



Lancashire Gardens Trust NEWSLETTER

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PLANNING FOR HEALTHY LANDSCAPES

The value of landscapes to public health, wellbeing and the local economy is the focus of two new reports that hope to convince health professionals and planners of the positive link between green spaces and an improved quality of life.

The Landscape Institute has produced a statement with five principles for creating healthy places. Benefits can target physical and mental health, flood reduction and improved air quality. They stem from the institute's belief that greater priority needs to be given to the prevention of ill health through landscaping, and that planning should be embedded into projects from the start.

Those of us who garden know of its health benefits; it is life in the slow lane, and careful, manual work outdoors calms us, builds a good appetite and leaves us feeling happier.

We must continue to campaign for the retention of garden spaces; they are good for the environment and good for our health.

www.landscapeinstitute.co.uk

OBITUARY

Mavis Batey MBE, VMM

Mavis died aged 92 on 12 November 2013. She was a garden historian, author and former President of the Garden History Society; she was also a codebreaker during the Second World War. Born Mavis Lever in 1921, she studied German in London and became an interpreter at Bletchley Park; she broke a code that enabled the



Royal Navy to defeat a convoy of Italian destroyers off the Greek coast.

She married and had three children; later she began to research 18th century garden history. Mavis served as Secretary and President of the Garden History Society, and was its Vice-President until her death. She was involved in the restoration of the Royal Pavilion Brighton gardens, and lobbied for the formation of the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens.

In 1985 Mavis was awarded an RHS Veitch Memorial Medal and in 1987 received an MBE. She wrote a number of books, including *Oxford Gardens* (1982).

JOHN EVELYN'S LONDON GARDEN

The celebrated 17th century garden, created by diarist and gardener John Evelyn, has been recognised by the World Monuments Fund as one of the world's 'most threatened places'. Their Watch List describes Sayes Court, in Deptford, east London, as 'one of the most famous and revolutionary gardens of its time'. Little remains, and the current landowners have applied to build over parts of the garden's original features. This will destroy any chance of excavating the area, and fails to fully acknowledge and respect the site's significance. www.sayescourtgarden.org.uk

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Wednesday, 16th July



We have a treat in store in July when we shall visit Clearbeck House, near Wray, Lune valley. It is featured in Lancashire Magazine's June issue, and described as '*the most fantastical garden in the North West*'. The article goes on to

say: 'Secrets, myths and symbolism are the key to understanding Clearbeck Garden; although if you like lakes, plants, follies and a surprise round every corner you can simply enjoy it for the wonderful green space'. The four-acre garden in the heart of the North Lancashire countryside is full of jokes for gardening historians and deeper meaning for lovers of literature and religion. It is the creation of Peter and Bronwen Osborne, and is dotted with follies and sculptures; stunning vistas look towards Ingleborough, Whernside and Middleton Fell.

The Annual General Meeting will take place at 2pm in the nearby Community Hall, then we transfer to the garden and end the afternoon with tea and cakes. Look out for the notice, to be sent shortly.

GARDENERS in SCHOOLS

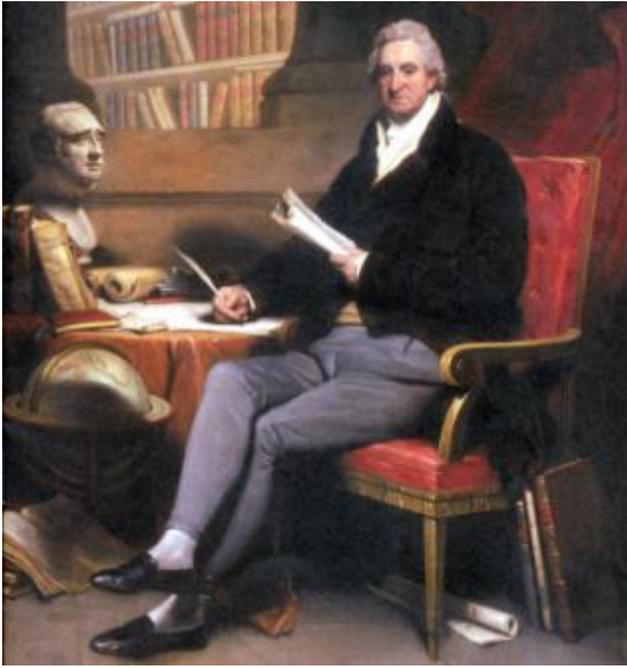
See the advert at the end of this Newsletter

Famous Lancastrians

WILLIAM ROSCOE (1753-1831)

In November, Dr John Edmondson came to speak to us at Samlesbury Old Hall; as a former curator of museums in Liverpool, John shared with us his admiration for a Liverpool son and a great botanist, William Roscoe.

