



Lancashire Gardens Trust NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 10 SPRING 2012

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J M W TURNER, LANCASHIRE AND THE PICTURESQUE

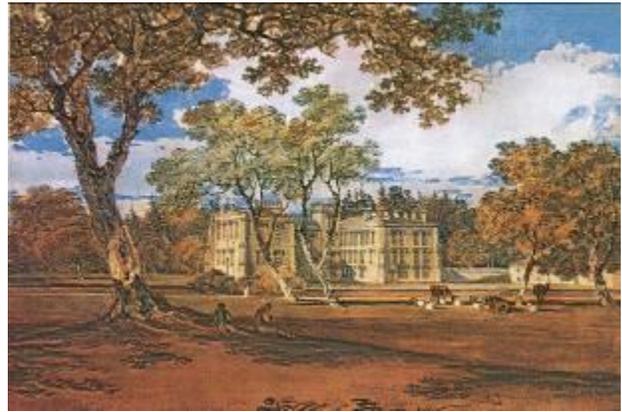
We have visited Towneley, Stonyhurst, Browsholme and The Holme, Cliviger and all have one factor in common, they were visited by Britain's greatest landscape painter, James Mallord William Turner R.A.(1775-1851).

He achieved early fame as an architectural draughtsman, basing his style on that of Piranesi; he made sketches and watercolours of antiquities, ruined abbeys, castles and seats of the nobility for topographical histories; he provided views of market towns, rivers and coastal scenes for illustrated guide books, popular with the new tourists.



Turner
Sketched by
C. Martin

All of this work resulted from long and arduous journeys on horseback, exploring the hills and valleys, lakes and rivers of Britain, following Picturesque guide books such as those by Rev. William Gilpin (1824-1804).



Towneley Hall, watercolour, 1799

Gilpin's definition of Picturesque scenery was simply that which was fit for a picture, and his books guided the tourist to the best places, and taught them how to view the scene. He wrote about the Wye valley, Wales, Scotland, Westmorland and Cumberland, his birth place, and the New Forest, his home. It is known that Turner used these books, but he hardly needed Gilpin's lessons on how to compose a scene.

Earlier artists had explored these routes in search of topographical subjects; Thomas Hearne's delicate representations of landscape had shown a pioneering feeling for nature which was in harmony with the new Romanticism; a work of art should stir our emotions. Hearne was invited by Richard Payne Knight to make sketches of the woods round Downton, Herefordshire, where Knight had created a landscape in the Picturesque manner,

and the resulting pictures show just how jagged and ragged Knight's version of the Picturesque could be. We have here the connection between the two art forms, painting and landscape gardening. Wild nature could be brought within reach, in a garden.

In his early career Turner earned his living by painting in the Picturesque manner, and soon became known as the best. When Rev Thomas D Whitaker of The Holme, Cliviger, told his friend and neighbour Charles Towneley of his intention to write a topographical history, *The History of Whalley* (pub. 1800-1), Towneley was responsible for inviting Turner to do some of the illustrations and Basire to do the engravings. We learn of the artist's firm preference for the new fashion in garden design by an argument which arose over the choice of view for Gawthorpe Hall; he was given a painting of the Hall which showed a walled garden in front of the house, its central path leading from a gate to the front door and geometrical flower beds lined on either side. He refused to copy it, and Towneley declaimed 'the youthful irritability of genius'. This first tour of northern England and Wales took place in 1797 and in the Lancs and N W sketchbook (TB XLV) he amassed the careful sketches, pictorial 'notes' for the future 'worked-up' paintings done in the studio. The origins of his future working patterns were established in these early northern tours.

Among the 10 watercolours made for the *History* are those of Browsholme, Towneley Hall and Stonyhurst, all of them superbly engraved by J. Basire. The colours for Browsholme are warm russets and blues; it was the end of the summer when the Whalley scenes were sketched, and the burnt grass and leaves, the half-opened windows and drawn blinds suggest that it had been a dry summer.



Browsholme Hall, watercolour 1799

Thomas Lister Parker's father, John, had accompanied Gilpin on some of his tours. The Towneley pencil sketch is a carefully observed composition; sufficient details of the architecture and trees are indicated but the middle distance and foreground figures are missing – they were added to the final watercolour. His method of adding figures, cattle and other incidents such as smoke plumes and fishing nets, is widely used in the northern sketches, and shows some influence from Dutch 17th century landscapes. The brownish shades of early autumn contrast with a blue and white sky.



Stonyhurst, engraved 1830, for *Picturesque Views of England and Wales*

The Stonyhurst subject shows a marked difference between the formality of the twin canals with a central drive between them, and the impression Turner gives; he has chosen to show only one canal, and managed to give it a curved appearance, making it appear more like

a pond. The tenets of the Picturesque were at the forefront of his mind.

In his book *Observations relative chiefly to Picturesque Beauty (made in 1772) in the Mountains of Cumberland and Westmorland* (pub. London 1786) Gilpin wrote of the lake Derwentwater:

He who is in quest of the picturesque scenes of the lake, must travel along the rough side-screens that adorn it; and catch its beauties as they arise in smaller portions – its little bays and winding shores – its deep recesses and hanging promontaries – its garnished rock and distant mountain. These are in general the picturesque scenes which it affords.

