



**CHESHIRE
GARDENS TRUST**

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

Issue No. 68

October 2020

Newsletter

www.cheshire-gardens-trust.org.uk

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CGT events (see page 7):

- * 9th Nov - Ed Bennis – A Factory Garden
- * 23rd Nov – David Cash's Top 10 gardens
- * 11th January – Simon Gulliver – John Claudius Loudon and his Wife, Jane Webb
- * 22nd February Michael Fish – Behind the Scenes as an RHS Judge
- * 15th March – Margie Hoffnung – The Work of The Gardens Trust



John Budworth, Norton Priory Walled Garden Eleventh in our Head Gardener Series

In August I was able to do my first face-to-face Head Gardener interview since lockdown began. Norton Priory reopened in July but, on the day I visited, it was closed, so we nearly had the place

to ourselves. John Budworth, Head Gardener, and I sat (carefully socially distanced) in a conservatory area on what was the site of the old hothouse. We were surrounded by exotics close to the pergola, an archway with figs, *Clematis tangutica*, climbing roses, *Akebia quinata* (chocolate vine) and *Vitis coignetiae*, a magical part of the garden.



John Budworth in front of a lemon tree in the conservatory

John was born and brought up in Wigan, where his parents had a large garden. When he left school age 16, he started by getting interviews at factories, but he decided he wanted to work outdoors. He was keen to do an OND in horticulture at Myerscough College but he needed 2 years work experience first. So he spent two years with Wigan Parks and Gardens Department, spending some of his time in the greenhouses where all the plants were produced. While there, he did day release for City and Guilds qualifications and an 'O' level in horticultural science.

The OND was a sandwich course. He spent time at a local nursery producing African violets and then went to Warwick District Council, where he had a very good all-round experience. He worked at Jephson Gardens, famous Victorian formal gardens in Leamington Spa, helped maintain golf courses and cemetery gardens and worked in the nurseries and drawing office.



The Tree of Life gate

Once John had gained his qualification he moved to Leicester Botanic Gardens where he met his wife Pauline, who also had a career in horticulture. I met her briefly when I arrived at the walled garden where she was doing some

voluntary work. John only spent six months in the Botanic Garden. In hindsight he wished he had done more but he was offered a supervisory role looking after care home gardens. In all he spent six years in Leicester.

In the meantime Pauline got a job with Manchester City College teaching horticulture. She was there for two years before John moved back north. He was able to get a job with Stockport Borough Council, based at Bramhall Hall. He did a lot of the bedding there but was also responsible for some secondary school grounds. He was with Stockport for four years from 1986 to 1990 as charge hand.

By this stage John had a great deal of experience and he applied for the Head Gardener post at Norton Priory Walled Garden; he has now been there for 30 years. He is responsible for horticulture throughout the site, including 2.5 acres of the walled garden, the monastic gardens and the wider landscape, 45 acres in all. Early on John gained an RHS Diploma through evening classes at Manchester City College, with the practical exams at Wisley. Quite an achievement, especially considering he injured his hand hedging a week before the practical exams.



Rudbeckia and Echinacea in the herbaceous border

Initially work in the parkland was contracted out and then rangers were employed. More recently John and gardener Jordan have done a variety of tree courses, an initial week's tree assessment course at Plas Tan y Bwlch in Snowdonia, then chainsaw courses at Reaseheath College. They are hoping to do more.

In normal times, in addition to Jordan, Kimberley works two days a week. Then there are volunteers, 9 on a Monday and 12-14 on a Tuesday, with others occasionally from Reaseheath or Myerscough Colleges. During lockdown it has mostly been just John working on his own, then Jordan was able to return on 1st

August, so it has been hard work. It is hoped that the volunteers will be able to return soon.

The garden is Georgian, built by the Brooke family in 1757. It was originally a kitchen garden feeding the nearby Norton mansion house of which only the Undercroft and Victorian Porch survive. It became derelict in 1921 with no surviving planting. In 1980 Warrington Development Corporation decided to recreate the garden. It took seven years, with an advisory council including Sam Youd and Tom Deans, landscape architect. Cheshire County Council took it over and asked Norton Priory Museum Trust to manage it for them. Then Halton District Council took over.

The walled garden has a wide range of features, which has kept John interested over the years. There are deep herbaceous borders with mixed shrubs and perennial planting, including hollyhocks, *Rudbeckia*, *Helenium*, *Verbascum*, *Lythrum*, *Phlox*, *Echinacea* and *Achillea*. There is a rose walk leading from the Tree of Life gate to the old greenhouse. This will be restored soon to celebrate 50 years of Norton sponsorship.



The rose walk leading to the old greenhouse

As befits a former kitchen garden there is a good range of fruit, vegetables and flowers, with cordoned fruit, an apple pergola, wild flowers and perennials. Initially heritage varieties were grown but this became too restricting. This area has become particularly difficult to maintain during lockdown as John has had to do all the propagation.

There is an extensive herb garden, but this has become rather overwhelmed with tansy during lockdown and will be an area for development over the next year. There is also a herb garden in the monastery garden, but this has been simplified



The apple pergola

in order to make it a little easier to maintain.

Near the normal entrance is the cottage garden (see below) with a good variety of perennials to make maximum effect.



Fruit is important at Norton Priory. As well as the fruit in the vegetable garden there is a small orchard with interesting varieties of fruit, apples, pears, plums, mulberries and quince. Norton now holds the National Collection of edible quince, *Cydonia oblonga*, with 24 cultivars dotted around the site (see front page). John started this off in 1993 under the auspices of NCPPG, now Plant Heritage. They hope to have an apple and quince day later in the year.