In his long and richly eventful life, William Roscoe managed to combine the diverse careers of banking, jurisprudence, politics, botany and promotion of Liverpool's cultural life. He was the son of a very busy father, who alternated between inn-keeping, tending a market garden and serving as butler at the grand mansion, Allerton Hall. By dint of personal effort and determination William organised his own education; he was articled and rose to become an attorney. He made a large fortune serving wealthy city clients, until he was able to return to Allerton Hall, this time as master of the house. Keen to expand his education, he studied Latin and Italian after work; an aptitude for writing led to the early publication of studies in Italian literature and religion. He clearly developed a passion for Italian culture and used his growing



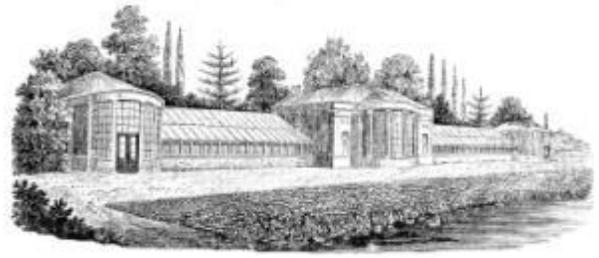
wealth to form a priceless collection of early Renaissance paintings; the glorious ‘Christ discovered in the Temple’, 1342, by Simone Martini, was the jewel of the collection, and this and his other paintings can now be enjoyed in Liverpool’s Walker Art Gallery.

In 1790 he was tempted to become a partner in a banking house, a decision he was to regret later. But in this year also he launched into the study of botany, which was to enrich the rest of his life. His passion for collecting found a new opening here, and he gathered together art, books and plants with scholarly care. He became known as ‘the father of Liverpool culture’. Through his influence several important institutions were founded:-

The Liverpool Society for the Encouragement of the Arts 1773

The Liverpool Royal Institution (fore-runner of the University)

The Athenaeum, with meeting rooms, news room and a library 1797 ; still flourishing.



The glasshouses in 1810

Athenaeum members paid a subscription and appointed trustees to manage the business. This unique system was to serve once more when Roscoe championed the creation of Liverpool Botanic Garden. He was encouraged in this great plan, and ably assisted by no less an expert than Sir James Smith (1759-1828); Smith had purchased the entire collection of Carl Linnaeus and was a prolific author on English botany. To start the Botanic Garden’s collection in grand style, the complete herbarium of J.R. Forster was purchased; he had travelled on Captain Cooke’s second voyage to Australasia and this was a landmark acquisition.

500 ‘proprietors’ bought a site on Mount Pleasant, on the corner of Myrtle Street and Olive Street: this was the first Botanic Garden in Britain to be financed by public subscription. The layout comprised a shelter belt, oval pond and oval bog garden, a very early example of a rock garden, and the ‘order beds’ where plants were arranged systematically, in families.

The buildings reflected the importance attached to the study of exotics – a large stove house and an herbarium, with a well-stocked library. The curator’s lodge stood beside the main entrance gates and housed John Shepherd (1768-1836); he took up his post at the opening in 1802 and remained there faithfully until his death. Roscoe focused his attention on tender orchids and members of the ginger family. He persuaded his shipowner friends to bring exotic specimens from tropical zones around the globe, installing the plants in the stove house and then recording and describing them in detail. In this way many were introduced which were new to science. A Mr Harrison who traded in Rio de Janeiro was commemorated with the orchid *Cattleya harrisoniae*.

Liverpool became a centre of excellence for botanical illustration as a result; Mrs Edward Bury, the wife of a railway engineer, drew and painted the plants using the new technique of lithography, a process developed to great effect in the 20th century by Lilian Snelling (1879-1972) the leading illustrator for Curtis's Botanical Magazine.



Roscoaea purpurea

The Botanic Garden was also a focus of architectural excellence; its curvilinear glasshouse was built by ironmaster Richard Turner, the colleague of Joseph Paxton on the design of the 'Crystal Palace' in 1851. It was enormously expensive; Lord Derby of Knowsley Hall enquired about one but declined on the grounds of its cost. John Shepherd served as curator for 34 years, and cared for a vast number of plants; the catalogue for 1808 listed no less than 4,400 taxa! He collected a wide selection of ferns, hardy and tender, and was one of the first to cultivate them from spores. His rockery to display some of them was appropriately constructed from ship's ballast.



RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2008

William Roscoe became a Member of Parliament, and campaigned for the abolition of slavery well before Wilberforce. He also dabbled in banking, and this was to be his undoing, for the economic downturn following the Napoleonic wars brought him to bankruptcy. He was forced to sell many books and paintings, and moved away from Allerton Hall. His consolation was to work on his *magnum opus*, *Monandrian Plants of the Order Scitaminae* which occupied him for twenty years; their flowers have only one anther, for example the *Alpinia*.