He did not favour wide stretches of water, since they were lacking in 'accompaniments', or the little details which give variety and break up a large expanse; a smooth, open expanse of water could be enlivened by a reflection such as a bridge or by the sails of a boat. All these devices Turner used to imbue a scene with detail and humanity.

When Whitaker embarked upon an even greater project, a complete history of the entire county of Yorkshire, he intended to embrace all the districts from Furness in the west to Northumberland in the east, claiming that all this was in Norman Yorkshire! Joseph Farington, a fellow Academician with Turner, wrote in his diary that Turner had been engaged to do the illustrations for 3,000 guineas for 120 drawings. By now aged 41 years, he was at the height of his career, well-travelled, a regular exhibitor at the Royal Academy and sought after by wealthy patrons. The publisher Longman agreed to Whitaker's project on condition that Turner provide the drawings, since these had been the chief attraction of the previous Histories. In the end, only one part was completed, *The History of Richmondshire* (pub. 1819) for which Turner provided 20 paintings at 25 guineas each, whilst the engravers received 80 guineas each.

His tour of Lancashire, Yorkshire and Northumberland started in August 1816, covered 550 miles and lasted 4 weeks. By now

he had left behind the simple, prescriptive tenets of the Picturesque and had established



Hornby Castle, pencil sketch 1816

his own ways of imbuing landscape with emotion and deeper meaning; he noted to Farington before his second northern tour in 1799 that in order to complete his portfolio prior to consideration for election to the Royal Society of Arts, he was travelling north *in search of sublimities*. (definition: *sublime – high: lofty; majestic; awakening feelings of awe or veneration*). The Society held landscape painting in low regard, and Turner was determined to elevate it to a position of esteem; James Thomson's poem *The Seasons* inspired him to interpret the many forces of nature through his landscapes and seascapes, and we see the wonderful effects of light in his rainbows, storms, sunsets and frost. The early patronage of a group of friends in northern England, Thomas Lister Parker, Charles Towneley, Walter Fawkes of Farnley Hall and Thomas Whitaker of Cliviger, was the spur which filled his early sketch-books with inspiring subjects amid the rivers and valleys of the north.



Ingleborough from Hornby terrace, engr 1822

On the third tour he once again enjoyed the thrilling crossing of Morecambe Bay; then on to the Crook of Lune and Hornby Castle, at once an antiquity and an excellent Picturesque subject. His brief was to sketch the view from the castle terrace, and the view of the castle from the village of Tatham; Whitaker was enraptured by its setting: ... *it commands an enchanting view of the fine river under curving woods and diversified grounds, and terminated by the vast bulk of Ingleborough ... distinct and majestic.* The finished watercolour is lost, but the engraving by J. Archer conveys Turner's meaning; he liked to sketch at sunrise, and here there are clues to the stillness of the morning, because the trees are upright and we are encouraged to imagine the lowing of cattle, the hooting of a peacock and the rush of water in the river Wenning. This is not a wild landscape, it is 'dressed ground' and he shows us the carefully arranged park on one bank and the hanging woods on the other. The inclusion of the northeast terrace parapet in the foreground only emphasises more strongly the quality of this Picturesque composition, seen from an historic castle.

Turner and his fellow landscape watercolourists can be credited with enthusing landowners with a desire for wild nature, brought into their park and garden; the group of northern friends all became keen landscapists and spent much time and money planting trees on their estates and improving the vistas. They all purchased as many of his paintings as they could.

Elaine Taylor

THE HOLME, CLIVIGER



Rev Thomas D. Whitaker.

The LGT visit to Cliviger provided the opportunity to see a very special landscape and to hear the impressive results of Susan Barker's extremely thorough research into the Whitakers and the Holme estate. This report tries to present for the layman the key features of her talk.

The cultural development of this little-known area owes much to the Whitakers of Holme: they were the key local landlords from the 15th century, and married into the other prestigious local families – the Sherburnes of Stonyhurst, the Towneleys of Burnley and the Nowells of Read, all at least initially Catholic Recusant families. The Whitaker family careers included



The Holme, Cliviger, now roofless

the church and academic life, in many cases at Cambridge.

The development of the local landscape owes its biggest debt to Thomas Dunham Whitaker JP, LLD, FRS, FSA (1759-1821). Born the son of a curate in Norfolk, he succeeded to the Holme estate in 1782 at the age of 23! Destined for a career in the law, he inherited because of the deaths of his uncle and his elder brother. However, with his cultured background this younger son of a younger son set up a local 'Literary Society'. He married Lucy Thoresby, the daughter of a Leeds merchant, which may have helped to finance his development of the estate.

In some respects, his career was not untypical of the landed gentry of the time; he became the local Magistrate and took to writing histories of churches, houses and districts in the North. But he was also devout and took Holy Orders; he was successively vicar of Whalley, Heysham and Blackburn. Perhaps because of this, he successfully talked to Burnley miners to prevent a riot, rather than call out the militia, which many Magistrates would have done.