John will be retiring in 3-3.5 years. He says it doesn't feel like 30 years. He and Pauline now have two adult children and several grandchildren. He will probably return to Wigan, though he enjoyed the globetrotting he was able to do while his daughter was travelling the world. The walled garden is a lovely place. They are going to miss John when he's retired. Thank you for giving up your time to talk to me.

Norton Priory is open Friday, Saturday and Sunday until the end of October, pre booking required <http://nortonpriory.org>

Text and photos Sue Eldridge

Aberglasney Gardens, Carmarthenshire



Early this September we made our third visit to Aberglasney (above) The garden is situated in the beautiful Tywi valley, near Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire. It is also quite close to the National Botanical Garden of Wales, so the two could be combined quite easily. The gardens extend to 10 acres, and the mansion is Grade II* listed.

We made our first visit not long after the garden first opened to the public in 1999 after extensive restoration, which commenced in 1995. Some of you will remember the BBC TV series "A Garden Lost in Time" about the restoration of the garden.

Aberglasney has a long and varied history dating back at least to Elizabethan times, but had fallen into neglect in the 1970s. The garden was completely overgrown and the mansion house was on the brink of collapse, neglected and vandalized. In the central section the roof had collapsed, so this was made into the Ninfarium, a sub-tropical indoor garden amongst the ruins now covered with a glass roof. The restoration of the ground floor of the mansion was completed in 2013. Unfortunately, neither were currently open which is a shame because the Ninfarium is, from memory, just gorgeous!



Aberglasney cloister

Next to the mansion is the Elizabethan cloister garden with a three-sided arcaded walkway, and beside this the gatehouse and a section of original Elizabethan diaper pattern cobbling. It has long borders that were planted with *Ammi visnaga*, *Gaura*, *Salvia* 'Amistad' and some dahlias, which were light and airy, mostly white, but with some other colours at intervals. There is a large fish pool and a stream runs from this down through a woodland garden.

There are two walled gardens, the largest upper garden (below) has a collection of fig trees along the north wall, and borders with mostly perennial plantings. Penelope Hobhouse designed the layout of this garden. The National Collection of *Thalictrum* is held in this walled garden (some of you may have seen this featured on Gardeners' World this year). The lower walled garden is a kitchen garden with fruit trees, vegetables and flowers. Part of this also has bananas, cannas, salvias etc. and a hot colour scheme.



In the woodland garden there were drifts of *Cyclamen hederifolium* as well as many other shade loving plantings under a canopy of trees dating from the Victorian and Edwardian period. Aberglasney Gardens are still being developed, and a fairly new courtyard garden has a shallow water feature in the centre that acts like a mirror. Old cowsheds have been converted into greenhouses that are used by horticultural students. The person I spoke to explained that they had acquired a new piece of land that was going to extend the arboretum on the hillside behind the mansion. Work on this new project had been put on hold this year for obvious reasons.

Despite the long lockdown, the garden was very well maintained. The head gardener lives on site and no doubt worked as hard as other head gardeners during lockdown. They also have three or four horticultural students who stay for a year, as well as volunteers.

Aberglasney is a beautiful and atmospheric garden, well worth a visit if you are in the area. It also has a pleasant tearoom and terrace overlooking the fish pool, a shop, plant sales and two holiday cottages. It is open daily all year round, and there is no need to book before your visit.

<https://aberglasney.org>

Isabel Wright



Courtyard with water feature

Cholmondeley Castle Gardens

Turning off the A49 and down the southern drive into Cholmondeley Park, the trees, space and light brought an immediate sense of peace. As the drive turns west there is a view towards the Old Hall (screened by trees) and the ancient chapel capping an adjacent hillock.



Robert Bakewell's gateway of 1722 relocated from the formal gardens by the Old Hall.

The castle, 1800 – c1830, second home of the 7th Marquess of Cholmondeley, is situated on an outcrop overlooking the park. It is surrounded by some magnificent 19th century trees which are complemented by Jim Russell's 20th century planting and the Lavinia Walk planted as a tribute to the 6th Marchioness.



*Plantings by the castle walls where the crevices support numerous daisy-like *Erigeron karvinskianus**



Hydrangea paniculata and other plants catching the light on the castle slopes

The combination is delightful. Not only are the plant beds beautifully maintained but there appears to be an ongoing programme of rejuvenation, new tree planting and the development of new features that complement earlier work. It is refreshing to see trees with branches sweeping to the ground and planting on a generous scale but there are no seats, no interpretation and no guide books; one is very much a welcomed visitor in a private paradise.



*The Lavinia Walk still bright with *Pericaria*, *Salvia*, *Sedum*, *Penstemon* and *Dahlia* in mid September*

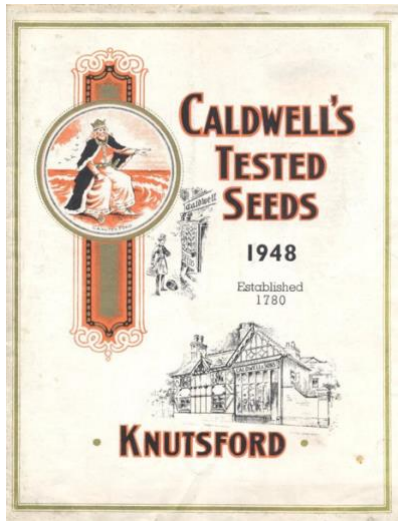
Open Wednesdays, Thursdays and Sundays till 25th October, pre-booking required

<http://cholmondeleycastle.com>

Barbara Moth

Caldwell's Nursery in the 20th Century - Part 2

This is a continuation of Joy Uing's article on the sales ledgers for Caldwell's Nursery which appeared in the late summer edition of the newsletter



Sales

The Sales Ledger covers a slightly different period – 1911 to 1917 – but does not include all the sales for that period as there were other ledgers in use at the same time, so we have to be careful about drawing conclusions. [I am just glad that I was not their auditor: it must have been a nightmare trying to find the right page(s) for each customer with different ledgers on the go at the same time. And the habit of sub-totalling and early purchases recorded later in the ledger, and later earlier, needed extra vigilance.]

