

# Staffordshire Gardens & Parks Trust

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## The Fashion for Dahlias

**The Dahlia was named in honour of Andreas Dahl, a Swedish botanist, but it was also called 'Georgina' for a short time in honour of J.G.Georgi, a Russian botanist. Both names were used initially but then due to the marketing of nurserymen, 'dahlia' won the contest.**

A native of Mexico, the flower was cultivated there before the Spanish conquest in the 16th century. Mexicans called the plant 'Cocoxochitl' and used an extract of the roots as a tonic. In 1789, seeds of three new species were sent from the Botanic Garden in Mexico City to the Royal Gardens in Madrid, where single & semi-double flowers were grown and in 1804, seed was sent from Spain to France and Germany. Most flowers require human intervention to hybridise and then it can take several years to see the results, but the dahlia produces natural variations and moreover it can be grown from seed in one year. It was a gift to commercial nurseries. In Berlin, 55 cultivars were bred in the first four years; the French, however, bred the first fully double flower in 1812, the first white in 1814, then larger flowers and smaller plants. One of the earliest garden owners to cultivate the flower was the Empress Josephine, who obtained seed from Mexico through plant collectors Bonpland and Humboldt.

Dahlias were imported to this country at the end of the Napoleonic wars, by which time all the flower shapes and colours, except the cactus variety, had been established. By 1828, according to author John Claudius Loudon, it was considered the most fashionable flower in the country and he wrote that 'the extent of its cultivation in nurseries is astonishing'. The flower was first taken up by nurserymen Whitley, Brames & Milne, at Fulham and then by specialist flower breeders led by William Dennis of Chelsea. By 1841, Joseph Harrison at Downham Market listed over 1000 double varieties in his nursery catalogue and horticultural journalists had written at length about their cultivation, there was even a treatise by Joseph Paxton.

At the height of the craze it is thought there were 1,500 varieties. John Wedgwood grew over 200 at Etruria Hall.

It was inevitable that the dahlia, which had proved so easy to hybridise, should become an exhibition flower. For show purposes, the flower shape defined the class; single, collarette, anemone, paeony, decorative, ball, pompon and eventually the cactus-flowered, which was bred in Holland in 1872. The taste for horticultural shows with multiple classes for professional and amateur gardeners as well as commercial growers had spread throughout the country from the 1820s and the nurserymen seized every opportunity of promoting their business by providing decorations and displays for the exhibition halls. Newspapers reported these in detail, and some of the displays at shows in the 1830s must have been very impressive, for example at Cambridge,

*'on entering the room three well executed arches of evergreens thickly studded with georginas extended from side to side. On the right, against the wall appeared in large characters of the same materials, The Cambridge Florists Society, with an anchor, star etc. At the upper end a magnificent crown with W and A on either side beamed resplendently with variegated lamps and flowers whilst the tables down the centre of the room were covered with a profusion of the*

*choicest blooms, upwards of 9000 of which were consumed in the general display and embellishments'.*

whilst at the Chippenham Horticultural Society Exhibition, there was

*'an endless variety of superb devices. On the right side of the spacious apartment was a handsome device the groundwork of which was composed of evergreens bearing the name of our gracious queen, formed with beautiful dahlia blooms and surmounted with the arms of the borough. Opposite to this appeared a representation of the bible, crown and*



Dahlia Walk

sceptre surmounted by a cross, the lower part corresponding with that on the right side but bearing the name of Flora'.

and a report of the Royal Cornwall Show stated that

'there were two very beautiful devices which presented a coup d'oeil that was highly gratifying. The first a very large and elegant device formed of dahlias by Mr Treseder, the occupant of the gardens formerly belonging to Lewis Daubuz Esq. This was behind the president's chair and in the centre of the room, the design embraced inter alia the words Victoria Rex but although we cannot praise Mr Treseder's Latin, which perhaps he does not wish to have praised, we may justly say he deserves great credit for his beautiful and varied display of this elegant flower. At the bottom of the room stood the other device formed of different flowers and consisting of the initials VRA These were surmounted with a crown'.