As the city surrounded the garden and threatened its plants with pollution, the entire garden and its contents were transferred further away in 1836. The garden was eventually sold to Liverpool Corporation and the public were allowed in; they flocked to see the strange forms of tropical flowers and foliage – bromeliads, orchids, *dracaena* and *codiaeum*. The vast array of glasshouses have now been demolished. A small section of the 'Botanics' collection is on display in the walled garden at Croxteth Hall where it is much admired. William is remembered in the dainty member of the ginger family, *Roscoaea purpurea*; it was brought from Nepal as the first species of a new genus, and is quite hardy. Its tall pointed leaves rather like those of a tulip rise from dormancy in late spring, followed by furled petals of an intense blue-purple.

POSTSCRIPT In 2008 Liverpool became ‘Capital of Culture’ for a year. The spotlight was made to shine once again on William Roscoe and his achievements; his beloved tropical plants were re-invigorated and presented with pride and artistry at Croxteth for all to admire again. To proclaim his fame more widely, an exhibit was staged at the Chelsea Flower Show; the design featured a small glasshouse and an evocation of Roscoe’s portrait (page 2), showing his famous book, his chair and the bust of his colleague, James Smith. Clustered around this were the stars of the collection – the tropical foliage, tender ferns and orchids, and the plants of economic value which he championed. As a symbol of hope for the future of his legacy, a Phoenix palm was placed in prime position.

Editor

NESS BOTANIC GARDENS February Visit

After a wet and dreary winter what a breath of fresh air it was to stand beside the clusters of early crocus and look across the Dee estuary to the Welsh hills! The coastal breeze was invigorating and we were eager to find the colours and perfumes of the first spring blooms. The mild climate of Ness works wonders; during our walk I counted over a dozen shrubs in flower, and many snowdrops besides. We were fortunate in having as our guide the resident botanist, Tim Baxter. He explained that he was going to accompany us round the extent of the garden as Arthur Bulley knew it, from the outcrops of Wirral pink sandstone around the house where the Bulleys made their home, along



Rhododendron falconeri

the pine ridge, then down onto the levels where the potting sheds were put to use as the base for his nursery business. He spent his career buying cotton from America and bringing it to Liverpool. As a hobby, he developed at first an interest in growing plants, and then a passion for finding new ones. Ness became his workshop, the place where he trialled new seed in as many different habitats as it was possible to create.

Tim outlined the importance of Ness today, as a Botanic Garden attached to the University of Liverpool; here plant sciences can be studied in a working laboratory. The conservation of the species *Sorbus* is a particular role here, and new hybrids are sold to nurseries and famous gardens, for example Crûg Farm Plants and the Royal Horticultural Society.

We saw the recently replanted heather slopes, now filled with Mediterranean shrubs whose glaucous and grey foliage tolerate drought. In bloom were *Euphorbia wulfenii* and *Rosmarinus officinalis prostratus*. Further on, blue and red pulmonarias were making a shy appearance, but outshone by wide patches of snowdrops, *Galanthus nivalis* and *G.n. flore pleno*. The glory of Ness in February is the pine ridge, planted in 1905 as a shelter belt for newly-arriving rhododendron seedlings. The delicate low-growing two-tone *R. moupinense* (E H Wilson 1904) had deep pink buds and paler open flowers. By contrast the tall, tree-like *Rh. falconeri* had leaves 30 cm long, covered on the underside with russet indumentum and showing

large flower clusters of creamy-yellow tinged with pink (Sir J Hooker, 1850). Hillier's Manual states that this should flower in April, proving that Ness is very sheltered. We looked up into the tall Rh. 'Polar Bear' and resolved to return in May, when its richly fragrant flowers should resemble pure white lilies (one of our party noted its name and resolved to find one to plant at home). Camellias 'J C Williams' and 'St. Ewe' were covered in blooms, as was a crimson, un-named specimen, as striking as a rose in summer.

Several varieties of snowdrop were colonising among the shrubs; we particularly admired *G. atkinsii*, with its extra-long tepals, and *G. plicatus* with rounded blooms and thick, glossy green leaves. Descending from the pine walk, we noted the beauty of a multi-stemmed *Betula utilis* subsp. *jacquemontii*, its shining white bark complemented by a backdrop of delicate tassels of *Ribes sanguineum* 'Album'. Another attractive combination here was the *Lonicera purpusii* a twiggy, scruffy shrub with a gorgeous perfume, and clustered beneath it the deep ruby *Helleborus orientalis*, its golden anthers glowing in the sun.