Like the purchases, the sales are interesting. We might not know **what** was bought, but we do know **who** the customer was, and the difference from the earlier ledgers is also striking.



Japanese garden at Tatton

The aristocratic and county families are mostly missing, apart from Lord Egerton of Tatton who continued to be an important customer, with accounts for both the estate and garden. Just one estate invoice was for more than £1,064 (this equates to about £1½m today). It took so long to

pay this off in full that £10 was added as interest. His expenditure on the garden account was more modest – a total of £235 – still a huge amount over 4 and a half years; over a similar period, Mr. Brentford (Snelson House, Chelford) spent £1 and Mr. Ford (Parkfield, Wilmslow) £10.

Most of the entries in the ledger are for “goods”, which could include all sorts of sundry items as well as plants, but others are for labour.

Interestingly, this is spelled “labor” throughout. Then there were the entries which read as “laborite”. What could these be? Was it some sort of code to indicate who the labourer was? Eventually there was an entry where it was more clearly written. Not “laborite”, but two words joined together, “labor, etc” – presumably meaning compost, weedkiller and insecticide. That made more sense.

There were several Knutsford customers who used Caldwell's as a gardening service; others used them to supplement their own gardener, perhaps where extra work was required, for specialist work or possibly while the gardener was away sick or on holiday. There were two other types of entry. One was “contract”, which I take to mean that Caldwell's was doing hard landscaping, probably to their own design. The other was “decorating”.

Some of the contracts were relatively modest sums (though may have been only the last payment, with the rest being in a missing ledger), while others were considerably larger. Victor O'Neill of Danemere in Hale paid more than £100 for the contract and £400 for plants and other items. His gardener was a Mr. Seymour and Caldwell's provided a bit of extra labour; in just one year O'Neill spent the equivalent of £200,000 on his garden.

There were 23 customers with contracts, but only five paid for decorating. There's no further information, but I assume it must have meant providing a temporary display, either in the house or the garden (or both), for a special occasion – perhaps a birthday or a wedding.

It was interesting to note the number of people who changed addresses. Not particularly surprising, as this was a time when nearly 80% of the population rented their homes. Generally, the move was in the same or a similar locality and may have been an indication of increasing wealth or status. Dr. Carver moved from The Meadows in Alderley Edge to Mobberley Old Hall.

Moves may also have been dictated by a change in family circumstance: perhaps a husband had died and left the widow less well off. Mrs. Close-Brooks of Overton House, Heaton, nr. Bolton moved to Glenham Grove, Saxmundham, Suffolk; with her husband away in the war (he was at Ypres, and died in January 1917), it was only natural that she should return to her family home.

Another customer who moved a long distance was Richard Hartley of Ollerton. Between May 1913 and March 1916 he spent more than £130 on his garden, but between June 1916 and June 1917, his address changed to Carnford Cliffs, near Bournemouth. The place was close to the sea, so possibly he only went for his health and the change of address was temporary.

With so few addresses outside of Cheshire and Lancashire, it was a bit of a shock to come across

Dr. Hamman of Taber, Alberta. Naturally, I googled the name and discovered that he had been both a teacher and a doctor. At the age of 22 he had been teaching in Manitoba while studying for his medical degree. He came back to Britain to do further study at both Edinburgh and Glasgow before returning to Canada and becoming a doctor in Taber. Quite a guy. Why did he purchase from Caldwell? Who knows, but he was born in Knutsford in 1866, which would make him a contemporary with Arthur Caldwell. What did he buy? Again, who knows? But the goods were to the value of £4 5s and carriage cost a further £2 19s 9d!

There's so much more I could write about – like the landscape gardeners, nurserymen and florists who purchased from Caldwell's, but perhaps we'll keep that for another day.

Joy Uings

Cheshire Gardens Trust winter talks

We are going virtual!

In recent months you will have received details in the Newsletter that the Gardens Trust has arranged a series of talks on line through the medium of Zoom, and some of the regional Gardens Trusts have followed their example.

We have decided therefore to arrange a series of five on-line talks over the winter months, starting on **9th November**. All these talks are **free** and will be held virtually through the medium of **Zoom**, starting at **2pm**, lasting for about an hour and half.

The first three talks are detailed as follows:

Monday 9th November, Ed Bennis, A Factory Garden



Our CGT Chairman Ed Bennis has chosen the topic, A Factory Garden, detailing the work of the esteemed landscape architect, Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe, one of the most respected landscape architects of the 20th century, focusing on his design of the landscape of the Cadbury Factory (1952), later Burton Foods.

Historic England has recently recognised this

factory garden as one of the most important post-war industrial landscapes in the UK with Grade II status. Jellicoe created a site layout where his use of water was an art form in the modernist tradition of the post-war period. He advanced his theories on perspective and illusion which are seen in a unique water canal or moat that contains ten pools, nine cascades and four viewing platforms. There were major challenges to create this feature, principally a nearly flat/level site which he successfully addressed with some very clever detailing.

Monday 23rd November David Cash, An Architect's Dozen



Inside the conservatory at Gardens by the Bay in Singapore.