In our own county, the Staffordshire Advertiser reported some of the local shows. For example, at the Uttoxeter Horticultural Show, at the Red Lion Inn, about 2,000 dahlias were staged and 'a beautiful design



Cactus dahlia



Single dahlia

composed of dahlias representing a Chinese temple was brought from Lord Vernon's, (Sudbury Hall). The room was tastefully decorated; at the top was a motto 'Success to the Society' and on the side 'Queen Victoria' with a crown all worked in dahlias'. In Longton, 'the show of dahlias was superb'; there were 'floral devices worked on boards chiefly in dahlias', the best a magnificent peacock by Lawton & Son and a flying horse from John Browne Esq. The report concluded that the 'formation of the objects as well as the arrangement of the colours

manifested considerable artistic skill'.

The days of such remarkable flower pictures are long gone, along with the craze for growing dahlias, but interest has revived in recent years, and it is possible to see impressive beds of flowers in some of the best gardens at this time of the year, and in Staffordshire we can always see them in the Dahlia Walk at Biddulph Grange.

Sue Gregory  
July 2013

## "The Gardens are very handsome"

(Cassandra Willoughby, of Wollaton Hall, later Duchess of Chandos, 1710)

**Members of the Trust and friends visited Melbourne Hall, the home of Lord and Lady Ralph Kerr, on September 7th, and were given a tour of the gardens by the Administrator, Jill Weston, whose extensive knowledge of the gardens greatly enhanced the enjoyment of the visit.**

The gardens at Melbourne Hall are of special interest to garden historians, since they survive as a rare example of early eighteenth-century garden design. Begun in 1704, they were laid out in the Baroque style popular on the Continent at the time. Developed by André le Nôtre, it is characterised by parterres, a central allée, radiating avenues ending in vistas, ornamental statuary and fountains.

It had always been assumed that they were designed by George London and Henry Wise, who enjoyed a near-monopoly on commissions at the time, but later research strongly suggests that they were, in fact, designed by the owner himself, Thomas Coke, vice-chancellor to Queen Anne, although London and Wise may have been consulted after the initial plans for the garden had been drawn up.

The parterre has now gone and been replaced by sweeping lawns, but much of the original design remains. A central allée, now off-centre following later alterations to the house, runs down to the large pool known as "The Great Basin". Below the pool stands a wrought-iron black-and-gold arbour made by the Staffordshire-born ironsmith Robert Bakewell. Recorded in 1711 simply as "Wrought Iron Arbour", and once brightly painted in blue, green and red, it is now known as "The Bird Cage", which has confused at least one visitor, who was disappointed to find no birds housed in it! (Another visitor startled her guide by asking to be shown Hitler's grave;



Yew tunnel



The bird cage

in this case, "Hitler" turned out to be a dachshund belonging to Lady Anne Kerr which had been buried in the pets' cemetery!).

While working at Melbourne Hall, Bakewell lived in a house provided by his patron and is suspected of trying to prolong his stay by finding more and more jobs to do! He did, however, provide the ornate iron fencing which allowed Melbourne Pool, the twenty-acre lake beyond the grounds, to be viewed from the garden. Originally, a mill pond, the Pool was enlarged to form a landscape feature in 1845.

Beyond the Great Basin lies the bosquet, a woodland, ten acres in area, divided by avenues and contained within tall hedges.

In Victorian times, the garden was covered by rose bushes, but, in 1906, these were all removed, and the garden restored to the time of Thomas Coke.

However, the garden has not been allowed to fossilise; while the main structure of the garden remains unaltered, a number of new plants and trees have also been introduced, mainly in the area of the mill stream which flows through part of the grounds and the bog garden.

Another of the garden's attractions is the amount of statuary to be seen. Concealed within bays of yew may be found "The Quarrelling Boys", a

sequence of lead putti by Jan van Nost The Younger tracing the course of the quarrel from fisticuffs to reconciliation. Van Nost's immense Vase of the Four Winds, a gift from Queen Anne, stands as an eye-catcher at a high point where several avenues meet, while Perseus and Andromeda stand on either side of the Great Basin, reminding the classically-learned visitor that Perseus, fresh from slaying the Gorgon Medusa, whose head he is brandishing, crossed the sea to save Andromeda.