At the core of the original garden are the low brick buildings which used to be Bees Seeds Ltd (once Co-operative Bees). Here Arthur Bulley developed the successful business which would fund his plant-collecting passion; his flare for commerce and promotion made the business a great success, and the cheaper seed packets were distributed in large numbers through

Woolworth's. Four major plant hunters were sponsored by him on expeditions in northwest China; next we stood beneath *Pieris forrestii*, in awed silence, whilst Tim told us of the dangers and privations endured by George Forrest during his explorations in Himalayan hills and valleys. The shrub is 4 metres tall and as many wide, and its red buds were ready to burst into an avalanche of cream blossom. Nearby a new bed has been created featuring the important introductions which he and Bulley made together.

Bulley's great favourites were alpines, and we saw the collection of stone troughs where many are displayed; beside them, the alpine house is sadly empty because there is no longer the time to devote to it. Passing the herbaceous walk, the azalea beds and rose beds, which would unfold their splendours from April onwards, we ended our tour at the boundary of Bulley's original garden. Here a *Davidia involucrata* epitomised the romantic stories attached to many plants in this garden; it was first discovered by the French missionary Père David in 1869 in western China, and then found again and brought to England by E H Wilson in 1904. In May the tree is draped in large white bracts, proving the worth of its nick-names, the ghost tree and the handkerchief tree.

Editor

CHORLEY CEMETERY March visit



The oval core of the site is sunken for effect

Susan Barker organised a visit to one of Lancashire's best-designed cemeteries, and told us about a project in the planning stage to record the county's cemeteries. She explained that their design in Britain owed much to French influence, particularly that of Père Lachaise in Paris, where the English landscape park was used as the layout, and funerary monuments installed along the paths. J C Loudon, author of the influential *Encyclopaedia of Gardening*, used his usual thorough methods to produce *On the Laying out, Planting and Managing of Cemeteries, and on the Improvement of Churchyards*, (1843).

John Harrison, chair of Chorley Civic Society, led us on a guided walk.

Chorley cemetery was opened in 1856 and the first interment took place in January 1857. The builder was Robert Rawlinson, an engineer with particular skills in sanitation; he was a friend of Florence Nightingale and had served in Crimea. He designed the entrance lodge and impressive gateposts, 3 chapels – one Catholic, one Anglican and one for Dissenters. Nikolaus Pevsner wrote in rather scathing terms of one chapel *of lightly crude composition with a rather small spire*. An invitation was issued to William Gay, an imaginative designer who had been responsible for the magnificent Undercliffe Cemetery, Bradford. Here, a group of non-conformist businessmen led by the famous Titus Salt, of Saltaire, commissioned a splendid layout on a hill outside the town, and in 1854 4,000 people came to witness its opening.

The burial situation in Chorley was becoming dire. Churchyards were overcrowded with graves and at St. Gregory's the coffins were 6 deep; the town's population had trebled in 10 years, and epidemics of cholera, typhus and dysentery were frequent. A Public Health Act was passed, but before there was a town council in being, the challenge to improve conditions was taken up by the Chorley Improvement Commission: this was made up of land- and mill-owners plus other professionals and philanthropists.



They appointed officers who set about installing sewerage, also a piped fresh water supply, under the leadership of surveyor James Durham. A site was sought for a public cemetery, and an advertisement was published stipulating 'a distance over 300 yards from houses'. After some haggling over the price, a sum of £3,100 was finally agreed, with rights to the timber but no rights to any underlying minerals. A equivalent sum today would be around £200,000.

The 13-acre site was divided into 3 strips, one connected to each religion, and plots were for purchase. The design was much admired; a long, narrow oval forms the core, and it is sunken, with a raised path surrounding it. The 3 chapels were positioned at left, right and centred on the far side, and a long central axis stretches from the lodge gates to the perimeter of the site. Curving paths lead away from the centre and the layout followed J C Loudon's urban *gardenesque* style. The trees are well-chosen to give a good variety: *Cedrus atlantica glauca*, *Taxus baccata*, *Ilex*, *Pinus* and *Abies* provide strong evergreen forms whilst native deciduous species give lighter colours. A small hill and a lake were pleasing features once, but have now disappeared, as have two of the chapels. The cemetery was once described as '*a place of beauty, for contemplation, a source of civic*

pride, with a view to the sea'. The aspect was very important, and other cemeteries in Lancashire are positioned to provide an atmosphere of grandeur and beauty, for example on a hill with a vista.

The Victorian funeral was an important affair with strict rules to be observed, in dress, behaviour and ceremony. We heard the stories of some of Chorley's worthies and their mode of departure from this life. John Thom was a calico printer, bleacher and dyer, and an employer of many in the town; his funeral procession set off from his home, Larkhill, and passed houses where the blinds were drawn, the shops and mills closed for the day, and his cortège was led by the band of the Royal Lancashire Regiment.