David Cash is a member of the CGT Council of Management. His extensive career was highlighted recently in the Newsletter. Having travelled widely around the world through both work and pleasure, David has had the

opportunity to visit a wide variety of gardens. Both historic and modern, they reflect a wide range of different cultures, styles and locations. David's talk will focus on his personal top twelve world gardens - viewed from an architect's perspective.

Monday 11th January Simon Gulliver, John Claudius Loudon, botanist and garden designer, and his wife Jane Webb



Following Simon's excellent talk on Ernest Wilson in spring of 2019, Simon was due to return to share his enthusiasm for a Victorian gardening double act of a lady gardener and science fiction novelist and her Scottish landscape gardening husband. Unfortunately this talk scheduled in March had to be cancelled due to COVID and the resulting lockdown. We are pleased, however, that Simon is willing to deliver this talk virtually.

Loudon designed Birmingham Botanical Gardens, and Derby Arboretum, the first public park and

published the first gardening periodical. He was influential in many ways and established the accepted norm of modern gardening. Jane continued his publishing enterprise, wrote the first book for lady gardeners and began the tradition of influential women gardeners.

Further details of the last two talks in the series will be given in the next edition of the Newsletter and will be on the following dates:

Monday 22nd February Martin Fish, Behind the scenes as an RHS Judge at Chelsea and other important garden shows

Monday 15th March, Margie Hoffnung, The Gardens Trusts' work and their on-going development

So book all these dates in your diary! We do hope to "see" you! If you would like to attend, please email Margaret Blowey (rhbmeh@aol.com) with the details of which talks you would like to take part in and you will be sent a zoom link, together with some helpful notes on the use of zoom, in advance of each meeting.

And for those of you who have not used zoom before, it is easy to use - all you need is a wifi connection and an email address!

We look forward to hearing from you.

Margaret Blowey, CGT Events Team

Other forthcoming events

Tatton Park

Two exhibitions in the Mansion, until Sunday 1st November:

Japanese garden: Legacy of Alan de Tatton

Showing the inspiration behind Tatton Park's Japanese Garden, its construction and legacy.

Behind the Lens: Photography of Maurice, Lord Egerton

A collection of the last Lord Egerton's photographs, taken during his travels.

Book online for mansion, free for NT members + £7 for 1 car entry to Parkland

<http://www.tattonpark.org.uk/home.aspx>

Arley Hall and Gardens, CW9 6NA

25th October 11am – 12.30 pm, Mushroom walk, call 01565 777 353 Ext 20 to book

5th/6th, December, Christmas wreath making workshops with Gordon Baillie, Arley's Head gardener www.arleyhallandgardens.com

Dorothy Clive Gardens, Market Drayton, TF9 4EU

17th/18th October NGS Open Day, 10am-4pm, booking essential <https://ngs.org.uk> – West Midlands area

25th October 1.30-3.30, Walk and talk Autumn Colour, Pre book, 6 places only

22nd November 10am – 3pm

Pruning day with the Head gardener, Zdenek Valkoun-Walker, £45 per person + entry fee of £5 for non-members. To book call 01630 647237

The Gardens Trust

The Gardens Trust has been organising a whole series of online talks. These are some that are still bookable over the coming months

Winter Lecture Series 2020/21 in conjunction with The London Gardens Trust

Mondays once a fortnight, 5th October till 22nd March 6pm-7pm, £40 for the full season or £4 individual talks. Topics include George London,

Joseph Banks and the designed landscapes of London and environs

Floreat: roots and branches that flourished in the Classical World

From Eden, through Ancient Greece, to Ancient Rome, Thursday mornings throughout October £20 for the complete course

Planning Training

Our historic designed landscapes can be vulnerable from a range of threats. What can we do to help protect them for the future? The Gardens Trust has organised a series of free training sessions, two are still available

3. Setting 12th October 2pm-3pm
4. Significance 2nd November 2pm-3pm

Book online

<http://thegardenstrust.org/events-archive/?events=gardenstrust>

Surrey Gardens Trust

Kiftsgate – Three generations of Women Gardeners, Saturday 17th October, 2.30pm

Book online

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/kiftsgate-three-generations-of-women-gardeners-tickets-122213490841>

Percy Cane, Garden Designer



Several of us took advantage of the Gardens Trust online talks on Great Gardeners of the 20th century. Amongst all the more familiar names, such as Percy Thrower and Beth Chatto, there was a name unknown to most of us, Percy Cane (above), garden designer, a real unsung hero. Jill Sinclair, a director of the Historic Gardens Foundation and a tutor on English Landscape Gardens, was the speaker.

Percy Cane was born in 1881; he was 19 when Queen Victoria died. He lived through both World Wars, the Cold War and was working well into the 1960s. He died in 1976, an incredible life span.

He was born Stephen Percival Cane and grew up at Bocking Mill near Braintree in Essex. He initially worked with his father as a miller. In 1903 he went to work at Crittall Metal Casements and stayed there for 5 years. He then set up as a nurseryman, selling seeds and seed potatoes. At the same time he began studying art at Chelmsford College of Science and Art.

At the outbreak of WWI he was not conscripted but he started to write articles for *My Garden*, the start of his garden writing career. After the war at the age of 40 he studied at Chelmsford County School of Horticulture (now Writtle College). He then launched himself as a garden designer. He had close links with the RHS, becoming a Fellow in 1915. He began exhibiting at Chelsea in 1921, followed by Show Gardens, winning eight gold medals. He was awarded the Veitch Memorial Medal in 1963 when he was in his mid 70s.