On one of the lawns below the house stands the Blackamoor. The blackamoor, or African Servant, was a popular figure in the eighteenth century, for both outdoor and indoor decoration. At Melbourne, he balances a tray on his head on which stands a large urn; at Dunham Massey, it is a sundial. The figure, sometimes depicted in chains, when it is known as "The African Slave", was also used in statuary to symbolise Africa as one of the four continents as known in the eighteenth century, the others being Europe, America and Asia.

A gentler interpretation gives the figure a religious symbolism, suggesting that it represented the soul in chains, though the modern visitor may not be comfortable with this, either.

A more recent addition has been a large urn installed by the Agent-General for Victoria to commemorate the bicentenary of his country and to mark its association with the 2nd Viscount Melbourne, who gave his name to the state's capital.

At the conclusion of the visit, members made their way to the tea room, which itself forms part of the history of the estate. Originally described as "a Wash Room and Bake House with laundry over", it had two fireplaces, and, as a potential fire hazard, was placed well away from the Hall, a wise precaution,

since, in 1903, the building was gutted and had to be re-built! During World War Two, Polish airmen were billeted on the first floor, and a bombed-out family on the ground floor. It has also been used as a chapel and a meeting place for the local Girl Guides.

Before returning to Staffordshire, some members visited the magnificent parish church of St. Michael and St. Mary, regarded as one of the finest examples of Norman church architecture in the country. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, it served successive Bishops of Carlisle as their cathedral when border warfare made remaining in their northern diocese too perilous. The Hall then became their palace and remained their property until purchased by Sir John Coke in 1629.

Without doubt, this excursion into Derbyshire provided SGPT members with a memorable afternoon, and we are grateful to Jill for ensuring that the visit was such a success.

W.B.S.



Putti - Fisticuffs



Putti - The Reconciliation

# The Italian Job

June 2013. The past year had been a tough one!

**In June 2012, I had undergone major surgery and, although everything went well, I was still recovering and struggling to 'find my feet'! Indeed, despite several attempts, it proved to be a further 12 months before I could begin a proper 'phased return' to work!**

Jax of course was equally exhausted.

We needed a break. But, having had such a close shave the previous year, we determined this would be no ordinary break – time to start on some of the things on that 'list of things to do' (or 'the bucket list' if you prefer). I personally blame Monty Don for sowing the seeds of an Italian garden - themed holiday, but whoever's fault it was, in hindsight they are completely forgiven. We found a specialist holiday provider online (Brightwater Holidays) and although neither Jax nor myself are really package or group holiday-goers, we decided to opt for their 4 day guided tour, chiefly because it offered guided access to otherwise restricted-gardens and some 'free time' in Rome, our favourite city

First, a walk from home to Stafford station, then a train from Stafford to Stansted, overnight at an airport hotel before being greeted by a Brightwater representative and flying to Rome Ciampino on the 4th July. At Ciampino we were met by our tour guide, Catherine Snelling, a very English lady, reminding me somewhat of a retired school mistress – exceedingly

knowledgeable and very well spoken as she pointed out places of interest on our drive to the four star hotel Diana, close to Termini railway station, an area we know well. Jax and I immediately unpacked, showered and ventured out to 'eat on the street'. Then a late drink at the rooftop garden bar, followed by a very welcome bed!

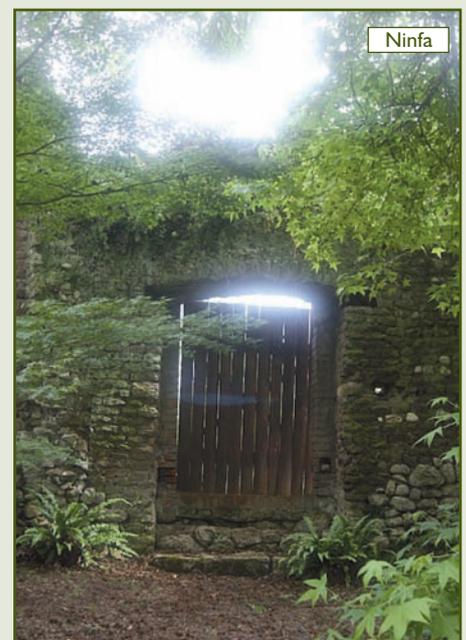
Day two and time to start the itinerary – first, an 'unscheduled' trip to Viterbo, capital of northern Lazio, an area rich and fertile, dotted with countless olive groves. It is the region's most historic centre, a medieval town that during the nineteenth century was something of a rival to Rome. There were a number of grand palaces and a host of old churches, enclosed by an intact set of medieval walls. Lunch was a sandwich and a lukewarm coffee - typically Italian. The setting was fascinating, but it was no garden.