He is described as a modest, severe and demanding man who spoke with great eloquence and insight, if sometimes at great length. He spent significant funds on rebuilding the Holme Chantry Chapel to create an elegant local church in the then fashionable classical style, but still including the traditional family chapel, where he and his wife are buried. The last of the direct line of the Towneleys is also buried in this churchyard!



Estate walks are preserved over the tunnel

His most lasting contribution is, however, is to the local landscape. After a morning of study (normally including Tacitus) and writing, he would go out to view the substantial planting schemes he had instituted in the surrounding area. The estate he inherited had only a few acres of woodland; he passed it on, landscaped in a grand romantic style. He was clearly influenced by the contemporary love of enhanced natural landscape – wooded hillsides,

rocky outcrops, hidden gullies, winding paths. The topographical backdrop was of course in place, but Thomas D clothed it in trees, enhancing the natural landscape; he provided pathways and viewing points, where the soul could commune with Nature and perhaps communicate with God.

As a good landlord, he protected the village dwellings with hedgerows and coppices, but his main plantings were woods stretching up the gullies and valley sides. He favoured larches, rowans and birches. In 1794 he received a gold medal from the Society of Arts for planting 64,000 larches in blocks surrounded by walls or hedges. He probably created at least some of the fishponds, and may have created the kitchen gardens.

On Thomas's death in 1821, the estate passed to his 7 year-old grandson, Thomas Hordern Whitaker, to be held in Trust until he reached his majority (the boy's father having died aged 32). Thomas D's wife and daughter-in-law seem to have lived in the house at least some of the time during the grandson's minority, and this period seems to have inevitably been one of stasis and uncertainty.

The grandson, Thomas H, married twice (1847 and 1851) but both wives died within a year of marriage, and one daughter only survived. Thomas H appears not to have been a scholar; he did not take Holy Orders, but he was a committed local landowner and JP. He continued the planting and probably introduced Rhododendron tunnels, and improved pathway access of what was already a huge wooded area.



A glorious jumble of upper and lower storey growth

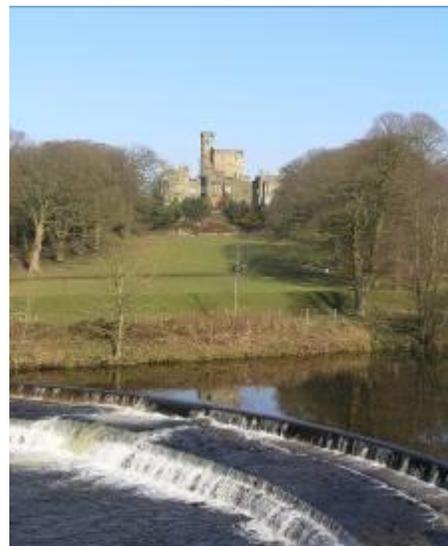
He preserved the estate during the advent of the railway and increasing road use, by providing estate paths under the road and ensuring similar access under the railway was built by the railway company. He bought land from the Towneley estate as that family became more London-focused. He also made improvements to the Hall through an extension at the back, which included family rooms, service rooms, and a coach house. He also built a stable block, smithy and joiners' shop, and sawpit. He was obviously trying to exploit the wood – the key asset of the estate. In fact, none of the larch trees remain.

By his death in 1889, he had consolidated a grand landscaped estate with a spacious historic house; unfortunately succeeding generations failed to make the estate viable. The last descendent sold in 1958, was cared for by the next owner but then fell into several unsuitable uses. Perhaps the dream of a landscaped estate in such a severe and beautiful setting never really was achievable.

Jeremy Rycroft

HORNBY CASTLE and SNOWDROPS

We were delighted to be able to have a private visit to the beautiful gardens and park by kind permission of Mr and Mrs Battersby, the next generation in ownership of this historic landmark in the Lune valley. It was much praised by Rev T D Whitaker in his *History of Richmondshire* (1819) '*Perhaps no situation in the northern dales can boast of equal fertility. Situated on a steep insulated hill, on a curvature of the Wenning, near its junction with the Lune, it commands an enchanting view of the fine river... In front is a long reach of the winding Lune, seen from a commanding elevation on the terrace in front of the castle, which ... surpasses that of Windsor in variety of landscape.* The castle is Listed Grade I and is in perpendicular style with origins in the 14th century; it has mullioned windows, a polygonal tower beside the ancient keep, embattled parapets, an oriel window, a narrow octagonal turret and a carved eagle's claw, the emblem of the 3rd Lord Monteagle, discoverer of the Gunpowder Plot.



Its southwest front is mid 19th century, in domestic gothic style with further additions in the late 19th century; both modifications, by Sharpe, Paley and Austin, harmonise well with the ancient fabric. Further Listed Buildings (Grade II) are the double gate piers and wing

walls attached to the gate-house; they are in sandstone ashlar with conical finials, and on each of the main faces is a carved roundel bearing the figures of a cat and a rat.