Percy continued to write throughout his career. He published four books on horticulture: *Modern Gardens: British and Foreign* in 1927, *Garden Design of To-day* in 1934, *The Earth Is My Canvas* in 1956 and *The Creative Art of Garden Design* in 1967. He also owned and edited the horticultural magazines *My Garden, Illustrated* (1918–20) and *Garden Design* (1930–38).

He was influenced by Harold Peto and his characteristic design style includes courtyards, glades and sculptures.

Jill highlighted 10 projects during his life time, including:

Sharnden Manor in Sussex, with terraces and wide stone steps, celebrating the local view.

Ivy House in Hampstead for the famous ballerina Anna Pavlova, where he created a pond for her pet swans.

Taptonville Road in Sheffield, probably the smallest property, where Cane designed a garden round a Victorian villa. It became a library in the 1950s and is now being restored by a community group.

Hascombe Court, Godalming, a Lutyens style house with 30 acres of ground, with a formal pool garden, terraces, a rock garden, rhododendron walks and spectacular views. Gertrude Jekyll was also involved. The current owners are now restoring the property, including a makeover from Tom Stuart Smith.

The Ridings, near Hanger Lane in Ealing, a very modern property and garden (unusual for Percy Cane) in 1930s style

Dartington Hall, probably the most famous of all his post war work. There he created steps and terraces, such as the magnolia walk, to open up a series of vistas. Dan Pearson is now working on restoration there

Jubilee Palace, Ethiopia, built to celebrate the Silver Jubilee of the Emperor Haile Selassie, perhaps the most unusual of all his commissions.

There isn't a great deal written about Percy Cane, he certainly deserves to be better known, but David Marsh has done a couple of fascinating blogs on the Gardens Trust website with a great



The Azalea Dell, Dartington Hall, Derek Harper

deal more information

<https://thegardenstrust.blog/2019/10/19/an-unsung-hero/>

<https://thegardenstrust.blog/2019/10/26/percy-cane/>

Sue Eldridge

Appreciating 'the smaller things' in life.....from a correspondent in the North

Some of you may know that we moved to the east side of Cumbria, between the Lakes and the Dales, about 15 months ago. We thought you may like to read about some of our experiences and observations so far, including during lockdown.



Why we moved here

The ornamental front garden has a sound design structurally and in the majority of the planting, but was badly in need of maintenance. The kitchen garden was even more so when we arrived; the home-spun raised beds are still falling apart but at least we have wrestled the weeds in the fruit cage to the ground. It was a cube of nettles into which we literally strimmed and hacked our way. We have worked through fruit

trees and climbers all of which needed 'restorative pruning' at the relevant time.

We also observed differences from Cheshire that were a pleasant surprise, considering we were much further north. Firstly a loamy soil, which is a joy to handle compared to the clay of West Cheshire; the latter was only just becoming manageable when we left it, after 20 years of compost. We also used to be in a surprisingly exposed spot; we had a good view of Moel Famau and the wind to go with it. In Cumbria we are tucked into the shelter of the Lune valley, and most frosts seem to roll down to the river a field



Finding the shed under Hydrangea petiolaris

away, evidenced by two large Japanese Maples that could be 80 years old.

This time last year, what we'd taken on was beginning to sink in rather rapidly. As well as the garden there is a small wood which runs up the hill from the house. For me, owning woodland for the first time not just managing it on behalf of clients, was particularly exciting. However in late summer we saw that not only was the predominantly Ash woodland colonised by the invasive non-native, Himalayan Balsam (fixable by hand-weeding albeit time-consuming); but also Ash dieback had completely infected the wood within a few weeks (not really fixable at all).



Before; dying and unthinned Ash

The aggression of the disease was probably exacerbated by the high density of the trees; they were very 'drawn' because they had not been thinned since they were planted over thirty years ago. For example some of the trees on the outside of the wood were healthier than those inside. After a few weeks of feeling depressed about it all, we realised that the Ash dieback was a great opportunity; not only to thin the woodland, but to do it sooner than we had anticipated, so that we could begin to turn the woodland round faster.

Instead of a dark, weedy, claustrophobic area filled with dying, lanky trees, we could retain the healthy specimens (Oak, Alder, Mountain Ash) and it could be open and light-dappled with shrubs and wildflowers. With some expenditure and much skilled help, this is what we are already beginning to achieve. Even I am amazed at the transformation. It is now also possible to see and appreciate some of the original features. There is a very old hedgerow (which we have not laid) on a bank covered in Bluebells, Primroses and other wildflowers this Spring. It contains two large, aged Crab Apples, one pollarded, the other laid long ago, both still producing copious amounts of fruit.



After: seeing the trees not the wood

Having the other hedges laid by a champion, and evangelical, hedge-layer has also let more light into the wood. One of the most pleasant surprises has been how skilled people turn up when they say they will and do good quality work, which had not often been our experience. Since much of the work was outside, including giving an annex a new life as somewhere for friends and guests to stay, it could be done in isolation. We have completed far more than we anticipated by this stage.

And what about all the inspiration beyond our boundaries? We have done some walking locally such as nearby sections of the Dalesway (<http://www.dalesway.org/route.html>), and garden visiting, but obviously not as much as we'd hoped to places that are now so much closer. We still have all the 'big-name' gardens to look forward to - Levens, Sizergh, Blackwell, Rydal Hall, Rydal Mount, Gresgarth, Holker, Lowther etc.

One garden we did discover before lockdown was Holehird (below), the gardens of the Lakeland Horticultural Society, completely managed and maintained by volunteers. It is an inspiration. (<http://holehirdgardens.org.uk/>).