At Bagnaia we at last visited the splendid gardens of Villa Lante.

Described by European garden expert Charles Quest-Ritson as "one of Italy's greatest renaissance gardens", this study in geometry and symmetry dates to 1568 when it was designed for Cardinal Gianfrancesco Gambara by the architect Giacomo Barozzi da Vignola. Interestingly, the stylised crayfish symbol of the Gambaras finds its way into most of the statuary. The dominant theme is water, and in front of the palazzine is a central water parterre which is a classic example of late-renaissance or 'Mannerist' style. A later addition is the ornate French-style parterre de broderie, with intricate shapes in clipped box set against a ground cover of reddish gravel. Behind the palazzine and shaded by mature trees, the garden ascends in a series of four terraces. From the top terrace the Fountain of Dolphins feeds the water feature that dominates the second terrace; falling onto the third terrace the water enters the Fountain of the River Gods and finally the circular Candle Fountain that dominates the lower terrace. Alongside the paths



are fountains that 'surprise' the unwary visitor with an occasional soaking! We were given a history of the garden (and





a personal soaking) by the Head Curator himself. The fountains themselves were spectacular, in particular the Pegasus Fountain! The gardens themselves are very formal, but beautifully proportioned, immaculately maintained and full of symbolism, a 'journey from darkness to enlightenment'. An excellent introduction!

On the evening, I was clearly beginning to 'find my feet' as we again 'broke ranks' and walked over 10 miles to eat in the Piazza Del Popolo, on the way home taking in the Trevi Fountain, Spanish Steps, Piazza Navona and The Pantheon!

Day three, after breakfast (Italy can't 'do bacon!'), the rest of the party embarked on a morning guided tour of the sites of Rome! Me and Jax walked to The Coliseum, via the Roman Forum for coffee. Then back to the hotel for, what for us was the highlight of the trip.

On the afternoon we visited Ninfa, passing en route, acres of kiwi fruit trees and travelling roads lined with pink flowering oleander. The gardens laid out in the ruins of the village of Ninfa, named after a mythical nymph whose tears shed for a lost lover, are said to have become the cool, crystal clear stream, which runs through the centre of the garden. This 'English romantic style' garden is deemed by many to be the most beautiful garden in Europe - if not the world. All this belies its turbulent history; burnt in



1382 and beset by malaria, the village was abandoned and lay deserted for hundreds of years. After the mosquito hazard was removed in 1922 by draining the surrounding marshes, the Duchess of Sermoneta and her son Prince Caetani began to lay out a romantic garden among the village ruins. At least 10,000 plants were collected and planting has continued ever since, giving Ninfa an enchanting beauty where flowers from all over the world thrive in a very special micro-climate. The restoration complete, the garden is a true masterpiece with something to thrill the beginner or the expert gardener alike. Due to the fragile and unique nature of the gardens our visit was by way of a conducted private tour given by the Head Gardener and her young daughter (who incidentally, sang and danced for us, by way of a charming 'thank you').

Suffice to say that Ninfa is a very special place and the memory of that glorious afternoon will long remain with both us. And we heard a cuckoo!

Day four and we visited the last of our gardens - that of the Villa d'Este in Tivoli, the 16th century gardens which are renowned for their use of water. The first thing we noted in the courtyard entrance, were the orange trees, bearing fruits. The garden is romantically overgrown with tall pines, evergreen oaks and cedars. From the upper terrace the valley seems to be full of sparkling spray and the senses are greeted by the continual sound of cascading water.