Also Listed are the monumental terrace walls; the front terrace is mentioned by Whitaker (above) and the walls seem like a fortification, plain and solid; beneath them are descending terraces, the flights of steps at each end, and sheltered against the might of the high wall a long herbaceous border promised a glorious show from early summer. The land beneath this is sculpted out of the sloping ground into smooth, level lawns and these were probably created when the re-modelling was done by the architects, Sharpe and Paley.

The rear, precipitous terrace (Grade II) scaling the steep slope behind the castle, was painted by Turner in 1816. This is the jewel of the garden; it was clearly intended to take advantage of the stunning view across the valley of the Wenning towards the village of Tatham; beneath lies the river, on one side a



Bastion on the NE terrace, overlooking Tatham

park planted with clumps of trees and specimens, and on the other side a curving plantation of trees forming a 'dressed' hillside. The valley is tranquil and picturesque, but standing on the parapet high above it makes the experience awesome and sublime. This northeast terrace emphasises its role, with a semi-circular bastion from which to experience the breath-taking vista; for cooler days there is

a summerhouse built into the wall and little stained glass windows colour the view. A flight of steps descend at least 12 feet to the next level, a sheltered border along a wall clothed by climbing plants – perfumed roses, honeysuckle and *Hydrangea petiolaris* in summer. Another descent of 12 feet takes the visitor down to a path, and the way towards the river; a delightful walk can be taken along its banks, among wild flowers and, in May flowering rhododendrons.



The lower walk, and summerhouse at the end

But this was February. We were there to see snowdrops, and were delighted to find long drifts of them on the steep embankments. Not only these were to be enjoyed; many different species have been planted in the borders, the rockery and along the paths. They were also for sale in the walled garden, now run as the nursery of husband and wife team 'Mary Green'. Our thanks to Ruth Thurnhill for arranging this fascinating visit and for her guided tour.

A short story of the snowdrop

Our own *Galanthus nivalis*, the single one, and *Galanthus flore pleno*, the double one, have been known in England since Tudor times; it is possible they were introduced by travellers and merchants bringing bulbs from Eastern Europe, the home of many of our hardy bulbs. Two more types arrived in the late 19th century, *G. plicatus* from the Crimea, having a pronounced

green blotch, and *G. elwesii* introduced by H J Elwes from Turkey and having wide, glaucous leaves. There are now hundreds of varieties, and the most exciting appearance is that of yellow markings and even yellow ovaries.



G. elwesii



G. nivalis flore pleno

Elaine Taylor

A FURTHER INSTALMENT of

NOTABLE LANCASTRIANS (by birth or adoption !)

In our series of Lancastrians noted for their talents in garden design and horticulture, the spotlight shines this time on **William Gould**, who in his will describes himself as:

Late Gardener to the first Emperor of all the Russias.

How did a gardener from Ormskirk, west Lancashire, come to work in Russia, and become celebrated there as the Russian Capability Brown ? He died in 1812 aged 77 and is buried in Ormskirk Parish Church; his early years were spent working at nearby Lathom House for Richard Wilbraham-Bootle, and he must have been employed in significant landscaping work, either here or elsewhere.



Prince Grigory Potemkin (1739-91)

He and 150 others answered an advertisement in an English newspaper, asking for gardeners and other craftsmen to work for Prince Grigory Potemkin; his application was apparently supported by Lancelot Brown.

The Prince was the lover, and supposedly the secret husband, of the Empress Catherine II 'the Great', and together they led the Russian craze, Anglomania. Catherine famously commissioned the 'Frog' china service from Wedgwood and Bentley, which depicted in 1,244 pieces views of English country houses and their landscape gardens. The china service is still consulted today by owners and researchers wishing to verify details of these gardens. The Prince initiated a huge recruitment drive to lure British experts to Russia, to reproduce the English Landscape Garden and the country house life-style over there, spread over his vast estates; some of these were bigger than an English county.



The Frog china

William was successful and left for Russia in 1776, aged 41; his first task was to lay out 60 acres of garden around the Taurida Palace, St. Petersburg, where Catherine and her children came to spend spring and autumn. The plan shows a winding river and an irregular-shaped lake, with picturesque features such as bridges, islands, a boat-house, cascades and a sunk fence (ha-ha) to separate the pleasure ground from the park. The functional sections (fruit and vegetable areas) are hidden by groves of trees and are more geometric in layout; the whole is intersected by winding walks through open lawns, small copses and larger plantations, and enclosed by a perimeter belt of trees in Brownian style. William's responsibilities extended to the fairy-tale Winter Garden where the glazed roof was supported by columns disguised as palms; statues, crystal vases, exotic fish, gravel walks and precious foreign plants created an atmosphere of opulence and wonder, and the lighting by night completed a romantic setting.



The Taurida Palace boating lake

William's second ambitious project was the creation of the English Park at Kremenchug in 1785. Catherine wrote: *I spent three days in a big, beautiful house near a wonderful oak grove and garden, I've never seen pear trees of such height and thickness.*

When Catherine and her Prince died, Paul I wanted to erase all his work and neglected the

Taurida gardens completely; a saddened William returned to Lancashire for a while, but



Taurida Palace garden, St Petersburg

on the accession of Alexander I he was invited to return and restore them. Not only that, but he was requested to mastermind the laying out of the Admiralty Gardens in St. Petersburg, a huge undertaking at his age. The site runs alongside the Admiralty buildings, covering 24 acres and here in 1805-06 Gould planned four rows of lime trees to complement the majestic classical architecture.