*Holehird in 2019, on the left *Euchryphia glutinosa* in flower; inspired, we have planted one in our garden*

So where could we get garden inspiration during lockdown? Horticulture in public open spaces did continue to be maintained by volunteers, for example in our nearest town centre of Sedbergh and in its community orchard, and not least along the promenade at Grange-over-Sands.

(<https://www.grangeoversandstowncouncil.gov.uk/>)

A strip squeezed between the prom and the railway doesn't sound a very promising location. But Grange is such a sheltered location and the Civic Society must have some very keen (and competitive) gardeners. Over a mile is filled with interest; not large swathes of the same shrub, but proper, detailed gardening with herbaceous, bulbs and year-round interest. They are a delight and appreciated by many people every day. And the teashops have now re-opened!

We have had a lot to do, for which we are particularly grateful this year. I imagine we've all felt similar things; it's 'the small' but fundamental things that keep us going, the solace of a garden,



The promenade gardens maintained by Grange Civic Society

the tranquility that space brings, and the community that is evident every day in public spaces like Grange.

If you'd like to visit our corner of Cumbria and some more northerly gardens, you would be very welcome to stay in our cottage. For details see <https://www.theroostcottage.co.uk/>.

Maria Bull

Book Reviews



John Tradescant the Elder, portrait attributed to Cornelis de Neve

***Strange Blooms: The Curious Lives and Adventures of the John Tradescants* by Jennifer Potter**

This is not a new book but has been sitting on my bookshelves for some time. It is the story of the Tradescants, father and son, two astonishing men, gardeners and plant hunters extraordinaire in the seventeenth century, set against a history of turmoil, religious differences, the establishment of the New World and the English Civil War.

The Tradescants were gardeners for some of the most powerful men in the kingdom; Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury; George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham; and Charles I and his queen,

Henrietta Maria.

John Tradescant the Elder (1570-1638) was born in East Anglia. He established himself early in his life as gardener and then head gardener to Robert Cecil at Hatfield House (below). In 1607 he married Elizabeth in Kent and she gave birth to their only son John a year later. He travelled to France, Belgium and Italy and brought back a wealth of plants including cherries, quince, mulberries, tulips and orange trees.



In 1612 Cecil died and after two years Tradescant moved with his family to Canterbury to Edward Lord Wotton at St Augustine's Abbey. While there he travelled to Russia, right up to the Arctic Circle and then with the British Fleet to the Mediterranean to crush the Barbary pirates, bringing back a lot of treasures to add to his growing collection of curiosities.

Tradescant then went to garden for James I's favourite, the very powerful George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham. In his late 50s John Tradescant embarked on his last foreign mission with Buckingham, to France. Buckingham was killed and Tradescant embarked on a new project.

This was establishing his own garden and Ark of Curiosities in South Lambeth. Then came the crowning appointment of his career, gardening for King Charles I and Queen Henrietta Maria at Oatlands Palace, helped by his son John.

The younger John Tradescant (1608-1662) left school at 14 in 1623, married Jane in 1628, who sadly died in 1635 leaving him with two small children. The younger John sailed for Virginia, but in the meantime the elder John died.

The younger John left no diary so we can only guess at his travels. But he did bring back some important trees, *Taxodium distichum*, *Platanus occidentalis* and the tulip tree, *Liriodendron tulipifera*. As well as plants he brought back interesting artefacts which found their way into the Ark, such as the cloak attributed to Powhatan, Pocahontas's father, now in the Ashmolean museum.

On his return young John went to work at Oatlands and married for a second time, Hester Pookes in 1638. But this was the time of the Civil War. The King was executed and John lost his job. He was no longer a royal gardener. He retreated to South Lambeth to look after the Ark, which had become quite a visitor attraction and tend his garden. At this stage Elias Ashmole put in an appearance, apparently cheating the Tradescants out of the Ark and its legacy. Young John died in 1662, age 53. A rather sad end to an incredible career. Whatever the rights and wrongs, a large legacy was left to the nation and both Tradescants are remembered.

This was an interesting, but not an easy read; just as well we were in lockdown. There is a great deal of detail and a lot of supposition and it is sometimes difficult to see the wood for the trees.

Philippa Gregory's Books

But if you want a more lively description of the Elder and Younger Tradescants, then turn to Philippa Gregory. She has written a pair of novels about the elder Tradescant, '*Earthly Joys*' and the younger Tradescant '*Virgin Earth*'. These are novels, so much is made up, especially the whole episode of the younger Tradescant's life with the native Indians in Virginia. But the background of the historical period, with plague and hunger,

King James and his allies, King Charles I and his Roman Catholic wife, are well done, as are the descriptions of the gardens, the Ark and the plants.

The Tradescants are buried in the family tomb (below), commissioned by Hester Pookes at the Church of St Mary-at-Lambeth, now the Garden Museum.



If you want further information on the Tradescants, the blog on the Gardens Trust website <https://thegardenstrust.blog/2020/04/25/the-tradescants/> is informative and well illustrated.

Sue Eldridge

Growing up with Foreigners by Peter Frank.

I have just finished reading this book which documents the fascinating lives of Peter Frank's parents, who separately fled Europe at the outbreak of World War II. Henry and Christine met and married in Devon and looked for ways to support a family. As a refugee Henry worked on several farms and nurseries in Devon and Hampshire. He took a correspondence course with the RHS and secured a job as head gardener for a lieutenant-colonel in Denbighshire. From there the family moved to Warburton, near Lymm, where Henry managed a plant nursery owned by the Cooperative Wholesale Society. From 1953 and 1978, Henry and Christine Frank ran Marbury Hall Nurseries and had a stall on Northwich Market. The story is both entertaining and moving.