Apart from the spectacular views from the garden, the single most memorable feature was the Path of One Hundred Fountains. There were amazing fountains at every turn and the remains of a miniature 'Rometta', constructed in 1568, to represent Rome and its seven hills washed at the foot by the River Tiber. The interior of the villa itself should not be missed and was easily as impressive as the grounds. Lunch was a simple one, at a bar in the village. The locals here were complaining about the poor weather - glorious sunshine and 32 degrees! Had we seen Villa d'Este in isolation, I'm certain we should have been more impressed, but having experienced Ninfa the day before, the overriding impression we were both left with is that, whereas it is certainly a powerful 'statement', and certainly impressive, it is, sadly, not as magical a place as Ninfa.

Later that same afternoon, we travelled to the airport to catch our return flight to Stansted. Again, to break the journey, a room was waiting for us there. However, we had to wait 5 hours in the departure lounge at Ciampino - but that's another story, and the only aspect of the holiday we'd rather forget. Our message then, to anybody with a 'bucket list'? Do it . . . . .!

2014 will see us on another adventure to Monet's Garden - see you there?

*Richard Moseley*



# A VISIT TO INGESTRE

It had rained in the morning, it rained again in the evening and most of the next day, but, though damp underfoot and cloudy overhead, the rain mercifully stayed away during the afternoon to allow us to explore the grounds of the Hall before moving on to the Orangery and finally ending at the Church, where tea and cakes were served and we were entertained by the church organist.

En route, our guide, Gill Broadbent, Director and Trustee of the Friends of Ingestre Orangery, shared with us her extensive knowledge of the history of the estate and of the family who had owned the Hall from the fourteenth century until the middle of the previous century.

Gill began by informing us that, given to the De Mutton family immediately following the Norman Conquest, the estate passed into the Chetwynd family when, in the thirteenth century, Isabella de Mutton married Sir Philip de Chetwynd; however, there is archaeological evidence of a settlement as far back as the Bronze Age. Aerial photography has revealed circular barrows, and a Bronze Age axe has been found in nearby Hoo Mill.

The present Ingestre Hall is a seventeenth-century Jacobean mansion built in 1613 for Sir Walter Chetwynd to replace an earlier manor house. The house was altered in the early nineteenth-century by the celebrated Regency architect, John Nash, and re-built in just two years along its original lines after a fire in 1882.

In the seventeenth-century, the house had formal gardens, including parterres and statuary to the south and west of the house, and a deer park to the north, but in about 1769 "Capability" Brown naturalised parts of the park and laid out new walks and a ha-ha.

By the end of the eighteenth century, the formal garden had been removed, and by 1815 an ornamental shrubbery with winding paths known as "The Mount" had been added to the west, with ornamental and kitchen gardens to the east and a raised terrace to the north. Before then, "The Wilderness" had been created to the north of the house.

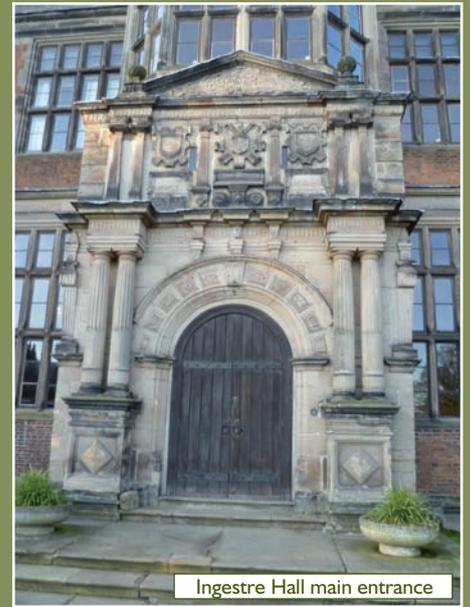
The Orangery, now a Grade II Listed Building, stands to the east of the Hall.

Designed by James "Athenian" Stuart, it was built by James and Samuel Wyatt, who were also responsible for the Orangery at Blithfield Hall.