Henry Hibbert, the son of a mill-owner, became a flour merchant and took part in a very early trade mission to China; he attended evening classes in the Buttermarket, became a Member of Parliament, and joined Lancashire County Council at its inception in 1881. He was a strong supporter of the WEA which championed education for workers. His cortège was led by a fire engine.

The Smethurst family owned the largest complex of mills in the town and rented homes at Duxbury Hall and Ellerbeck, Windermere. They purchased a central plot in the cemetery where 2 large vaults were erected. One of their funerals was also the occasion for a grand procession, and the crowds were so great that the cemetery gates had to be closed for people's safety. Commenting on Queen Victoria's funeral, George Bernard Shaw wrote: *the nation was enjoying its favourite festival – a funeral*.

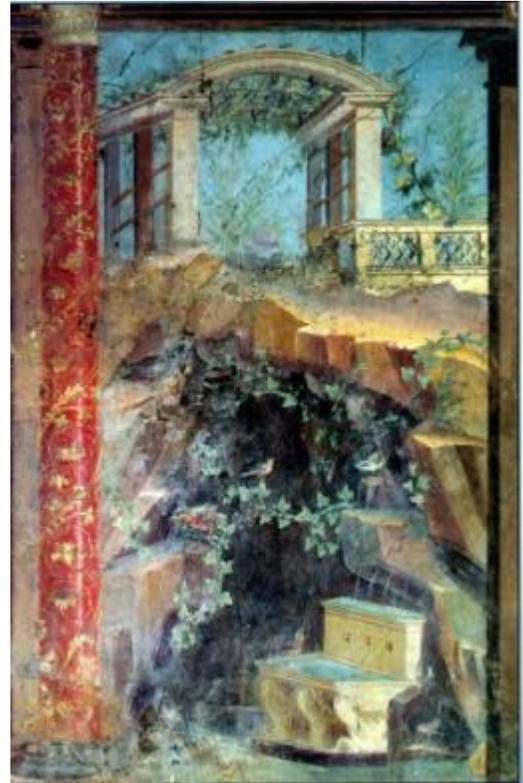
If you would like to have information about the research project, or have some information you could contribute, please contact Susan Barket at secretary@lancsgt.org.uk

Further reading: J C Loudon's book is available from Google books.

Sarah Rutherford, *The Victorian Cemetery*, 2009, Shire Books.

Editor

GROTTOES AND FERNERIES Churchtown Botanic Garden April



An architectural garden incorporating a natural grotto
Boscovale, near Pompeii 1st century AD

The grotto and fernery are a pair, like the horse and carriage, for where there is dripping water a fern will grow. Some types of rock take on curious forms when filtering rainwater, to become naturally decorative places. The Greeks and Romans venerated these places, sources of life-giving water, made them into shrines, and incorporated copies into their gardens. Italian Renaissance designers re-discovered the feature as a cool retreat away from the heat of the Mediterranean sun; they took up with enthusiasm the possibilities for decoration, using tufa – petrified limestone – and stalactites, crystalline rock, and colourful pebbles. The style became gradually more elaborate, more architectural, and statues were used to tell stories of river gods, water nymphs and strange beasts from wild places.

Transferred to England, the grotto became an opportunity to express a Romantic ideal; at Painshill Charles Hamilton built a sequence of grottoes on an island, so that visitors were taken

by boat through a labyrinth, lit by candles so that they were dazzled by glittering stalactites of crystal, and surprised by showers of water squirting over them.

The appeal of a dark, damp cave was taken up again in the 19th century. At about the time that Queen Victoria came to the throne, a strange epidemic crept over Britain, and lasted almost the duration of her long reign; it was given the name *pteridomania* (after the Greek word *ptēris*, a feather), and it drove people to scale cliffs, delve into ravines, experiment with spores – and build extravagant structures to display their finds – delicate, feathery ferns. These unpredictable, all-green, shade-loving plants appealed to Victorians for several reasons; a thirst for botanical knowledge and self-improvement; a desire to display good-taste in contrast with the prevailing fashion for bright and primary colours; and an urge to form collections, whether shells, seaweed, butterflies or any other natural object. Lord Leverhulme as a young man arranged a collection in his back garden, planted in bacon boxes lined with cork; he went on to build a suite of glazed fern-houses, for hardy, temperate and exotic ones. The Manchester Magazine reported that a working man had made a display in his coal hole covered with a pane of glass. *Pteridomania* affected all levels of society.