The book is published by Pegasus and is available from most book suppliers.

Mary Jeeves

Other horticultural books out now:

100 20th Century Gardens and Landscapes, 20th Century Society

American Gardens, Monty Don and Derry Moore

The Gardens Trust's response to the National Trust's vision

Extracts from TGT's new chair, Peter Hughes' statement of 10 September 2020:

'Gardens Trust and County Gardens Trust members will have been reading with grave concern the recent comment and analysis in the media following the leak of a draft National Trust paper, 'Towards a 10-year Vision for Places and Experiences'. The exposure of this apparent new direction for the National Trust has rung alarm bells through the heritage sector. The glaring lack of reference to conservation as a guiding principle and clear suggestion that landscapes should be free from 'existing styles and expectations' has worrying connotations for future protection....

The National Trust (NT) is custodian of in excess of 200 of these nationally important registered landscapes (just a part of its wider portfolio of over 250 parks and gardens) and the largest number of historic parks in single ownership in Europe....

In recent years, the GT has, however, found it necessary to object strongly to proposed development within these landscapes where it is apparent that it is designed principally to extend visitor attraction while detrimental to the aesthetic and cultural impact and

reading of the historic designed landscape....

The GT will continue its essential work as statutory consultee. Our response will continue to be on a case by case basis, but we will robustly defend our ethos. With much reduced resource in the NT, we would ask our members and those of the County Gardens Trusts to engage with their local NT contacts to ensure that we do everything that we can to help keep the essential curatorial research-based understanding of the significance of these treasured places high on the agenda in this debate. This is important in relation to NT parks and gardens of local interest and significance as well as those which are on the National Heritage List Register of Parks and Gardens.'

The NT's discussion paper clearly gives rise to great concern and emphasises the importance of the Conservation Role of all County Gardens Trusts. Please get in touch if you feel strongly about this issue and may be able to assist Cheshire Gardens Trust's small and busy Conservation Group: planning@cheshire-gardens-trust.org.uk

Cwm Dyli Power Station and Pipeline – Snowdonia



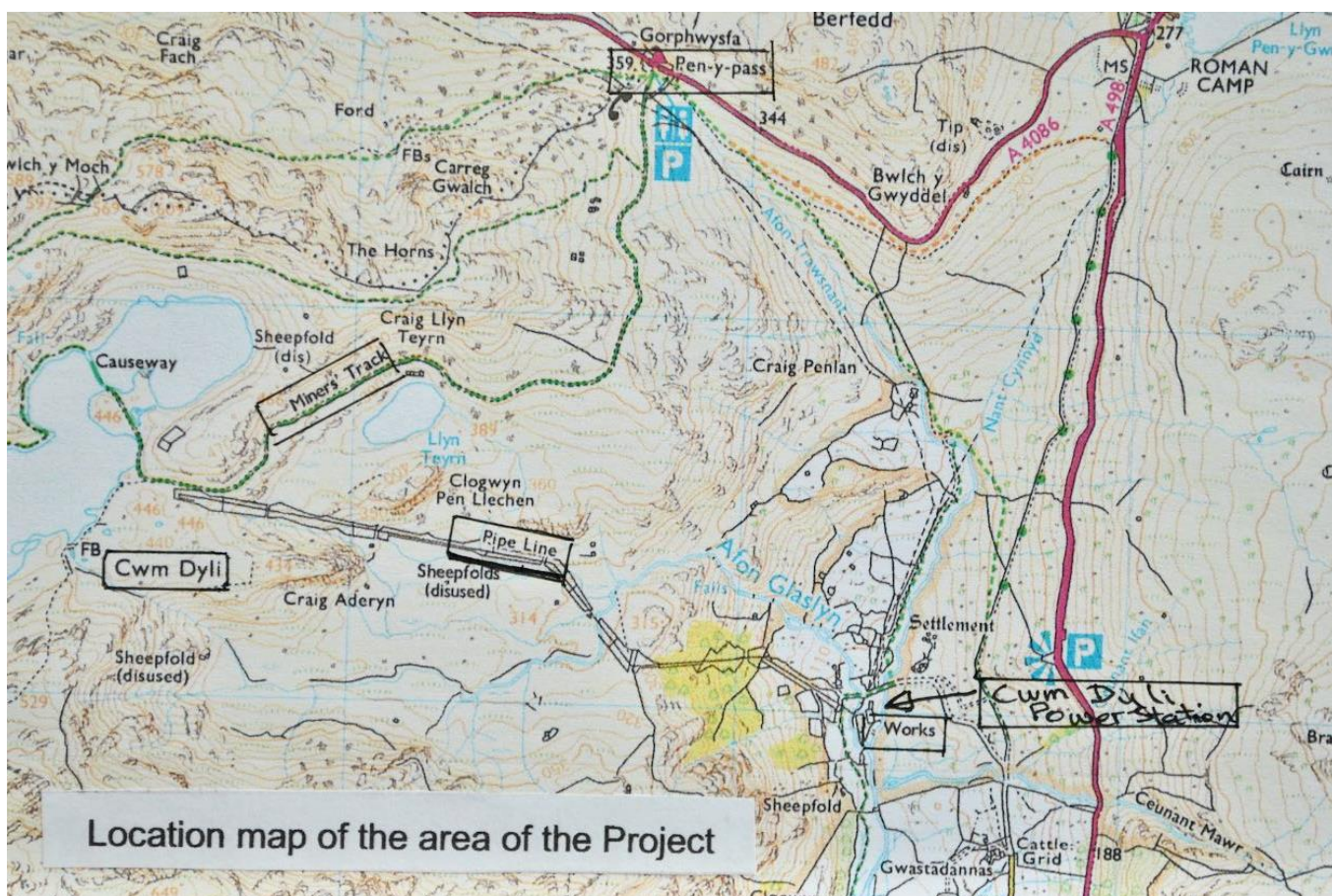
Late summer 1989 prior to commencing the project

The RHS has recently produced a series of films showing different horticultural career paths, following a survey that highlighted that almost a third of people questioned confessed that not knowing enough about careers in our industry was the main reason for not working in horticulture. With this in mind, the following article I hope shares with you the sector of the industry I chose to be part of for the best part of fifty years.