Gill described in graphic detail the neglected state into which the Orangery had fallen by the time The Friends took on the task of reclaiming it. To start with, The Long Walk, the approach to the Orangery from the Hall, was blocked by brambles and nettles, which had to be dug out. Once these had been cleared, the volunteers found that they could not get into the Orangery because of the density of the plant life which filled it. To add to the challenge, a fig tree had grown through the glass roof, and a fox had taken up residence!

Nothing daunted, a large working party set about clearing it out. In the course of their wider labours, a new path linking The Long Walk with The Woodland Walk was discovered and uncovered.

The plan is to make the newly-restored Orangery available for small public functions, there being no village hall in Ingestre, but this has met with two snags. The first, the absence of water,



Ingestre Hall main entrance

meant the tracing and repairing of leaks in a supply system which had not been used for the past four years.

The second was heating; the Orangery's original function meant that it is suitable for social activity only in the summer, and it is hoped to resolve this problem by building a pod to the rear of the Orangery which can be heated

Three other classical buildings once stood in the grounds – the Pavilion, the Doric Rotondo and the Pentagon Tower. Built between 1735 and 1743 they may, according to Timothy Mowl and Dianne Barre†, form the earliest sequence of classical garden buildings in Staffordshire. Two survive but now stand on ground



Ingestre Hall

outside the present estate and were therefore not included in the visit.

The Pavilion was intended as both a retreat and an eyecatcher. Much bigger than most garden buildings of its type – it was criticised by a contemporary as being “too much like a dwelling house” – The Landmark Trust’s website merely says that “the pattern of its use by the family that built it can only be guessed at”; however, Gill offered a more racy explanation, which those members who had visited the Temple of Diana at Weston Park the previous year were quick to appreciate!

Having fallen into a derelict state, in 1988 it was acquired by The Landmark Trust, who restored it in one of the Trust’s largest restoration projects and now rent it as a holiday let.

The Pentagon Tower was demolished in the mid nineteenth century after it had been the scene of a sensational murder, while The Rotondo now stands in the grounds of a nearby farm.

The magnificent Old Stables, built in the late seventeenth century, were converted to residential properties in the 1970s, while the New Stables, built in 1885 from the insurance money received following the fire to house the 20th Earl’s large collection of polo ponies and carriage horses, is now the home of the Ingestre Riding Stables.

In 1960 the estate, which had remained in the unbroken ownership of the Chetwynd family for six centuries and was still owned by a descendant of the original owners, now ennobled as the Earl of Shrewsbury, was broken up as a consequence of a divorce, and the Hall was sold to West Bromwich Corporation, now Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council. It is now run it as a Residential Arts Centre providing schools with courses in drama, dance, music and art (Perhaps ironically, this was after an attempt by the Earl to persuade Staffordshire County Council to buy the house and then run it as an arts centre, while allowing him and his family rooms so that they could continue to live there had been rejected).

In this, it continues a tradition begun by Nadine, the first wife of the 21st Earl of Shrewsbury, and herself a celebrated opera soprano, who promoted two seasons of opera in 1957 and 1958. Amongst the artistes taking part was a



Inside Ingestre church an attentive audience listens and learns

young mezzo-soprano, Janet Baker, who sang the role of the Second Witch in Purcell’s “Dido and Aeneas”.

Set to become “the Glyndebourne of the Midlands”, the festival came to an abrupt end when, the next year, the Earl sued for divorce on the grounds of his wife’s alleged adultery with their daughter’s tutor.

However, when the 400th anniversary of the building of the Hall was celebrated with a festival of music last year, it was appropriate that Purcell’s opera should have been included in the programme.

Each year, two thousand children, brought up in the industrial environment of the West Midlands, visit the Hall, which gives them the opportunity to experience the peace and quiet of the countryside. The Hall can also be hired for private functions, including weddings, although, since overnight accommodation is in the form of dormitories, it is unlikely that any bridal party would want to stay at the Hall overnight!

A staff of just three maintain the garden and the Hall.

The Parish Church of St. Mary the Virgin, which stands opposite the Hall, is the only Wren church outside London. Built “as his own monument” by Walter Chetwynd, the third of that name, who was a friend of Sir Christopher Wren from their days together at Oxford University, it was completed in 1676.