What was life like for a head gardener during the Russian Empire? It seems that William Gould enjoyed a place at court and took part in many lavish entertainments and journeys. He lived in style with servants and a carriage and horses of his own. He employed hundreds of workers in the gardens, organised travel details and comforts for the Prince which included creating temporary gardens in the places he visited. He was sent to inspect distant estates, Astrakhan, the Ukraine and Crimea, and when the Prince bought land in the south, William designed fashionable English-style landscape gardens to surround the palaces built there. He recounts that in one of these *the paths were covered with crushed shells, in order to prevent dust rising during Promenades*; here he planted



Catherine II

twenty thousand trees which were brought from Poland, the Crimea, Turkey and Voronezh. This garden still exists and after restoration now belongs to the local Agricultural Academy.

What has become of the other gardens?

Taurida has not fared well; wartime ravaged it but a restoration initiative in the 1960s improved the waterways. Today, the outline is visible but there is no maintenance, and the Winter Garden is a government office.

Kremenchug has been designated a 'protected area' recently and the current private owner has plans to restore it and improve its value to local citizens; apparently the mayor and civic leaders came to Britain to see examples of restoration work here.

William Gould had an illustrious career; he was appointed Imperial Gardener by Empress Catherine, and she had a small Palladian house built for him. When he wished to return to England for medical treatment she gave him 5,000 roubles for the journey. One event must have pleased him; in 1794 Edward Wilbraham-Bootle, the son of his former employer, came to St. Petersburg on his Grand Tour, and William accompanied the party on visits to the most interesting places.



The gardener's house, St Petersburg

He was known as a spirited member of the English community, a popular figure with a fund of stories, and esteemed by all ranks due to his honesty, goodwill and hospitality. Having spent thirty years in Russia, he left in 1806 with his daughter Elizabeth and came back to Ormskirk, with an annual pension of 1,700 roubles (1 rouble was equivalent to 4 shillings). In his will, dated 14th May 1811, he describes himself as 'late Gardener to the first Emperor of all the Russias', and a local directory records him as William Gould, gentleman; by his employer he was known as 'the Russian Capability Brown' – high praise indeed.

Editor's

Note: I am indebted to June Bibby for permission to quote from her publication about William Gould. The whole text with more fascinating pictures can be read online at:- www.william.gould.bibso.com

VISIT TO PRESTON CEMETERY, NOVEMBER 2011

The visit to Preston cemetery aimed to draw attention to the cemetery as a designed landscape. English Heritage has recently carried out a review of cemeteries and as a result many cemeteries, particularly in the south, have been included in their Register of Parks and Gardens of special historic interest in England. In *Cemeteries Under Review*, Conservation Bulletin 43/22 English Heritage state that "In cemeteries, designed and natural

features are combined to create unique landscapes. Design elements include the layout of the site with avenues, drives and footpaths, boundaries and burial plots, significant gateways and chapels, mortuaries and shelters, sculpture and monuments, and planting schemes with trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants that evoke mourning and contemplation” and that they are “biographies of communities and their social history”.



Sir John Bunyan's Tomb

In the Lancashire area covered by LGT that includes parts of Greater Manchester and Merseyside there are sixteen registered cemeteries, all grade II apart from St. James's Cemetery Liverpool which has recently been upgraded to Grade I.

There are at least a further eighty-six cemeteries in Lancashire, only eleven of which are included in the English Heritage and Lancashire County Council commissioned 'Bennis and Dyke Report of 1998'. A list of these sites can be found on LGT web site www.lancsgt.org.uk and a research note is being prepared to give an overview of cemetery design and development.

INTRODUCTION – ENGLISH HERITAGE CATEGORIES

We started the day at Samlesbury Memorial Hall with a short illustrated talk about Lancashire cemeteries (where possible) in the four categories of cemeteries defined by English Heritage as follows:

Pre-Victorian Burial Grounds, mainly churchyards and private burial grounds on family estates or for religious minorities or institutions. Bunhill Fields Burial Ground in London (1665) is the only Registered site of this period. More recently it has had C19 & 20 alterations and is now a public park incorporating the cemetery memorials including Sir John Bunyan's tomb (1628-1688). No pre-victorian sites have been identified in Lancashire but there may be sites that should be assessed, in particular early quaker burial grounds which although of simple design may have significant historical significance.

Early C19 Cemeteries (1820-50) combine the layout of the private park with the religious monuments of the churchyard – mainly private cemeteries often established by non-conformists through Joint Stock Companies. There are two registered sites in Lancashire, St. James', Liverpool (1827) and Manchester General Cemetery (1837). Liverpool Corporation commissioned renowned local architect John Foster to design St. James', the

first cemetery to be set in a disused quarry, on the lines of the famous Père-Lachaise Cemetery in Paris. (See www.stjamescemetery.co.uk).