Fern forays were a popular Sunday pastime, when groups would travel by train to hill and dale and return with their baskets filled; some species were plundered to extinction. Only the skilled and knowledgeable would manage to



Dewstow, a series of underground grottoes, by James Pulham & Son

grow their finds successfully in the right conditions, but then a series of events came together within the space of 10 years which would revolutionise fern culture. Nathaniel Ward discovered that foliage thrived in a glass case due to the constant moisture: Joseph Paxton designed the ‘Crystal Palace’ for the Great Exhibition, 1851, and its ‘kit-form’ method simplified the construction of glass-houses; the excise duty was removed from glass, causing a drop in the price from 1 shilling to 2d (pence) per square foot, (a sixth of the original price). The flood-gates were opened. In one of the many books published to instruct those stricken by ‘fern sickness’, Thomas Moore (1853) wrote: *Your hardy fernery would look well with water in little cataracts dashing its spray, disappearing in caverns and creeks, lingering in a glassy pool.* He went on to advise that the cover afforded by glass would provide better protection from harsh weather, and would accommodate more varieties of a less hardy constitution. In smoky, sooty industrial towns it was now possible to cultivate ferns to perfection.



competitions where many prizes were won. One of the largest suppliers was the Manchester firm of J. Birkenhead, whose catalogue of 1886 advertised 1,400 varieties. They could design and build ferneries and conservatories, supply the heating system and many intriguing accessories, including a tile for insertion into a shady wall which was a planting niche. They would even convert your outbuilding 'for a modest sum'.

But the kings of rock-gardens and ferneries were James Pulham & Son, rock-builders to royalty, aristocracy, wealthy industrialists – and civic Corporations. Contemporary work of theirs can be seen in Preston's 3 parks – Moor, Miller and Avenham, where natural sandstone has been used to create massive constructions – tunnels, bridges, caves and cascades. Then the Churchtown Botanic Gardens Company commissioned the firm to work in their new park. In 1876 the 'Southport Aquarium' was opened to great acclaim, following the success of Pulham's other Aquaria in Brighton, Blackpool and Manchester, all now gone.

Plans for these public fern grottoes were all similar. Rectangular in shape with high walls of brick or stone to give the impression of entering a gully, with one section submerged to emphasise the depth; a high viewing gallery at each end to look down into the gully; winding paths between jagged projections of rocks for surprise; the paths made of gravel and pebble mosaic; a glass roof, often double-glazed for winter and painted with whitewash in summer; heating pipes were concealed behind rockwork; pillars and iron supports were covered with wire netting to host moss and ferns; to display ferns at a higher level, tall arches and 'ruined' structures were incorporated with niches and crannies for planting. Water was essential to provide high humidity, and a large tank made of slate slabs would hold a vast quantity, capable of transmission through different widths of pipes to supply a cascade, a series of pools, a little stream passing under a bridge and through stepping stones, to finish as a 'dropping well' in the roof of a cavern.



Southport Aquarium, now known as the Fernery at Churchtown

A natural habitat of such intricacy and beauty can only be found in hilly, limestone districts, where calcareous rainwater drips constantly onto the porous rock. Constant dripping onto mossy rock causes the formation of *tufa*, a highly-prized, light and porous mineral much used in the past by grotto makers. James Pulham & Son invented their own substitute. Using gritty sand, Portland cement and peat, their skilled craftsmen worked the soft, wet substance with hands and modelling tools until it took on the right appearance, building up walls, caves, arches and promontories to look realistic, and including planting holes. **The Fernery at Churchtown is a rare survivor of their artistry.**

Planting. Ferns had to be lime-tolerant in this situation. Tiny Asplenium were ideal for niches and crevices, tall Osmunda and Matteucia for the waterside, the hundreds of varieties of Polystichum and Polypodium provided feathery, curly and branching shapes, delicate Maidenhair for the damp interior of a cave, strap-shaped Hart's tongue in the rockwork, and, given a little winter protection, the branching canopy of tall, majestic Australian tree ferns. Covering the lower rocks were mosses, Selaginella and creeping fig, the latter also climbed the walls and pillars. Aerial growers such as Stag's horn and Davallia would be suspended in baskets of virgin cork or bark, others packed into coconut shells with sphagnum moss.

Private owners liked to keep pets in their ferneries; goldfish were usual, monkeys, tortoises and lizards were also reported. The

most popular was the toad, for it could devour pests such as cockroaches, beetles and snails – all of which could create havoc among the delicate stems and fronds, munching through them by night.

At Churchtown we met Gladys Armstrong and David Cobham, who told us about the work of the North Meols Civic Society and the Botanic Gardens Community Association. Members have re-invigorated the park which was under threat of closure due to budget cuts in Sefton Borough Council; it is now buzzing with activities, filled with visitors and vibrant with colour again. The Fernery is described as their ‘Jewel in the Crown’ and in 2007-08 restoration work was completed to the value of £300,000.