Designed in the Palladian style,

it replaced a fourteenth-century chapel which stood on a nearby site and was famous for its salt springs which drew the lame and the diseased in search of a cure.

Its interior is a feast to the eye; it has a carved tripartite screen and pulpit by the great craftsman, Grinling Gibbons, as well as a stained glass window by Edward Burne-Jones. The commissioning of such outstanding artists and craftsmen can only be a tribute to the influence and wealth of the family. It also contains a number of carved memorials to the Chetwynd-Talbot family, perhaps the most notable of which is that of Viscount Ingestre, son of the 10th Earl of Shrewsbury, who is depicted in full Royal Horse Guards uniform, including red-plumed hat.

So numerous are the memorials that one visitor was compelled to say, “I thought churches were supposed to be dedicated to the glory of God, but, in this church, the Chetwynds and the Talbots seem to be celebrating themselves”!

The visit, for the success of which we are greatly indebted to Gill and her colleagues, had an added piquancy owing to the fact that the estate will eventually be blighted by HS2, which will run within 300 metres of the Hall and Orangery and within 200 metres of the Pavilion!

†The Historic Gardens of Staffordshire”, p.99

# “Their names shall not be forgotten”

At the first meeting called to consider the form the memorial should take, the Lichfield Chamber of Trade advocated an institute as “having a utilitarian value which can be enjoyed by the general body of citizens, particularly those men and women who have served in the Forces and are now returning as civilians... there is a serious lack of facilities, especially for the young people, which only such an institute could provide”. In the ensuing discussion this suggestion received strong support.

Summed up, the debate was whether there should be a “living or dead memorial”, a debate which was the starting-point for every committee convened to consider the most appropriate form of remembrance. (On the other hand, the leader writer of “The Mercury” wrote rather more darkly of providing for the living at the expense of the dead!)

In the event, the proposal seems to have been undermined by concern as to whether such a memorial would be permanent, there already being examples in the City of clubs which had failed owing to lack of support and attendant financial difficulties. At any rate, a memorial garden, with “architectural monument” inscribed with the names of the fallen, was finally agreed, the monument providing a focal point for the bereaved and the garden itself offering a place of tranquillity and reflection for the wider public. Thus, both criteria were met.

The Garden occupies a prime site in Bird Street, on one side facing the Museum Park, on another the Minster Pool. Previously the garden of the adjoining house, from which it had to be legally separated, it was necessary to obtain the consent of both the Cathedral Chapter, who owned the house, and the City Corporation, who owned the garden. Once agreement was obtained, a tall brick wall running along the side of Bird Street was replaced by a low stone wall and balustrading, pierced to allow wrought iron entrance gates “of Old English design”.

In addition, the road and footpath outside the garden were widened

More balustrading lines the side of the garden facing Minster Pool, allowing a view out of the Garden onto the Pool and into the Garden from across the water.

The garden itself is laid out with lawns containing flower beds and quartered by paved walks. The monument itself, ten feet high and fifteen feet wide, and with “enriched mouldings, the treatment being of English Renaissance character”, stands in the centre of the wall facing the entrance gates. In the centre of the upper part is a statue of St. George and the Dragon, a symbolic figure to be found on many other memorials, and, below, on panels of green slate, are inscribed the names – more than two hundred in number – of those who had died in the conflict.

In presenting the monument to the City at its unveiling on October 22nd, 1920, the Mayor explained that the decision had been taken to record the names, “without rank or unit, in alphabetical order”, since “the great sacrifice made by those whose names are here recorded was an equal one”. Here again, this was decision facing many War Memorial Committees, who did not necessarily follow Lichfield’s example.

The garden was embellished by gifts from local dignitaries of a sun-dial, stone vases and a garden seat.



Nearly a century later, the Memorial Garden still fulfils the functions for which it was designed, a focal point for ceremonies of remembrance and a place of quiet which invites its visitors to relax and reflect.

The next issue of the Newsletter will contain an enlarged article on war memorial gardens which will incorporate additional material based on research which members of the Trust are carrying out to mark the centenary of the outbreak of World War One.



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