Manchester General Cemetery main entrance
Manchester General Cemetery was on a smaller scale but its buildings (now demolished) were of the classical style associated with this stage of cemetery development as can be seen in the illustration from *Manchester General Cemetery*, by W. Arthur Deighton, F.I.A.S.
High Victorian and Edwardian Municipal Cemeteries (1850-1914) make up the largest category with fourteen cemeteries in Lancashire: Rochdale, Lancaster and **Preston**

(1855); Tonge, Bolton and Toxteth Park, Liverpool (1856); Weaste, Salford, Greenacres, Oldham (1857) and Chadderton, Oldham (1857); Borough, St Helens (1858); Anfield, Liverpool (1863); Philips Park, Manchester (1867); Southern, Manchester (1879) and Whitworth, Rossendale (1879); and Allerton, Liverpool (1909). They were created largely as a result of public health concerns about the state of church graveyards and the introduction of the Burial Acts of 1852-57 established a national system of public cemeteries with consecrated grounds for Anglican use and unconsecrated grounds for Nonconformists. They echoed the design approaches of previous private cemeteries with some evolving developments influenced by John Claudius Loudon (1783-1843) who wrote the wide ranging and influential *On the Laying Out, Planting and Managing of Cemeteries* (1843). The dominant building style was Gothic.



Yews in Lancaster Cemetery

Lancaster Cemetery (1855) is an early example of this period which retains its buildings by the eminent Lancaster architect Edward Paley. It is believed that the layout may be by the notable cemetery designer William Gay.

Chorley Cemetery (1856) is not registered by English Heritage. One of its design features is an oval shaped sunken area adjacent to the

mortuary chapel near the entrance. The graves of some of the most distinguished townfolk can be found in this area.



Chorley Cemetery, sunken area

C20 Funerary Landscapes evolved following criticism of the grand Victorian cemeteries and their monuments and a shift in emphasis in the post-war period to utility and minimal management to reduce costs of maintenance. The War Graves Commission cemeteries set an influential example of the dignity of uniform monuments in an immaculately maintained landscape setting, reflected in the design of later new lawn cemeteries. Cremation had been legalised in the 1880's but it was not until the mid 20th Century, after the Cremation Act of 1952, that significant numbers of crematoria were built and in the 1960's cremation became the dominant mode of interment.

There are only six registered sites in this period, none in Lancashire although there are many C20 sites still to be surveyed.

The American Cemetery, Madingley, Cambridge (1955) is a striking example of a Post-war Military cemetery of the highest design quality by Olmsted Brothers, an internationally renowned landscape firm.



Carlton Cemetery and Crematorium (1935) is not registered. It was designed by the then Borough Surveyor, John Charles Robinson, in a Tudor style and has a formal rose garden in the garden of remembrance and a later colonnade.



Each period has its own design style and English Heritage's suite of documents from 2002 onwards, entitled *Paradise Preserved*, provides much more information and can be downloaded from www.english-heritage.org.uk

PRESTON CEMETERY



In the afternoon, with a trail leaflet *Preston Old Cemetery: Wildlife & Heritage Walk* (available at the cemetery office) we toured the cemetery which is registered grade II, noting the layout, the buildings and structures, plantings, and memorials, including those of interest described in the leaflet.

The layout of the original 1855 site uses a geometric serpentine drive and path pattern based on an unusually complex 'butterfly' form as can be seen on the plan. There are three

serpentine drives fanning out to give access to the focal sites of the former chapels. The buildings (now demolished apart from the entrance gateway) were by an eminent regional architect, Thomas Denville Barry, who specialised in cemeteries. They included three chapels and a gateway and flanking lodges, together with a lodge at a second entrance.



Building illustrations from: *Preston a Pictorial History*, by Geoffrey Timmins. Phillimore 1992

A notable feature of the cemetery is the mature perimeter tree belts and English Heritage has also highlighted the large number of slab graves. The new cemetery shown on the plan was created in the same high Victorian period in the late C19 but a simpler grid-design, as promoted by Loudon, was used.

A BRIGHTER FUTURE

Following the publication of the *Paradise Preserved* documents and co-ordinated action by those involved in the management, care and protection of cemeteries much has been achieved in tackling the neglect and dereliction in cemeteries but more needs to be done and good practice highlighted. In Blackburn, the Friends of Darwen cemetery have started to work in partnership with the local authority to improve its condition.



As part of an ongoing partnership project with Lancashire County Council to update the Bennis and Dyke Report and identify, research and record Historic Designed Landscapes a *Lancashire's historic cemeteries project* is being considered which aims to research development history, design styles, influences, condition and restoration issues, collect photographs, plans, records, identify pressures for change, opportunities and to collate this information into a publication and provide County wide workshops.