Elaine Taylor

RESEARCH & RECORDING REPORT

Members Nigel Neil and Ruth Thurnhill have been assisting John Miller and his team at Lytham Hall. A community excavation, with a total of around 40 volunteers, spent six days uncovering parts of the iron-railinged square garden in the South Prospect Garden. Maps showed this in existence by 1885, and still in use in 1932. The fence was low – only about 3 ft – with a hooped top, and may have been a continental import, since it was of metric specifications: most of the length was represented only by the bottom rail. There were gates at two or more corners, but little is known about the central sunken feature shown on the map – possible a tiled fountain. They also looked briefly at a small part of one of the huge greenhouses in existence until the 1830s, which underlay the north end of the square garden. The site produced very few dateable finds, but there were some artists’ paint tubes, and bottle and window glass, and plenty of bricks from the footings.

Around the Mount, a huge amount of tree felling has been done, and general removal of planting from the 1960s to 1990s; it has been completely cleared of trees and re-seeded with grass. Soon more excavation will take place on

the site of the ice house, and then restoration of the path and steps to the top will commence. Nigel, Ruth, Julia, Barbara and Irena have contributed to the project **A Leap in the Park**; The Forest of Bowland is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and this work presents the history of the landscape by way of interpretation panels, materials for schools, and with new technology Apps – Applications to download to your Smartphone and Tablet. Follow this link -

<http://www.forestofbowland.com/aleapintheperk>

The project has been financed by a group comprising the Heritage Lottery Fund, Lancashire County Council and the AONB. There is an article about it in the June issue of the Lancashire Magazine.

LGT and the HISTORIC DESIGNED LANDSCAPES of Lancashire

In planning is a project with our partner Lancashire County Council to conduct research into the county’s cemeteries. English Heritage has highlighted the poor state of these memorial landscapes in recent years, and welcomes more investigation into them. The major cemetery in each large town has been placed on their Register of Parks and Gardens of Historic Importance, usually at Grade II. Now, an in-depth survey will reveal more about these important places, and about the people who designed and built them, and ultimately who were buried there. See the report in this Newsletter on the visit to Chorley cemetery and contact details for those wishing to contribute. Local historians will have much to add to this project.

SILVERDALE AND ARNSIDE AONB

Ed Bennis and Ruth Thurnhill have been working for this AONB with Lancashire County Council to produce a report on the Historic Designed Landscapes within it. 63 sites were investigated and classified into categories, with 6 placed in the top group, Ashton, The Hynning, Bleasdale, Hazelwood, and Greywalls – the latter 2 being wholly by Thomas Mawson, and Bleasdale his in part; 5 more were considered regionally significant. An interesting discovery

was that the designer Ralph Hancock, famous for his roof gardens, worked in the 1950s for Lord and Lady Peel at The Hyning, now a religious institution.



Shell fountain by Thomas Mawson, Hazelwood

CB 300 Much research is on-going all over the country in preparation for this nationally important event. 2016 sees the anniversary of the birth of Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown 300 years ago; he is celebrated as the greatest exponent of the English Landscape Park, which some art historians claim to be Britain’s finest artistic achievement. Records of his work are scattered and incomplete; there are bank accounts of his, and a collection of information gathered by the garden historian Dorothy Stroud. Lately, the landscape architect John Phibbs has assembled all present details in one document published in the Garden History Journal. It is chiefly a list of one or two-line statements and perhaps a sum of money quoted.

Now, Tom Williamson, working at the University of East Anglia, is proposing to work with members of the county Gardens Trusts, and produce a definitive monograph; this will aim to include as much reliable detail as can be gathered, from all sources. The archives in county Record Offices may hold plans and maps, records of bills paid to Brown or his contractors by the house / land owner. There will be engravings and paintings in private houses of their estate when it was ‘improved’ by Brown; a splendid example is the set of paintings by JMW Turner for the Earl at Harewood, Yorkshire. Our member Gill Crook has contacted Knowsley Hall, Merseyside, where there is reliable

evidence of work by Brown for the Earls of Derby, and LGT is keen to pursue research there. A visit took place on 15th May, and a report on this will appear in the next Newsletter. www.capabilitybrown.org.uk

CONSERVATION & PLANNING

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is now two years old and proving to be a difficult policy to work with. It was introduced with the aim of simplifying the planning system and putting local people in control. More houses would be built, we were told, but they would be built with local consent.

The reality has been rather different. In a report by the Campaign for the Protection of the Rural Environment (CPRE) *Community Control or Countryside Chaos*, published in April, an analysis of 29 Local Plans was made and the results of 70 major planning decisions studied. It provides powerful evidence that the NPPF is resulting in greenfield development, while derelict sites within towns and cities are left abandoned. A developer can claim that these sites are expensive to clear and are therefore uneconomic. ‘Brownfield’ first was a cornerstone of planning policy for more than 20 years, but was removed from the new NPPF. We protested even then that gardens were being treated as ‘brownfield’ and had them described as amenity land, necessary to urban diversity.

