown sycamore seedlings, and repairing terraces and steps found under the soil. All this on such a steep incline. Now the garden is being used as a community garden growing flowers, fruit and vegetables. Old tools are dotted around and a greenhouse, built by the volunteers, can be visited just below the walled garden. Usually when we talk about walled gardens in Cheshire, we think of brick structures. However, Rainow is in the foothills of the Peak District so the walls here are built of stone and are not particularly high.

The photos in the next column show the steep incline, as well as some of the picturesque corners of the restored garden. It is certainly worth a visit if you can cope with slopes, but it is not generally open to the public except for the NGS weekend. We visited on 12 June 2021.



*The garden sits in a wooded area. This photo clearly shows the wall sloping steeply down the hillside*



*A picturesque corner of the garden with an auricula theatre*



*An exquisite stained glass window in the volunteers shed. The view through the top panes gives a clear view of the slope. Spot the snail in the stained glass design!*

For more information on Walled Kitchen Gardens, click on the link: <https://www.walledgardens.net>

And for the link to the National Gardens Scheme see <https://ngs.org.uk/view-garden/18167>

## Tom Stuart Smith's Garden



Pool and cloud pruning at Cogshall Grange

Tom Stuart Smith is one of our leading contemporary landscape designers. His work is to be seen at the new RHS Bridgewater Gardens, of course, where he designed both the master plan and the Paradise Garden. But he has been involved in many more high profile projects in the region, such as the new garden at The Hepworth Wakefield, reworking the Italianate Gardens at Trentham, developing areas of natural planting at Chatsworth this year, as well as stunning private commissions such as Cogshall Grange (above). Beautiful work.

His own garden is at Serge Hill, Hertfordshire, which he opens once a year under the NGS. He lives at The Barn, one of the properties converted from old farm buildings across the lane from a late Georgian house, his old family home, which they open jointly as Serge Hill Gardens. The route to the old house takes you along a meandering wooded drive, ending at the sweep of shrubberies and lawns around the house. A long deep border informally planted with shrubs, roses, and bold stands of *Cynara cardunculus* and *Miscanthus sacchariflorus* amongst the herbaceous perennials, runs along the outside wall of the old kitchen garden (see below), which is entered at the bottom.



Once in, a network of narrow paths lead through deep beds, full to the brim and tumbling with flowers. At the top end of the walled garden is the vegetable area and old greenhouse, and from here you pass through the

stable yard, across the lane to the old unmade farm track that leads to The Barn and its cluster of outbuildings.

The converted barn (below), with its vernacular black cladding and low red-tiled roof, is barely visible for the plants that surround it.

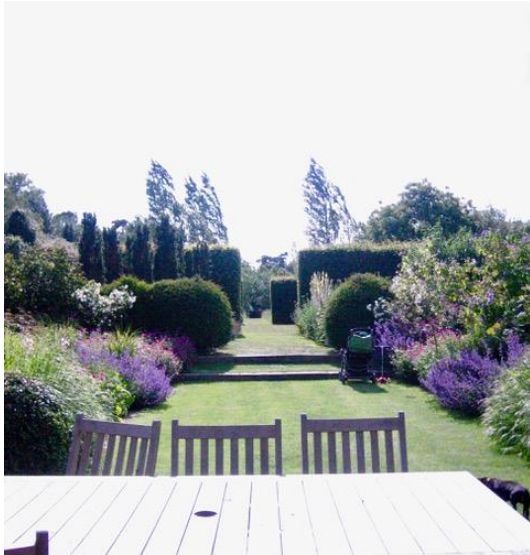


A small gate on one side leads to a totally private, enclosed courtyard garden. Here, Stuart Smith has re-used the Corten Steel water tanks from an early Chelsea Flower Show, with a grid of narrow brick paths between them, and an abundance of Mediterranean planting - *Euphorbia mellifera* and *Genista aetnensis* for structure, interspersed with drifts of *Allium*, *Salvia*, grasses and *Astrantia*.



The courtyard with Corten Steel water tank

To get to the main garden, you have to walk back round the building, along the track between house and working buildings, and pass through a cloud pruned box hedge into an orchard area dotted with box domes, which merges into a large meadow drifting down the slope of the Hill. A tall yew hedge with a gate marks the garden, which again is laid out in a grid pattern, but this time to form a series of rooms, each enclosed, firstly by cloud



pruned yew hedges, and further on by hornbeam. A broad grass avenue creates a long vista from the sitting terrace straight through the rooms to a row of poplars on the crest of the Hill (see above). Deep, deep beds are full to overflowing with herbaceous perennials, roses, and his signature fastigiate yews to give structure in winter. Narrow grass paths intersect and wind through the densely planted grounds, losing the very edges of the garden into trees and shrubs. The very last room is simply mown grass surrounded by tall hornbeam hedges, a green pause between the exuberance of the flower beds and the trees and long grass of open country beyond, with its views dropping out over neighbouring hills dotted with poppy fields. Here is the perfect place to pause – we sat round a large table, but the hammocks slung between trees were very tempting.