Volunteers are being sought for this project and if you are interested in taking part or would like to know more, you can contact me by email at: s.barker.62@btinternet.com or by telephone 01282 423016

Susan Barker

VISIT TO ASHTON GARDENS, ST. ANNE'S

On a sunny March morning, members were treated to a day at the seaside, and in particular to a walk round the lovely Ashton Gardens, just off Clifton Drive. They are a rich mixture of styles; the grand approach is through magnificent double gateposts and along the wide main avenue, flanked on either side by sunken lawns and flower beds, with a towering War Memorial as the focal point. After the tennis courts and bowling greens, the visitor has several choices: to take the low road and descend into a deeply sunken flower garden, warm and sheltered; or to take the high road

and cross a (seemingly) rustic bridge, over a little rocky ravine and on to discover a stream cascading over limestone rocks, flowing from a little lake set among rocky banks.



The sunken garden with spring bulbs

At the water's edge are bamboos and weeping willows, and the shrubs beside them have a Japanese theme, maples and azaleas. The rockwork is very skilfully done, limestone beside the lake and sandstone in the ravine; for the famous firm of James Pulham and Sons built these features, and the rustic bridge is not made of wood, but of Pulhamite, their artificial stone.

Fred Moor told the fascinating story of these gardens, and began with a look at the founding of St. Anne's and how the gardens were always intended to be at its heart. Fred and the Friends of Ashton Gardens have done some thorough research and confirmed that they were originally designed and set out by Edward Thomas, a little-known designer who was born in Hopton, Shropshire; he worked with his 'master gardener' uncle at Welshpool, according to the Census records. Welshpool is a hop, skip and a jump from Powys Castle, of course. He was subsequently appointed head gardener at the Southport Pavilion and Winter Gardens (designed by Maxwell and Tuke who later laid out St. Anne's). Next, he arrived to live in St. Anne's and undertook the laying out of the St. George's Gardens (later 'Ashton') between August 1875 and 1877.

The transition to Ashton Gardens came about because of a difference of opinion amongst ratepayers as to the impact on the rates if the Council bought them! A formal 'Poll of Ratepayers' was to be initiated following a petition, but – literally – on the eve of that poll, Lord Ashton stepped in with an offer to buy the gardens for the people of St. Anne's. Lord Ashton had become enamoured of the town following his disaffection with Lancaster as a result of political change (ie the growth of unionisation and the Labour movement), which he saw as a personal betrayal by his workforce (making linoleum). He started to play golf here and soon bought an impressive seafront bungalow, now sadly demolished.



The restored fountain



Bridge in the Japanese garden, 1920s

Following a design competition, the Council chose Fred Harrison (a local man with an architectural practice in Manchester), however too grandiose a scheme, including a concert hall with echoes of the Taj Mahal, meant his plan was abandoned. James Pulham & Son not only built the lake and rockwork, they offered to lay out much of the remainder of the gardens. Their proposals were accepted and they undertook the earthworks, rock gardens and also the soft landscaping works. The buildings in the

regenerated gardens were designed and constructed by the Council's brilliant new Engineer and Surveyor, James Stanley Sawdon, whose tragically short career showed he had an absolute gift for turning sow's ears into beautiful silk purses. He took a pitch pine shed and turned it into a wonderful colonial-style pavilion (which the new Pavilion Café replicates) by adding a verandah and colonnade. He took a St. Anne's-style 'Porritt' stone and marble doorway, widened it, added a pediment and a curved brick stucco-covered back, to create the Grecian-style monument to Lord Ashton – which we have just restored.

The walk around the garden after the talk gave LGT members the chance to see how the history of the gardens had shaped the town, and how they have been brought up to date – whilst still retaining the basic design of Edward Thomas - first by the Pulhams and later by the recent £2 million scheme.

A final quotation from the Lytham St. Anne's Express of 4 February, 1916:

The whole design of the Rock and Water Garden is more admired the more it is seen. The name of Mr Stracey, of Messrs Pulham & Son, will ever be associated with this remarkably fine piece of landscape gardening.

Fred Moor

FERN FEVER – THE STORY OF PTERIDOMANIA

By Sarah Whittingham

A Review by Elaine Taylor



Lady Ann Barkly, wife of the Governor of Australia, 1856-63, wearing a fern-embroidered dress

Much has been written about Pteridomania, the craze for ferns which swept Victorian England. We have heard of smoky parlours adorned by a steamy glass case filled with pale green fronds, of whole country areas being stripped of their delicate beauties by avid collectors, of underground caves lit by candles to spotlight some rare fronds. But why did this begin, and just how far did the craze permeate Victorian society?

Sarah Whittingham's book explains in admirable detail every phase and every nuance of this phenomenon, and introduces us to the people who set curiosity alight, the technological inventions which aided its rapid trail, the attitudes in society which fostered the study of nature, and the significant contribution of the Empire in fuelling it with plentiful specimens.

The writing style is engaging, and the illustrations are copious, including examples from contemporary books and magazines, advertisements and fern-related domestic artifacts. Examples are drawn not only from

England, but from around the English-speaking world where this craze quickly spread. There are glorious pictures of some recently restored glazed ferneries, and an all-important list of those to visit.

Early heroes in the story are identified as John Lindsay, James Bolton, Dr. Nathaniel Ward, and Edward Newman.