The chosen project, the restoration works on the Cwm Dyli pipeline was undertaken thirty years ago at a period in my life when I was employed as Regional Contracts Manager for the Economic Forestry Group (EFG), whose principal workload was the growing, planting and harvesting of forestry trees nationally, and restoration and reclamation works of derelict areas into landscaped areas.

Known locally as the “Chapel in the Valley”, Cwm Dyli Power Station itself has an interesting history, not only being Britain's oldest power station, but believed to be one of the oldest grid connected hydro-electric stations in the world. Built initially in 1905, to supply electricity for a proposed railway company serving quarries and mines in the area, it was a year later used to supply power for the Oakeley Quarry in Blaenau Ffestiniog.

The water for the power station comes mainly from the Llyn Llydaw, a reservoir situated some 320 metres above the Station where rainfall is



consistently very high and is carried down via a 2 kilometres long pipeline. The Power Station was closed in 1990 for upgrading works and the installation of a single turbine. The existing pipeline had been removed and replaced in 1989 by a new pipeline painted with Royal Navy paint "Battleship Grey", leaving the ground restoration works awaiting urgent attention.



Late summer 1989 prior to commencing the project

Cwm Dyli is without doubt Snowdon's most impressive and dramatic valley, set in an environmentally sensitive area (SSSI). Prior to any site works taking place, there had been strong arguments over whether the old existing

pipeline should be dismantled and removed off site and should the new pipeline be buried and hidden from view in a trench and backfilled. Thankfully the chosen construction method - above ground - was from a ground restoration aspect in my opinion the correct decision.

Due to its location and the climatic conditions of the region, the pipeline Main Contractor would have found the work crossing boggy/peaty trackless ground, very difficult for the use of the heavy plant and machinery required for the trenching method, which would have severely destroyed the soil structures and made restoration even more difficult.

The initial contact for our involvement with the restoration works was made at our Carmarthen Office with Vince Jones, Director of Operations in Wales by Wyn Thomas on whether we would be interested in such a challenging job in North Wales.

The responsibility for the project had been entrusted to Wyn Thomas & Partners, a multi-disciplinary practice based in Cardiff headed by the respected and inspirational Wyn Thomas OBE, who sadly died in 2017. He was a Town Planner, Architect and Landscape Architect well experienced in restoration projects on open cast coal and reclamation sites in South Wales, fluent Welsh speaker and serving member on the Prince of Wales Committee.

After a few lengthy phone calls with Vince we considered that we certainly had the office, the storage facilities and the backup management skills at our Forestry Regional Office at Bala. This included a reliable workforce albeit forestry trained but used to working when required in all conditions. All we seemed to be missing was a site agent who could manage such a sensitive contract and all the problems which would occur on a daily basis.

EFG had been made very aware from our first involvement with the restoration project that both the renewal of the pipeline and the upgrading of the Power Station had been very controversial.

So started the process of tendering, budget costs, method statements etc and finally submitting a tender value based on a good guess on what the work would involve. A few days later we were meeting up with Wyn Thomas at the Site Office, left by the main contractor, discussing our strategy for carrying out the work and our

programme.

Later in the day we met up with the Park Ranger (Ellis) who through contacts arranged for a RAF helicopter to airlift the site materials from the Rangers car park area at Pen-y-Pass to various areas along the pipeline.

Again, with Wyn Thomas's assistance we obtained the services when required of Dr Edwards, a Botanist from Bangor University, to help in identifying the vegetation we could use from adjacent areas.

The scope of work entailed general tidying especially around the concrete anchor blocks, re-channelling water courses, re-building and repairs to tumbledown stone walling and repairing areas of the natural vegetation damaged by the Main Contractor's machinery. We were requested only to use any form of powered vehicle or machinery as a last resort. **To be continued in the next edition of the newsletter.**

Gordon J Darlington
Member of CoM and events Team

The Sandstone Ridge needs your help



Northern Gateway to the Sandstone Ridge

Volunteers of The Sandstone Ridge are currently working on all sorts of desk top initiatives, one of which relates to the rock-cut garden and park features, previously observed during various field visits.

There is a pattern of caves, follies and alcoves

along old panoramic walks that probably dates back to the eighteenth century and which deserves to be recognised and better understood. For more information see their website:

<https://www.sandstoneridge.org.uk>

If you have a specific interest in this topic or have seen other similar features that could be incorporated in a useful review, please contact:

The Sandstone Ridge Trust
Tattenhall Library
Chester Road
Tattenhall, Cheshire
CH3 9AH
or email:
info@sandstoneridge.org.uk

Keep your eyes open for the new Cheshire Gardens Trust website (www.cheshire-gardens-trust.org.uk). It has been undergoing extensive updating over the last few months. The new site will be open soon, though there will still be a lot of development work to do. Thanks in particular to Ed Bennis, Sue Bartlett and Gareth and Robert Whitehead at Roxbury Dynamic. We hope you like the new look.

Copy date for January newsletter is 31st December 2020

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