*Fastigiate yews in herbaceous/rose borders*

Back through the meadow, you cross to the experimental, working side. Firstly, there is the large prairie planting (below).



This was developed after working with Professors James Hitchmough and Nigel Dunnett (of Olympic Park fame), and was grown from seed into a deep sand layer, the idea being to sustainably maintain a balance between the species planted; curving mown paths meander through. Then there is the vegetable garden and greenhouse area, and further buildings, closed off this time as major work is in progress. Tom Stuart Smith is in the process of moving his studio out from London, but he is also developing a Plant Library as part of the Serge Hill Project for Gardening and Health in conjunction with his wife Susan, a psychotherapist. The collection of herbaceous plants is to provide a resource for learning, not only for horticultural students, but also they 'plan to work with local charities, schools, neighbours and keen gardeners to create a space and focus for environmentally oriented gardening and good mental health.' Foundations are laid for a horticultural hub building, and the Sunnyside Rural Trust (a thriving charity and social enterprise that offers training and work experience to vulnerable people) will build a small propagation facility for growing plants for their nursery – on sale of course at the open day. Many were brought home, and I am now struggling to find space for them all.....

**Liz Roberts**

## Gardens Trust and Other Events

A varied series of events from The Gardens Trust and their partner groups is now in full swing on the website. This includes the full programme of monthly winter/spring talks from the London Gardens Trust ranging from Women in Horticulture to Skateboarding in the City. Four talks, starting 22<sup>nd</sup> October, given by Caroline Holmes for Kent and Sussex Gardens Trusts and the National Gardens Scheme are based on her book

'Where the Wildness Pleases'. Devon Gardens Trust looks at Plant Hunters and Pioneers – the Veitch Nurseries - 4 talks from 4<sup>th</sup> October, and there are more Unforgettable Gardens to look at, this time from Surrey Gardens Trust.

Japanese Gardens: a series of seven talks in partnership with the Japanese Garden Society runs from 23<sup>rd</sup> October. Graham Hardman, CGT Member and Vice

President of the Japanese Garden Society will be speaking about the Japanese garden at Tatton Park on 16<sup>th</sup> December.

The Garden History series has reached the Early C18, with the last two lectures on October 21<sup>st</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> looking at New World explorers and early Botanical Science respectively. Late C18 and the Landscape Movement to follow. Also running till 9<sup>th</sup> November are talks on current Garden Archaeology finds, with an C18 bias.

'Why so special? Iconic C20 Landscapes' series of 21 talks reviews the prominent designed landscapes recently added to the National Heritage Register. Ed Bennis delivers two of these lectures - The Cadbury Factory, 19<sup>th</sup> October, and Roper's Garden, 18<sup>th</sup> January.

Barbara Moth is contributing to the series on Plant Nurseries beginning 1<sup>st</sup> November. Her talk on Caldwell's Nursery will be on December 13<sup>th</sup>.

As usual, all talks can be subscribed to either as a series or individually, and recordings are available for one week if you cannot make the actual lecture.

Full details and links are available at <https://thegardenstrust.org/events-archive/> New courses are regularly added

Cheshire Local History Association will be holding their History Day, with talks on Cheshire's Pioneers, at The Grange Theatre, Hartford on October 30<sup>th</sup>. For details please email [cheshirelha.committee@gmail.com](mailto:cheshirelha.committee@gmail.com)

**Liz Roberts**

## Why is this here? The Obelisk



Recently revealed from a dense thicket of overgrown laurels, a tall rustic stone obelisk may have caught the eye of anyone travelling east out of Knutsford on the Chelford Road. It stands proudly on its newly cleared piece of land, opposite Toft Cricket Club, with nothing to say what it is or why it is there. An enigma.

A search of Historic England shows that it has a Grade II listing (No.1388314, 1974): Obelisk Mid C18. Rusticated stone. A square pillar approx. 7m high on plain stone base and surmounted by projecting cornice, on which is a large urn and flower head or flame. History: thought to have been erected as a memorial to the Legh family following the demolition of the original Norbury Booths Hall in 1745. And it does indeed stand surrounded by Booths land, so this seems quite plausible.

At this time, the Norbury Booths estate was owned by Peter Legh, who demolished an old timber hall which had stood surrounded by a moat, with a causeway and fishpools. The new hall of c1744, later added to and known as Booths Hall, was built NW of this site, overlooking Booths Mere and surrounded by parkland. The park stretched south to the Chelford Road, which divided it from tenanted land further south.

Marked simply as an obelisk on earlier maps, the Tithe Map of 1847 reveals a little more detail - the obelisk stands in its clearing, but interestingly the land is not directly part of the Norbury Booths estate – it is highways and commons land, marked on the Tithe Map as 'thoroughfare and wasteland'. And moving to the next available map, the O/S 6" map of c1872, this shows the legend: "Obelisk, a monument to Ralph Leycester Esq and his Wife".