John Lindsay, an amateur botanist, was credited by Sir Joseph Banks (advisor to George III at Kew Gardens) of *making a very valuable discovery*: he first recorded the gametophyte stage of fern culture from spores, and from this, 'fern seed' was sown by nurserymen and amateurs, who exploited the great attraction of the fern families, to produce new and exciting forms which differ from the parent.

James Bolton, a self-taught naturalist, wrote the first book on British ferns and in words and accurate drawings described their beauty and culture, thus inspiring future fern lovers (*Filices Britannicae*, 1785).



Glazed fern cases, in Hibberd 1870

Dr. Nathaniel Ward is universally hailed as the saviour of plants in transport. His discovery of a tiny fern growing in a closed glass jar led to the solution of a thorny problem – the successful transport of live plants across the Empire and the globe. The Wardian case, a glass box to conserve moisture, was siezed by manufacturers and transformed into a thing of

elegance for the parlour or drawing room. An increasingly affluent society, from the middle classes to the aristocracy, enjoyed displaying objects which also proved their knowledge and good taste.

Edward Newman brought this knowledge within the reach of all; his *History of British Ferns (1840)* described his walking tours and the particular habitats of a range of ferns. He published guides for all pockets and in many editions, from a 1 shilling paperback to a luxurious illustrated version. People knew where to find the plants free of charge and could make their own *fernery*, (his new word).



The Fern Gatherer, 1877 C S Lidderd

Freely taking plants from the countryside was cloaked in the term '*botanising*'. The Victorian was intent on self-improvement, and the study of nature was encouraged at all levels of society. Fern collecting fitted neatly with the drive to assemble nature's gifts – fossils, shells, butterflies, stuffed birds. The wonders of Creation were proof of God's infinite powers, and their study was advocated not only by religious leaders but also by the authors themselves, and by garden makers such as James Bateman of Biddulph Grange, Staffordshire, whose 'Creation Gallery' is undergoing restoration.

The removal of the glass tax in 1845, and the removal of the paper tax in 1861 aided the

growth in conservatories, and in magazines on horticulture. Sarah Whittingham explores with great enjoyment the ferneries of the wealthy, and, using descriptions from the vast store of contemporary periodicals, entices us into the serpentine paths between moist, filmy ferns of Killarney, under hanging stag's horn specimens, and beneath the towering canopy of tree ferns from Australia with their long, arching fronds. She investigates the role of Kew and its network of plant hunters and curators which spread across the Empire; Botanic Gardens in four continents were managed by those trained at Kew, and they in turn exported plants to fill the Botanic Gardens and nurseries in British cities.

Charles Kingsley named the craze *Pteridomania*; these vascular plants are pteridophytes, from the Greek *pteris*, a feather. At its height from 1850 to 1890, it resulted in the formation of the British Pteridological Society which still thrives today, and once more the tree fern has become a fashionable garden plant. This book is exhaustively referenced and deserves to become the standard reference on the subject.

This review is published by kind permission of the editor of *The Victorian*, the magazine of The Victorian Society in which it recently appeared.

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
THURSDAY 31st MAY**

**WE HOPE TO SEE MANY OF YOU AT
ALEXANDRA PARK
OLDHAM
for a tour of a traditionally managed park**

Can any-one please assist with the Treasurer's duties? Normal book-keeping skills are all that is required, recording the transactions for events etc.

**Contact the editor if you can:-
01204 842 101**

REQUEST FOR HELP

Can any members help us with the following tasks, all essential to the running of the group?

Knowledge of charity administration

Ideas for events

Information on planning applications

LGT WEBSITE - www.lancsgt.org.uk

Hopefully most members have had an opportunity to look at our new website and will continue to keep in touch with it as it is updated. As (a somewhat reluctant and inexperienced) webmaster I thought I'd take this opportunity to tell you a little bit more about the site and to get your views and suggestions about how we can continue to develop and improve it.

THE AIM of the site is to provide information and, via the notice board page and email contacts facility, a means of interaction for a variety of 'viewers' – members, related organisations and groups including local authorities and conservation bodies. We also hope the site will be accessed by people with an interest in historic designed parks and gardens and that new members will be attracted.

YOUR COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

for improving the site and any other information you would like to see included would be most welcome. Please do send your photos of visits or old photographs of parks and gardens; comments on gardens you've visited; sites in Lancashire that you think merit inclusion on the list of historic designed landscapes; and your memories of visits to parks and gardens. Please also send in for the notice board related events of other

organisations that you think members might be interested in.

THE FUTURE - As a novice 'web developer' my limited IT skills have been tested – more of a long slow crawl than a steep learning curve, so if there are any IT anoraks amongst you please feel free to offer your help to improve and develop the site in the future. You can contact me at: s.barker62@btinternet.com or through the website.

Susan Barker, Webmaster

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Our events appear on our website, and you can print a Membership Application Form to give to anyone who shares our interests and aims.

**Editor
Elaine Taylor**

Any articles, snippets of news, reminiscences
about gardens and parks?

We want to know what is happening near you

Items please for the next issue to the editor
enq@lancsgt.org.uk

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