There are more applications now to build within Grade II Registered Parks and Gardens. The over-riding directive in the NPPF is the ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’; the underlined word is not defined, it is subject to interpretation in each case, making decisions difficult to arrive at – or challenge. Some councillors will say that it simply means near public transport.

We continue to stand up for green spaces because they ensure quality of life; we continue to stand up for Designed Landscapes – parks, gardens, squares, cemeteries, promenades – because they express our need for artistic expression and our thirst for

beauty. They also fulfill our need for outdoor exercise. The fact that they add enormously to the quality of our climate goes without saying.

Editor

The Conservation and Planning Group continues to monitor planning applications, consultations and emerging planning policies as they affect Lancashire's heritage designed landscapes.

In the Autumn 2013 Newsletter we reported on the proposals at Harris Knowledge Park in Preston (as the former Harris Orphanage is now known). This is a Registered Park and Garden, and was laid out in 1888 in the form of a small village as a result of the foresight of Edmund Harris, the Preston benefactor. The site is now in private ownership and the owner has now secured permission for three bold modern dwellings in the grounds, and has just recently gained permission for the residential additions to four of the original villas. We shared the view of the Victorian Society that the proposals were inappropriate; however we now look forward to seeing the details of the essential restoration proposals for the historic parts of the park, and an early start on their implementation.

The Grade I listed Samlesbury Hall between Blackburn and Preston adjoins the major BAE Systems site which is intended to be one of the two main



Samlesbury Hall

locations for the Lancashire Advanced Engineering and Manufacturing Enterprise Zone. The consultation on the Masterplan and Local Development Order took place over the later part of 2013, which appeared to give little regard to the importance and sensitivity of Samlesbury Hall. Our representations drew attention to the requirement for an adequate landscape buffer

and standoff to be provided in the plan to protect the grounds and setting of Samlesbury Hall. Now that the proposals have been approved by South Ribble BC, this project will require ongoing monitoring.

In last year's spring newsletter we reported that further amendments were intended to the Go Ape Course in the Grade II Registered Lever Park, Rivington. An application was subsequently submitted by the operator, Adventure Forest Ltd, and the Trust restated its fundamental concerns about this inappropriate facility within the historic Park. We continue to ask that a comprehensive Conservation Management Plan is produced for Lever Park.

During 2013 Preston City Council have been pursuing a Heritage Lottery Fund application for restoration works at Moor Park. Moor Park is one of the country's oldest public parks and was initially bought and enclosed in 1833, and comprehensively laid out from 1864 by Edward Milner. The park contains several examples of Pulham rockwork, all requiring specialist repair. The Trust has given comments on the Stage 1 application and is supporting the Council in the project.



Moor Park, West Lodge at Garstang Road Entrance

At Cuerden Hall, Bamber Bridge, Sue Ryder Foundation have occupied the Lewis Wyatt Grade II* Regency mansion, originally built for the Townley Parkers, for over twenty five years. The care facility now requires the creation of a new neurological unit and the proposal to construct this within established woodland near the site entrance has caused local objection. The intention is that the Hall will be returned to residential use, and the planning application for both these proposals is currently under

consideration by Chorley BC. Whilst it is encouraging to see emerging proposals for restoration of the gardens in the immediate setting of the Hall, and also that the residential conversion will not result in any building beyond the current building footprint, it is perhaps unavoidable that the current permissive public access will be lost. At least the current conversion proposals appear to avoid any further fragmentation of the setting of the Hall. Again this requires ongoing monitoring.

Current proposals for wind turbine developments are now widespread. To name a few we have raised issues in relation to the possible impact at Gisburne Park, Gisburn, and will be assessing the possible impact of the proposals at Rooley Moor, Rossendale in relation to Whitworth Cemetery.

We also continued to work with planning authorities in developing their local plans and have recently attended a planning workshop at Burnley, and made comments on the recent Fylde Heritage Strategy.

Stephen Robson

Interested in Education?

Want to help gardening and conservation with youngsters?



Could you spend a little time to help organise Lancashire Gardens Trust to respond to requests for help?

If yes is the answer please contact Diana Stenson
distenson@hotmail.co.uk
 01253 862232

We recently circulated the AGT Yearbook to all LGT members. An article within is entitled 'Where my wellies take me', and Emma Schofield, a primary school teacher and advisor to the AGT, writes:

It is well worth our valuable time and effort; I have seen first-hand how important it is that school grounds are developed to encourage direct engagement with the natural environment. We must remember that all children are future carers of our precious environment; we need continually to develop their desire to be outside and inspired by all that nature has to offer. Every little seed of knowledge you pass on could blossom into a bumper crop of future gardeners.



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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.

The editor is seeking articles for the next edition,
so if you have anything in mind do let us know.

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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