*Postcard view of the Obelisk, courtesy of Cheshire Image Bank*

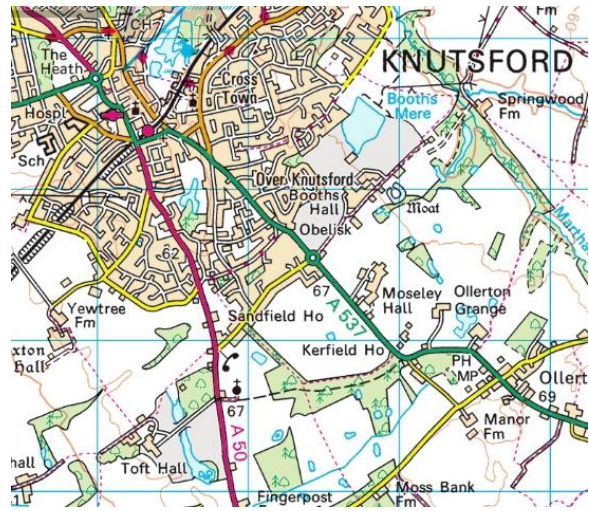
Ralph Leycester was the owner of Toft Hall, which lay to the SW of Norbury Booths on the south side of Knutsford, on the Holmes Chapel Road. Toft Hall is a late C17 house which Ralph had inherited in 1707 and and developed the park with avenues of trees. The land of the two estates abutted mid way between the Chelford Road and Holmes Chapel Road.

This has led to an alternative proposal that the stone for the obelisk was not from the old Norbury Booth's Estate, but from the old parochial church of St Johns on land owned by Christ Church College, Oxford, on the NW boundary of Norbury Booths's estate, and that the urn at the top came from a memorial to the Leycester family in the church. Further, that the obelisk was built on common land between the two estates, tall enough to be seen from both. <sup>1</sup>

Up until the early C18, Knutsford was in the parish of Rostherne, a distance away, with a parochial chapel at St Johns Wood which was in poor condition. In the 1740s, Ralph Leycester led the committee to raise funds for a new church within a separate parish for Nether and Over Knutsford, and a new central site was chosen (now Church Hill). The new church was consecrated in 1744, and the old St Johns abandoned, apart from a small chapel that continued to be used by Major Legh and his tenants.<sup>2</sup> Its ruins and disused graveyard are marked on the Tithe Map and all subsequent O/S maps and are still visible today. The relationship between ruins, obelisk, and both halls is clearly visible, with the obelisk seemingly mid way between Toft and the St John ruins.

But that is all we have by way of conjecture – either to Peter Legh or Ralph Leycester, whatever prompted the decision to build in 1745 is lost in the mists of time and is a reminder of how difficult it can be to read the past.

**Liz Roberts**



*The Obelisk can be seen in the centre of this modern OS map, Toft Hall bottom left, Booths Hall above the Obelisk. St Johns ruins are just above Booths Mere.*

<sup>1</sup> Joan Leach, Knutsford: A History Phillimore & Co 2007 p44

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. pp 30, 33

## Thank you to Ed

We are so fortunate to have had Ed Bennis as our Chair and 'front man' for so many years. He was involved in Cheshire Gardens Trust from the beginning, helping to guide us through our ups and downs and, as he says himself, has had "far too many years as Chairman!". Now he really is stepping down from Trusteeship and Council of Management.

Ed gained a Landscape Architecture degree in the USA followed by an MA in Conservation Studies (Historic Landscapes) in the UK. He has worked in the subject of historic landscapes, and lectured in numerous countries, presented papers, co-authored books, and published in professional journals. He was Head of the School of Landscape at Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU), and then Head of the Centre for Landscape Research. He has been a landscape consultant for English Heritage and regional governments, to several professional practices as well as designing and managing his own projects in the private sector.

With this background Ed's contribution to CGT has been enormous. He has given talks on American gardens, garden history and more recently Jellicoe's Cadbury's factory on the Wirral. He is currently giving lectures for the Gardens Trust in the Iconic C20 Landscape series. His contacts all over the world enabled CGT to undertake overseas tours to Belgium, Germany, Portugal and Sweden. This winter he has arranged for his overseas contacts to give zoom talks for our winter programme.

And, of course, he has chaired CoM and guided CGT through a range of its developments.



Of course this means that he's always on call to give lectures, write papers and generally contribute to the landscape movement. It doesn't leave a lot of time spare. All I can say is that we'll miss you Ed and wish you well for your "semi-retirement". We hope to see you at events and talks and are grateful for your continuing involvement in maintaining our Website, contributing to Events and occasional advice with Planning issues.

**Thanks from all of us.**

**Copy date for January newsletter is 31<sup>st</sup> December**

**Contributions to the Newsletter are very welcome. If you want to comment on articles in this edition or would like to contribute one for the next, please contact the Newsletter Editor, 148 Chester Road, Hazel Grove, Stockport SK7 6HE or email [newsletter@cheshire-gardens-trust.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@cheshire-gardens-trust.org.uk)**